

19 February 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti

Context:

PM paid tributes to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his Jayanti.

Details:

- 19th February is observed as the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
 - For more on Chhatrapati Shivaji's life, check [This Day in History dated 19th Feb.](#)
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2. Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)

Context:

The Cabinet has approved the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase – II.

About Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen):

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) or SBM – G is a sub-mission of the [Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan](#) for the rural areas.
- The SBM – G seeks to eliminate open defecation from the country.
- It also aims at improving access to sanitation.
- In addition, it seeks to generate awareness to motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices, and encourage the use of appropriate technologies for sanitation.
- **Key objectives of the mission:**
 - Improving the quality of life in rural areas by promoting cleanliness and eliminating open defecation.
 - Motivating communities and panchayati raj institutions to adopt sustainable sanitation practices.
 - Encouraging appropriate technologies for sustainable sanitation.
 - Developing community-managed solid and liquid waste management systems.
- The key components of the implementation of SBM-G will include:
 - Start-up activities including preparation of state plans.
 - Information Education Communication (IEC) activities.
 - Capacity building of functionaries.
 - Construction of household toilets.
 - Construction of community sanitary complexes.
 - A revolving fund at the district level to assist Self Help Groups and others in providing cheap finance to their members.
 - Funds for rural sanitary marts, where materials for the construction of toilets, etc., may be purchased.
 - Funds for solid and liquid waste management.
- Under SBM-G, the construction of toilets in government schools and anganwadis will be done by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ministry of Women and Child Development, respectively.

- The mission is under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
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3. Technology Group

Context:

The Union Cabinet has approved the constitution of an empowered “Technology Group”.

Details:

- It is a 12-member Technology Group with the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India as its Chair.
 - This Group is mandated to render timely policy advice on the following:
 - Latest technologies.
 - Mapping of technology and technology products.
 - Commercialisation of dual use technologies developed in national laboratories and government R&D organisations.
 - Developing an indigenisation road map for selected key technologies.
 - Selection of appropriate R&D programs leading to technology development.
 - **Impact of the Group:**
 - The Group will render the best possible advice on technology to be developed for a technology supplier and the technology procurement strategy.
 - It will develop in-house expertise in aspects of policy and the use of emerging technologies.
 - It will also ensure the sustainability of public sector technology developed/being developed at PSUs, national labs and research organisations.
 - **The three pillars of the Technology Group:**
 - Policy support
 - Procurement support
 - Support on R&D proposals
 - The Group has been formed to overcome the challenges that were seen in the Indian technology domain:
 - Silo-centric approaches to the development of technology.
 - Technology standards were either not developed or applied, leading to sub-optimal industrial development.
 - Dual use technologies were not being optimally commercialised.
 - R&D programs were not aligned with efforts at technology development.
 - There was a need for the mapping of technologies important for applications in society and industry.
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4. 22nd Law Commission of India

Context:

The Union Cabinet has approved the constitution of the twenty-second Law Commission of India for a period of three years.

Details:

- The Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body constituted by the Government of India from time to time.
- The Commission was originally constituted in 1955 and is re-constituted every three years.
- The tenure of the twenty-first Law Commission of India was up to 31st August, 2018.

Know more about the Law Commission of India [here](#).

5. Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill 2020

Context:

Cabinet approved the Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill 2020.

Details:

- The bill makes provisions for the safe and ethical practice of assisted reproductive technology services in the country.
- Through the bill, the National Board, the State Boards, the National Registry and the State Registration Authorities respectively will regulate and supervise assisted reproductive technology (ART) clinics and assisted reproductive technology banks.
- The Bill also provides for a National Registry and Registration Authority to maintain a central database and assist the National Board in its functioning.
- The Bill proposes for stringent punishment for those practising sex selection, sale of human embryos or gametes, running agencies/rackets/organisations for such unlawful practices.

Background:

- India has one of the highest growths in the ART centres and the number of ART cycles performed every year.
- Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), including In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), has given hope to a multitude of persons suffering from infertility, but it also introduced a plethora of legal, ethical and social issues.
- India has become one of the major centres of this global fertility industry, with reproductive medical tourism becoming a significant activity.
- Clinics in India offer nearly all the ART services—gamete donation, intrauterine insemination (IUI), IVF, ICSI, PGD and gestational surrogacy.
- However, in spite of so much activity in India, there is yet no standardisation of protocols and reporting is still very inadequate.
- The need to regulate the Assisted Reproductive Technology Services is mainly to protect the affected women and children from exploitation.
- The oocyte donor needs to be supported by an insurance cover, protected from multiple embryo implantation and the children born through assisted reproductive technology should be provided all rights equivalent to biological children.
- The cryopreservation of sperm, oocytes and embryo by the ART banks needs to be regulated and the bill intends to make Pre-Genetic Implantation Testing mandatory for the benefit of the child born through assisted reproductive technology.

There have been a series of legislation intended to protect and safeguard the reproductive rights of women.

To read about the Surrogacy Regulation Bill 2020, check [CNA dated Aug 7, 2019](#).

Also read about the [Medical Termination Pregnancy Amendment Bill 2020](#).

6. Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS)

Context:

Cabinet approved the revamping of "Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)" and "Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS)".

About the RWBCIS:

- This scheme aims to mitigate the hardship of the insured farmers against the likelihood of financial loss on account of anticipated crop loss resulting from adverse weather conditions relating to rainfall, temperature, wind, humidity, etc.
- RWBCIS uses weather parameters as “proxy” for crop yields in compensating the cultivators for deemed crop losses. Pay-out structures are developed to the extent of losses deemed to have been suffered using the weather triggers.
- Launched in 2016, the scheme covers major food crops (cereals, millets and pulses) and oilseeds, and also commercial/horticultural crops.
- Farmers covered:
 - All farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing the notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage. However, farmers should have an insurable interest on the insured crop.
 - All farmers availing Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) loans from Financial Institutions (i.e. loanee farmers) for the crop(s) notified are covered on a compulsory basis.
 - The Scheme is optional for the non-loanee farmers. They can choose between WBCIS and PMFBY, and also the insurance company.

To read about the [Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana \(PMFBY\)](#), click on the linked article.

7. Animal Culture Linked to Conservation for the first time

Context:

UN Wildlife Conference.

Details:

- Animal culture, the learning of non-human species through socially transmitted behaviours, is being linked to conservation action for the first time.
- There is evidence that whales, dolphins, elephants and primates acquire some of their knowledge and skills through social learning.
- In addition to individual learning, some animals may learn socially from adults or peers about

various behaviours, including optimal migration routes.

- To consider conservation measures for the Eastern Tropical Pacific Sperm Whale and the nut-cracking Chimpanzee, two such proposals will be presented to delegates at the on-going 13th Conference of Parties meeting to the Convention of Migratory Species at Gandhinagar (CMS COP 13). For more on CMS COP check [PIB dated 10th Feb 2020](#).
 - **Sperm Whale:** The concerted action for the Sperm Whale recognizes the complex social structure within four subspecies.
 - They differ little from each other in their nuclear DNA, but their vocalizations vary considerably, indicating that these can only be acquired through social interaction and learning.
 - Collecting data through acoustic and photographic records can help conservationists fully understand the social structure of all subspecies.
 - The proposed conservation measures call for research and transboundary information exchange to close knowledge gaps.
 - **Nut-cracking Chimpanzees:** The initiative for the nut-cracking Chimpanzees highlights the species' unique technological culture.
 - The species can crack open different types of nuts by using stones and pieces of wood as a hammer and anvil.
 - Despite nuts, stones and wood being commonly available, nut-cracking skills occur only in the most westerly parts of this subspecies' range spanning Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, and not in other populations across Africa.
 - Scientists say this cultural capacity enables these Chimpanzees to survive dry seasons in their western habitats.
 - Such behaviour could enhance survival prospects of chimpanzees in areas showing climate-induced changes to vegetation.
 - **Human activities** that disrupt the social fabric of culturally developed species can have severe impacts.
 - Once a species has vanished from an area, critical knowledge can also be lost.
 - For example, the Southern Right Whales' knowledge of migration routes around New Zealand's coastline was lost to the species as a result of commercial whaling in the 1800s. Nowadays, a handful of whales have again started to calve around New Zealand.
 - Recent evidence of genetic mixing among these whales suggests that the species may recolonize forgotten migration destinations once the population recovers from the impact of whaling.
 - Protecting cultural knowledge among peers and across generations may be vital for the survival and successful reproduction of certain species.
 - Supporting individuals that act as 'repositories' of social knowledge such as elephant matriarchs, or groups of knowledgeable elders, may be just as important as conserving critical habitat.
 - Understanding how Sperm Whales pass on valuable information to their offspring or why some groups of Chimpanzees have a culture of cracking nutritious nuts with stone tools while others do not, can be key to evaluating conservation challenges for such species.
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8. National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

Context:

16th Foundation of Day of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) organised.

To know more about the [National Commission for Scheduled Tribes \(NCST\)](#), click on the linked article.

9. North East Sustainable Development Goals Conclave 2020

Context:

NITI Aayog is organising “Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Conclave 2020: Partnerships, Cooperation and Development of North Eastern States” in Guwahati.

Details:

- The Conclave is being organised in association with the North Eastern Council, Government of Assam, Tata Trusts, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).
- The 3-day event will see representations from the highest offices of all the State Governments of the North East, Central Ministries, academia, civil society and international development organizations.
- The technical sessions would include sessions pertaining to SDG localisation in the northeast, economic prosperity and sustainable livelihoods, climate adaptive agriculture, health and nutrition, education, skill development and entrepreneurship, connectivity and infrastructure development & inequality and exclusion.
- [NITI Aayog](#) has the mandate of overseeing the adoption and monitoring of SDGs at the national and sub-national level.
- Progress in the northeast region is crucial in this decade of action for the country to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

To know more about the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), click on the linked article.