

CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 10-08-2023

PRADHAN MANTRI MATRU VANDANA YOJANA



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- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a Centrally Sponsored DBT scheme that provides a cash incentive of ₹ 5000/- to Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth.
- The incentive is paid in three installments upon fulfilling certain health and nutrition conditions.
- The scheme aims to compensate for the wage loss due to pregnancy and to ensure adequate nutrition for the mother and the child.
- The PMMVY was launched in 2017 as a replacement for the previous Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), which was a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women launched in 2010.
- The IGMSY covered only 53 districts and provided a cash benefit of ₹ 6000/- per beneficiary.
- The PMMVY expanded the coverage to all the districts of the country and reduced the cash benefit to ₹ 5000/- per beneficiary, while the remaining ₹ 1000/- was to be given under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) for institutional delivery.

The beneficiary has to meet the following conditions for receiving the instalments:

- First installment: ₹1000/- on early registration of pregnancy at the AWC/ approved Health facility.
- Second installment: ₹2000/- after six months of pregnancy on receiving at least one antenatal check-up (ANC).

- Third installment: ₹2000/- after childbirth is registered and the child has received the first cycle of BCG, OPV, DPT, and Hepatitis - B, or its equivalent/ substitute.
- The scheme is applicable only for the first live birth and excludes miscarriage, stillbirth and abortion.

A total of 758 Fast Track Special Courts including 412 exclusive POCSO(e-POCSO) Courts are functional in 29 States/UTs across the country

- The Government of India has enacted the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 (as amended in 2019) to provide safeguards for children against sexual abuse.
- The act defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years. The POCSO Act, 2012 provides for establishment of Special Courts for the purpose of ensuring speedy trial.



- In furtherance to the Criminal law (Amendment) Act, 2018, Department of Justice has started a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in October, 2019 for setting up of a total of 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) (including 389 exclusive POCSO Courts) across the country.
- As on 31.05.2023, a total of 758 FTSCs including 412 exclusive POCSO(e-POCSO) Courts, are functional in 29 States/UTs across the country. As per data provided by the High Court's up to May 2023, total 169342 cases have been disposed of by these courts since inception of the Scheme.
- As per the information received from National Legal Services Authority the State/District Legal Services are involved in payment of compensation, the concerned Legal Services Authorities take expeditious steps for payment of compensation to the victims without any delay.
- The data received from the SLSAs, with regard to passing of award by the Legal Services Authorities for payment of compensation to the

Victims under Victim Compensation Schemes under section 357A Cr.P.C. during the last three financial years throughout the country, is as under:

- Further, under 'Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman' (PM POSHAN) one hot cooked meal in Government and Government aided schools is provided to students at the elementary level of education.
- Also, Section 10 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act states that it shall be the duty of every-parent or guardian to admit or cause to be admitted his or her child or ward, as the case may be, for elementary education in the neighbourhood school.

ROBOT 'BANDICOOT' TECHNOLOGY TO ELIMINATE MANUAL SCAVENGING

The requirement which products like Bandicoot deals with, is limited to removal of accumulated grit and deposits at the bottom of a manhole, which could cause choking and sewer overflows.

Thus, local bodies have been advised to acquire appropriate manhole de-gritting machines which can be operated without need to enter inside a manhole and also set up an appropriate cleaning period.

The need for periodic as well as emergency de-gritting manholes can be completed by adopting much simpler machines, easily locally fabricated, which will give almost the same, if not better, output while ensuring a similar level of safety for sanitation workers.



Cities have been advised to use simple, cost effective mechanical products for management of their manholes and sewers.

As per Section 33 of the MS Act, 2013 every local authority and other agency are supposed to use appropriate technological appliance for cleaning of sewer and septic tanks. Government has to promote the use of modern technology through financial assistance, incentives and otherwise.



As per “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Rules,2013 (MS Rules, 2013)” it is mandatory for the employer to provide the safety gear, devices and ensure safety precautions as prescribed in the Rules.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.

In addition to this, NAMASTE scheme is being implemented in all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the country to ensure the following: -

- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
- All sanitation work to be performed by skilled workers
- No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human fecal matter
- Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers
- Strengthening and capacitating Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) to ensure safe delivery of mechanized sanitation services.
- Empowering of Sanitation workers to run sanitation enterprises and promote mechanization of cleaning operation through availability of machines.

The scheme also formalizes sewer septic tank workers by providing occupational training, safety gears and extension of health insurance under AB-PMJAY to ensure safe cleaning with mechanized equipment and enhancing their dignity.

Cott-Ally mobile app

Cott-Ally mobile app has been developed for farmers to increase awareness about MSP rates, nearest procurement centers, payment tracking, best farm practices etc.

Government has taken several measures for development of cotton sector and various facilities are provided by Government. Some of the major steps and facilities are indicated below: -

To safeguard the cotton farmers from distress sales, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is appointed as a Central Nodal agency for undertaking MSP operations when prices of Fair Average Quality grade seed cotton (kapas) fall below the MSP rates.



Brand name for Indian cotton as “Kasturi Cotton India” was launched on 7th October 2020. MoU signed between CCI on behalf of Govt. of India and TEXPROCIL for Traceability, Certification and Branding of KASTURI Cotton India with Corpus fund of 30 crores by joint contribution of Industry and MoT over a period of 3 years during 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has sanctioned a special project on cotton titled “Targeting technologies to agro-ecological zones-large scale demonstrations of best practices to enhance cotton productivity” with a budget outlay of Rs. 41.87 crores under NFSM during 2023-24.

This projects targets technologies such as High-Density Planting System (HDPS), closer spacing and production technology for ELS cotton focusing on a cluster-based and value chain approach in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to farmers.

Cott-Ally mobile app has been developed for farmers to increase awareness about MSP rates, nearest procurement centers, payment tracking, best farm practices etc.

Kerala Assembly passes resolution to rename state as Keralam

The Kerala Assembly has passed a resolution urging the Centre to rename the state as “Keralam” in the Constitution and all office records.

The Parliament has the power to change the name of a state. The Constitution of India gives the parliament power to alter the name of a state under Article 3.

Article 3 of the Constitution explicitly lays down a procedure to alter the area, boundaries, or name of a state.

The process of renaming of a state can be initiated by either the Parliament or the state assembly. The state legislature sends a proposal in the form of a resolution



to the Central government. In Parliament, the bill cannot be presented without a recommendation from the President.

Procedure

States which are going to get affected by such changes, the legislature of that state must be presented with the bill. The provision to send a bill to the state legislature was not in the original Constitution. This process was added in the 5th Amendment Act, 1955. The State Legislature may present its views on the bill within the prescribed time period. The views or suggestions of the State Legislature are not enforceable against the President or the Parliament. If Parliament wants, it can dismiss the opinion of the state legislature. After receiving the suggestions of the State Legislative Assembly or after the expiration of the limited time period the bill goes back to the Parliament.

Then the bill gets further deliberated upon in the Parliament.

Passing of the bill

The bill is sent to the President for approval. After the said bill gets approved, it becomes a law and the name of the state stands modified.

Other institutions involved in the process

No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from several agencies such as the Ministry of Railways, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Posts, Survey of India and Registrar General of India are required.

Once the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) receives the NOC from these institutions, it gives its consent to the resolution passed by the state.

Origin of Kerala

There are several theories about the origin of the name 'Kerala'. The earliest epigraphic record that mentions Kerala is emperor Asoka's Rock Edict II of 257 BC. The inscription refers to the local ruler as Kerala Putra (Sanskrit for "son of Kerala"), and also "son of Chera" referring to the Chera dynasty.

Origin of Keralam

About 'Keralam', scholars believe it could have originated from 'Cheram'. Scholars observed that the word 'keram' is the Canarese (Kannada) form of cheram. They described Keralam as Cheram — the region between Gokarnam and Kanyakumari. The origin of the term could possibly be from the root 'cher', which means to join. This meaning is clear in the compound word 'Cheralam', in which alam means region or land.

INDIAN EAGLE OWL



- The Indian eagle-owl (*Bubo bengalensis*) has recently been recognized as a distinct species, setting it apart from the Eurasian eagle-owl.
- This formidable bird stands as an imposing figure in the avian world, distinguished by its physical attributes, nocturnal behavior, and intriguing cultural significance.
- Its large, piercing orange or yellow eyes are adapted for low-light conditions, enabling exceptional night vision.
- Striking ear tufts, reminiscent of horns, protrude from its head, possibly serving as a defense mechanism.

Nocturnal Nature

- Its nocturnal habits have contributed to limited knowledge about the species, making it a mysterious and elusive subject for researchers.

Habitat and Range

- **Widespread Distribution:** Spanning the entire Indian peninsula, the Indian eagle-owl's extensive range suggests a stable population.
- The Indian Eagle Owl is widely distributed across the Indian subcontinent, including India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- This species is not heavily dependent on forests, thriving in open scrublands, agricultural tracts, and rocky perches.
- These owls often inhabit areas with rocky terrain or cliffs that provide suitable nesting sites and vantage points for hunting.
- They are also known to adapt to human-altered landscapes and can be found near villages and agricultural fields.



Agriculture and Conservation

- Indian eagle-owls contribute to pest control in agricultural areas by preying on rodents, bandicoots, bats, and doves.
- Research reveals healthier owlet populations near agricultural lands, indicating the species' positive impact on farm ecosystems.

Conservation Status

- The Indian Eagle Owl is classified as a species of "Least Concern" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- However, habitat loss due to urbanization, agricultural expansion, and deforestation remains a threat to their populations.
- Conservation efforts should focus on preserving suitable nesting sites and protecting their diverse habitats.

AMAZON COOPERATION TREATY ORGANISATION

Eight South American countries have united in an effort to combat deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) summit, held in Brazil, aimed to prevent the rainforest from reaching a "point of no return" and outlined a joint strategy to address deforestation.

The ACTO summit held in Brazil marked a significant event as it was the first time in 14 years that the organization convened.

ACTO, established in 1995 by South American countries sharing the Amazon basin, holds the potential to address ongoing challenges related to the Amazon rainforest and its preservation.

Member Countries and Declaration

The member countries involved in this initiative are Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela.

They signed a joint declaration at the summit held in Belem, Brazil, which laid out a comprehensive plan to promote sustainable development, halt deforestation, and combat organized crime related to deforestation.

The roadmap emphasizes the need to prevent deforestation by implementing stricter regulations, monitoring illegal activities, and enforcing penalties for those involved in illegal logging and land clearance.



Promotion of Sustainable Development

The member countries intend to promote economic growth while ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. This includes supporting responsible agricultural practices, eco-tourism, and indigenous-led conservation efforts.

Combatting Organized Crime

The summit addressed the issue of organized crime linked to deforestation. By targeting criminal networks engaged in illegal logging and land conversion, the countries aim to disrupt the drivers of deforestation.

The ACTO summit's outcomes signify a collective commitment by South American countries to combat deforestation in the Amazon. While some demands remain unmet, the joint declaration and roadmap provide a foundation for ongoing efforts to save the Amazon rainforest and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The engagement of leaders, activists, and civil society underscores the urgency of the issue and the need for collaborative action.

The inter-services organisation bill

The Rajya Sabha recently passed a bill that empowers the commander-in-chief and the officer-in-command of inter-services organisations with disciplinary and administrative powers over personnel from the other services serving in them.

The Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control & Discipline) Bill – 2023 was introduced in the Upper House.

The bill seeks to empower Commander-in-Chief and Officer-in Command of Inter-Services Organisations with all disciplinary and administrative powers so that they take decisions related to personnel serving in or attached to such organisations.

At present, all Army, Navy and IAF personnel are governed by their service-specific acts.

Service personnel serving in or attached to an Inter-Services Organization will continue to be governed by their respective Service Acts.

The enabling bill when enacted will empower heads of Inter-Services Organisations to exercise all the disciplinary and administrative powers as per the existing service acts, and related rules and regulations, irrespective of the service they belong to.



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It also empowers the central government to constitute an Inter-Services Organisation, thus paving the way for the creation of integrated theatre commands a major military reform on cards.