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Government organizes Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavs

Context

- To promote the culture of our country, the Government of India has organized Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavs (RSMs).
- In addition to these Mahotsavs & Festivals, all the Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) also organize various cultural activities and programmes on regular basis throughout the country.

Zonal Cultural Centre

- To protect, preserve & promote various forms of folk art and for creating awareness among people about cultural heritage of our country, the Government of India has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs).
- These ZCCs are implementing a number of schemes viz. Award to Young Talented Artistes, Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme, Theatre Rejuvenation Scheme, Research & Documentation Scheme, Shilpgram Scheme, etc.

‘Make in India’ Initiative in Defence Sector

Context

‘Make in India’ programme is being used by the Government for defence procurements by categorising the capital acquisition proposals under ‘Buy (Indian-IDDMM)’, ‘Buy (Indian)’, ‘Buy and Make (Indian)’, ‘Make’ and ‘Strategic Partnership Model’ categories of Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)-2016.

Measures taken by government

- Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) has been revised in 2016 wherein specific provisions have been introduced for stimulating growth of the domestic defence industry.
- A new category of procurement ‘Buy {Indian-IDDMM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)}’ has been introduced in DPP-2016 to promote indigenous design and development of defence equipment.
- Government has notified the ‘Strategic Partnership (SP)’ Model which envisages establishment of long-term strategic partnerships with Indian entities through a transparent and competitive process, wherein they would tie up with global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to seek technology transfers.
- The ‘Make’ Procedure has been simplified with provisions for funding of 90% of development cost by the Government to Indian industry and reserving projects not exceeding development cost of Rs.10 Crore
- Separate procedure for ‘Make-II’ sub-category has been notified wherein a number of industry friendly provisions has been introduced such as
 - relaxation of eligibility criterion, minimal documentation, provision for considering proposals suggested by industry/individual etc.
- Government has decided to establish two defence industrial corridors to serve as an engine of economic development and growth of defence industrial base in the country.
- An innovation ecosystem for Defence titled Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) has been launched
- The Ministry has instituted a new framework titled ‘Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti’ which aims to provide boost to the IPR culture in indigenous defence industry.
- The process for export clearance has been streamlined and made transparent & online.

Guidelines for Awarding Ashoka Chakra

The Ashoka Chakra shall be awarded for most conspicuous bravery; or some act of daring or pre-eminent valour or self-sacrifice otherwise than in the face of the enemy.

Persons eligible for the Ashoka Chakra

- Officers and men and women of all ranks of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, of any of the Reserve

Forces, of the Territorial Army, Militia and of any other lawfully constituted forces.

- Members of the Nursing Services of the Armed Forces.
- Civilian citizens of either sex in all walks of life and members of Police Forces including Central Para-Military Forces and Railway Protection Force.

Bank NPA

Context

As per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data on global operations, aggregate gross advances of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) has increased drastically.

Reasons for Stressed Assets

- As per RBI inputs, the primary reasons for spurt in stressed assets have been observed to be, inter-alia, aggressive lending practices, wilful default / loan frauds / corruption in some cases, and economic slowdown.
- Asset Quality Review (AQR) initiated in 2015 for clean and fully provisioned bank balance-sheets revealed high incidence of NPAs.
- As a result of AQR and subsequent transparent recognition by banks, stressed accounts were reclassified as NPAs and expected losses on stressed loans, not provided for earlier under flexibility given to restructured loans, were provided for.
- Further, all such schemes for restructuring stressed loans were withdrawn.

Steps for NPAs resolutions

- (1) The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) has been enacted, which has provided for the taking over management of the affairs of the corporate debtor at the outset of the corporate insolvency resolution process.
- (2) Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act has been amended to make it more effective, with provision for three months' imprisonment in case the borrower does not provide asset details and for the lender to get possession of mortgaged property.
- (3) Under the PSB Reforms Agenda,
 - a. PSBs have created Stressed Asset Management Verticals to focus attention on recovery,
 - b. segregated monitoring from sanctioning roles in high-value loans, and entrusted monitoring of loan accounts and
 - c. created online end-to-end One-Time Settlement platforms for timely and better realisation.

Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers

Context

A draft National Policy on domestic workers is under consideration of the Central Government.

Features

- Inclusion of Domestic Workers in the existing legislations
- Domestic workers will have the right to register as workers. Such registration will facilitate their access to rights & benefits accruing to them as workers.
- Right to form their own associations, trade unions
- Right to have minimum wages, access to social security, protection from abuse, harassment, violence
- Right to enhance their professional skills
- Protection of Domestic Workers from abuse and exploitation
- Domestic Workers to have access to courts, tribunals, etc.
- Establishment of a mechanism for regulation of concerned placement agencies

Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008

- The Central Government has enacted the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 for providing social security to all unorganized workers including domestic workers.
- The Act provides formulation of social security schemes viz. life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits & old age protection by the central Government.
- The state Government are mandated under the act to formulate suitable welfare schemes for unorganized sector workers including domestic workers relating to provident fund, employment injury benefits housing, education schemes for children, skill up gradation of workers, financial assistance & old age homes.

Several initiatives for improving Teaching Standards

Context

The Central Government has taken several initiatives to assess and improve the quality of teaching in the country.

About initiatives

- In order to focus on quality education, the Central rules to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 have been amended to include reference on class-wise, subject-wise Learning Outcomes.
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) conducts periodic national surveys of learning achievement of children in classes III, V, VIII and X.
- All untrained in-service teachers working in Government, Government- aided, and Private un-aided schools should acquire minimum qualification as laid down by an academic authority, authorized by the Central Government, by March, 2019

- A four year B.Ed integrated course to bring about qualitative improvement in teacher education programmes in India has been conceptualised and regulations for this course have been published in official gazette.
- Empower the appropriate Government to take a decision as to whether to hold back a child in the 5th class or in the 8th class or in both classes, or not to hold back a child in any class till the completion of elementary education.
- The Central Government has launched an integrated scheme for school education named as Samagra Shiksha which subsumes the three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored schemes of school education.
- A single point repository of e resources called e- PATHSHALA containing NCERT textbooks and various other learning resources has been developed.
- MHRD has launched a Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) platform popularly known as SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds)
- A programme for utilization of satellite communication technologies for transmission of educational e-contents through 32 National Channels i.e. SWAYAM PRABHA DTH-TV has been launched.

Plan to increase the number of MSMEs in the country

Context

- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises is striving to increase the number of micro and small industries in the country on a sustainable basis through implementation of various schemes and programmes.

Major schemes

- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP): This is a credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth.
- Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI): It is a cluster-based scheme for development of khadi, village industries and coir clusters by providing them with improved equipment, common facilities centers, business development services, training, etc.
- A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE): to set up a network of technology centres and to set up incubation centres to accelerate entrepreneurship and also to promote start-ups for innovation and entrepreneurship in agro-industry.
- Coir Board: Ministry of MSME, through Coir Board, is also implementing various Schemes/programmes to assist entrepreneurs to set up new Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in all coconut producing states.
- Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE): The scheme facilitates credit to the MSE units by covering collateral-free credit facility (term loan and /or working capital) extended

by eligible lending institutions to new and existing micro and small enterprises.

- Credit linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS): CLCSS facilitates technology upgradation of small scale industries, including agro & rural industrial units by providing 15% upfront capital subsidy
- Micro & Small Enterprises-Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP): The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India (GoI) has adopted the Cluster Development approach as a key strategy

National Policy on Bio-Fuel

Context

The National Policy on Biofuels-2018 notified

About the policy

- The policy allows production of ethanol from damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice etc. which are unfit for human consumption.
- The policy also allows conversion of surplus quantities of food grains to ethanol, based on the approval of National Biofuel Coordination Committee.
- Use of damaged foodgrains and surplus foodgrains for production of ethanol will increase its availability for Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.
- During the ethanol supply year 2017-18, 150.5 crore litres of ethanol was blended in Petrol which resulted in foreign exchange impact of about Rs. 5070 crore and reduced carbon emission.
- The National Policy on Biofuels-2018 approved by the Government envisages an indicative target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol and 5% blending of bio-diesel in diesel by 2030.

Initiatives for Increasing Production of Oil and Gas

The policy initiatives taken by the Government to increase domestic production of oil and gas include:

- Policy for Relaxations, Extensions and Clarifications under Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime for early monetization of hydrocarbon discoveries
- Discovered Small Field Policy
- Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy
- Policy for Extension of Production Sharing Contracts
- Policy for early monetization of Coal Bed Methane

- Setting up of National Data Repository
- Appraisal of Unappraised areas in Sedimentary Basins.
- Re-assessment of Hydrocarbon Resources.
- Policy framework to streamline the working of Production Sharing Contracts in Pre-NELP and NELP Blocks
- Policy to Promote and Incentivize Enhanced Recovery Methods for Oil and Gas
- Policy framework for exploration and exploitation of Unconventional Hydrocarbons under existing Production Sharing Contracts, Coal Bed Methane contracts and Nomination fields

New Schemes for Tribals

About the scheme

- The schemes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs are demand driven and funding are made in various sectors including for employment-cum-income generation and covers activities such as establishment of Agro/Forest/Natural Resource based micro / village industries through training of tribal cooperatives
- The scheme of Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP
- The activities involving expanding knowledge base, training for sustainable collection, value addition, etc. are done through by the Ministry and the Central Government bears 100% of the expenditure incurred for these activities.
- While there is no proposal to introduce a separate scheme/policy on this matter, Ministry of Tribal Affairs desired to brand the activities being undertaken by it under the existing scheme of Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP)

Names of Schemes / Programmes

- (1) Pre Matric Scholarship Scheme for ST students
- (2) Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for ST students
- (3) National Overseas Scholarship for ST students for studying abroad.
- (4) National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST students
 - (a) Scholarship for Higher Education (earlier known as Top Class Education For ST Students).
 - (b) Fellowship (earlier known as Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme for ST students).
- (5) Grants-in-aid to Voluntary Organisations Working for welfare of STs
- (6) Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts
- (7) Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- (8) Grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India
- (9) Special Central Assistance(SCA) to Tribal Sub-Scheme(TSS)
- (10) Grants-in-aid to Tribal Research Institutes
- (11) Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products/Produce
- (12) Support to National/State Scheduled Tribe Finance and Development Corporations
- (13) Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Mechanism of marketing of Development of Value Chain for MFP
- (14) Research Information & Mass Education, Tribal Festival and Others