

31 May 2019: UPSC Exam PIB Summary & Analysis

1. First decision of the Prime Minister dedicated to those who protect India

Context

The very first decision of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on assuming his office is approval to a major change in the 'Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme' under the National Defence Fund.

National Defence Fund (NDF)

- The National Defence Fund (NDF) was set up in 1962 to take charge of the:
 - Voluntary donations in cash and kind received for promotion of the national
 - Defence effort, and to decide on their utilisation.
- Currently the fund is being used for the welfare of the members of the Armed Forces, Para Military forces and Railway Protection Force, and their dependents.
- The fund is administered by an Executive Committee with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson and the Defence, Finance and Home Ministers as Members.
- Under National Defence Fund major scheme of 'Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme (PMSS)' is being implemented to encourage technical and post-graduate education for the widows and wards of the deceased/ex-service personnel.
- Scholarships are available for education at technical institutions (medical, dental, veterinary, engineering, MBA, MCA and other equivalent technical professions with suitable AICTE/UGC approval).
- The National Defence Fund accepts online voluntary contributions through the website

Changes in Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme

- The rates of scholarship have been increased from Rs. 2000 per month to Rs. 2500 per month for boys and from Rs. 2250 per month to Rs. 3000 per month for girls.
- The ambit of the Scholarship Scheme is extended to the wards of State Police officials who are/were martyred during terror/naxal attacks.

2. Government offers pension coverage to crores of farmers

Context

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved a new Central Sector Scheme, a historic decision that will empower farmers across India.
- The salient features of this scheme are:
- A voluntary and contributory pension scheme for all Small and Marginal Farmers (SMF) across the country.
- Entry age of 18 to 40 years with a provision of minimum fixed pension of Rs.3,000/- on attaining the age of 60 years.
- For example, a beneficiary farmer is required to contribute Rs 100/ - per month at median entry age of 29 years.
- The Central Government shall also contribute to the Pension Fund an equal amount as contributed by the eligible farmer.
- After the subscriber's death, while receiving pension, the spouse of the SMF beneficiary shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension received by the beneficiary as family pension, provided he/she is not already an SMF beneficiary of the Scheme.
- If, the death of the subscriber happens during the period of contribution, the spouse shall have the option of continuing the Scheme by paying regular contribution.
- An interesting feature of the Scheme is that the farmers can opt to allow his/her monthly contribution to the Scheme to be made from the benefits drawn from the Pradhan Mantri KisanSamman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme directly.
- Alternatively, a farmer can pay his monthly contribution by registering through Common Service Centres (CSCs) under MeitY.

3. PM-KISAN Scheme extension

Context

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved that the ambit of the Pradhan Mantri KisanSamman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) would be comprehensively extended.

About the extension

The revised Scheme is expected to cover around 2 crore more farmers, increasing the coverage of PM-KISAN to around 14.5 crore beneficiaries.

With this decision, all land holding eligible farmer families (subject to the prevalent exclusion criteria) would avail of the benefits under this scheme.

PM-KISAN: A path-breaking support incentive for farmers:

- The genesis of the PM-KISAN Yojana dates back to the interim Budget for the year 2019-2020
- The key element of PM-KISAN is income support of Rs. 6000/- to the small and marginal landholder farmer families with cultivable land holding upto 2 hectare across the country.
- The amount is being released in three 4-monthly instalments of Rs.2000/- each over the year, to be credited into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries held in destination banks through Direct Benefit Transfer mode.

4. Union Cabinet clears new initiative to control Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

Context

- During the Union Cabinet Meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today, the first since the outcome of the 2019 Lok Sabha election, a novel initiative was cleared that will benefit crores of farmers and improve the health of animals.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis:

- These diseases are very common amongst the livestock – cow-bulls, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs etc.
- If a cow/buffalo gets infected with FMD, the milk loss is upto 100% which could last for four to six months. Further, in case of Brucellosis the milk output reduces by 30%, during the entire life cycle of animal.
- Brucellosis also causes infertility amongst the animals. The infection of brucellosis can also be transmitted to the farm workers and livestock owners.
- Both the diseases have a direct negative impact on the trade of milk and other livestock products.

About the initiative

- This initiative pertains to controlling Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis to support the livestock rearing farmers.
- The programme so far has been implemented on cost sharing basis between the Central and State Governments.
- In a rare instance of departure, the Central Government has decided to now bear the entire cost of the programme to ensure complete eradication of these diseases and better livelihood opportunities for all the livestock rearing farmers in the country.

5. Cabinet clears pension scheme for traders

Context

- India has a rich tradition of trade and commerce. Our traders continue to make a strong contribution to India's economic growth.
- In a decision that will benefit the trading community, the Union Cabinet, has approved a new scheme that offers pension coverage to the trading community.

How the scheme works:

- Under this scheme all shopkeepers, retail traders and self-employed persons are assured a minimum monthly pension of Rs. 3,000/- month after attaining the age of 60 years.
- All small shopkeepers and self-employed persons as well as the retail traders with GST turnover below Rs. 1.5 crore and age between 18-40 years, can enrol for this scheme.
- The scheme would benefit more than 3 crore small shopkeepers and traders.
- The scheme is based on self-declaration as no documents are required except Aadhaar and bank account.
- For example if a person with age of 29 years contributes Rs. 100/- month, then the Central Government also contributes the equal amount as subsidy into subscriber's pension account every month.