

### INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

#### Why in News?

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has released the draft ‘**Guidelines for Incorporating Indian Knowledge in Higher Education Curricula**’.
- These guidelines aim to help colleges and universities develop courses for introducing students to the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

#### About Indian Knowledge System (IKS):

- Established in **October 2020**, Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is an innovative cell under Ministry of Education (MoE) at AICTE, New Delhi.
- As a concept, IKS was introduced through the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- **Objectives –**
  - To promote interdisciplinary research on all aspects of IKS,
  - Preserve and disseminate IKS for further research and societal applications,
  - Actively engage for spreading the rich heritage of our country and traditional knowledge in the field of Arts and literature, Agriculture, Basic Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Architecture, Management, Economics, etc.

#### Functions of IKS Division:

- Facilitate and coordinate IKS based/related inter and trans disciplinary work done by various institutions in India and abroad including universities, institutions of national importance, R&D laboratories and different ministries and inspire private sector organizations to engage with it.
- Establish, guide and monitor subject-wise interdisciplinary research groups comprising of researchers from institutes, centers and individuals.
- Create and promote popularization schemes.
- Facilitate funding of various projects and develop mechanisms to undertake research.
- Make Policy recommendations wherever required for the promotion of IKS.

#### UGC’s Draft Guidelines:

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has released draft guidelines for the incorporation of the Indian knowledge systems (IKS) in higher education for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses.
- The UGC has also directed higher educational institutions to share a few suggestions on the draft guidelines by April 30.
- As per the directive, **all UGC-recognized universities and institutions are to include subjects related to the Indian knowledge system as part of the National Education Policy 2020.**
- The UGC argues that integrating IKS within the existing educational framework will aid in preserving and disseminating Indian Knowledge Systems for further research and societal application.
- Furthermore, the **UGC has recommended that every student in UG and PG courses be encouraged to take credit courses in the Indian knowledge systems.**
  - Specifically, students enrolled in UG programmes in medicine will be required to study the Indian system of medicine, including Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Homeopathy, and Siddha, in their first year.
- In other courses, the role of itihās and purānas will be incorporated to better understand the Vedas in UG and PG programs.
  - The six vedāngas - **Sikha, Chhanda, Vyākṛana, Nirukta, Jyotiṣha** and **Kalpa** will also be integrated into the courses.
- Mathematics in Vedas and Sulba Sūtras will also be integrated into the courses. Apart from Dharmasāstra and Arthasāstra, students will also learn about Indian astronomy.

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## THE MATERNITY BENEFIT ACT: MATERNITY BENEFITS TO ADOPTIVE MOTHERS

### Why in News?

- The Supreme Court agreed to hear a petition challenging the constitutional validity of **Section 5(4) of the Maternity Benefit Act 1961.**

- This section states that a woman who legally adopts a child **below three months** old will be entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave.

## What is the Maternity Benefit Act 1961?

- It was originally passed to **regulate the employment of women** in “certain establishments” for the period **before and after childbirth** and to provide for maternity benefit and certain other benefits.
- Originally, it applied to **every establishment** being a factory, mine or plantation.
- In 1973, it was extended to “**any such establishment belonging to the Government**” and “every establishment where persons are employed for the exhibition of equestrian, acrobatic and other performances.”
- **No employer shall knowingly employ a woman** in any establishment during the **six weeks immediately following** the day of her delivery or her miscarriage.
- **The right to paid maternity leaves** was also given, although the period of such leave could not exceed twelve weeks.
- **For availing maternity benefits**, a woman is mandated to work in the establishment for at least 160 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of her expected delivery.
- Violating provisions of the Act could result in **3 months’ punishment**, with or without a fine.

## The Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Act 2017:

- It amended Section 5 of the erstwhile Act to **allow 26 weeks of paid leave after childbirth**, although **only to biological mothers**.
- The amendment inserted **Section 5(4)** which said that adoptive or surrogate mothers legally adopting a child below three months will be entitled to a maternity benefit period of **12 weeks** from the date the child is handed over to the mother.
- Further, it inserted provisions to **allow women to work from home under Section 5(5)**, where the nature of work assigned to a woman is of such nature.

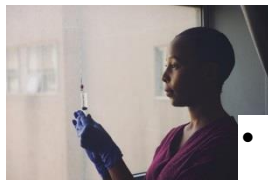
## What are the Criticisms of the Amended Act?

- Women in the **unorganised** sector cannot avail maternity benefits.

- Even five years after the amendment Act was passed, it was **yet to deliver a positive impact on job opportunities for women.**
  - **The women's participation dropped** in more than five out of 10 sectors (surveyed by a human resource organisation) since the implementation of the Act.
  - After maternity, **women face several challenges** - 30% cited wage cuts followed by resistance or lack of support from family and access to childcare.
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## R21 VACCINE

Recently, a much-anticipated malaria vaccine developed by Oxford University has received its first approval.



### About the R21 vaccine:

- It is the first vaccine to achieve **more than 75% effectiveness**. (The goal set by the World Health Organisation).
- It has been approved for use in **children aged 5-36 months**, the age group at the highest risk of death from malaria.
- **Ghana became** the first African country which approved the vaccine.
- Matrix-M, a saponin-based adjuvant developed by Novavax, is used in the vaccine to stimulate a **stronger and longer-lasting immune response**.
- Antigen presentation in regional lymph nodes is improved by the Matrix-M adjuvant, which also encourages the entrance of antigen-presenting cells at the injection site.

### Key facts about Malaria

- Malaria is an acute febrile illness **caused by Plasmodium parasites**, which are **spread** to people through the **bites of** infected female **Anopheles mosquitoes**.
- It is **not contagious** and cannot spread from one person to another
- There are many different types of plasmodium parasites, but only 5 types cause malaria in humans.
- **Plasmodium falciparum**: Mainly found in Africa, it's the most common type of malaria parasite and is responsible for most malaria deaths worldwide.

- **Plasmodium vivax:** Mainly found in Asia and South America, this parasite causes milder symptoms than Plasmodium falciparum, but it can stay in the liver for up to 3 years, which can result in relapses.
  - **Plasmodium ovale:** Fairly uncommon and usually found in West Africa, it can remain in your liver for several years without producing symptoms.
  - **Plasmodium malariae:** This is quite rare and is usually only found in Africa.
  - **Plasmodium knowlesi:** This is very rare and found in parts of Southeast Asia.
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## INDIA'S FIRST UNDERWATER METRO

India's first underwater metro recently conducted its trial run under the Hooghly river, Kolkata.



### About India's first Underwater Metro:

- It is a part of Kolkata Metro's East-West Corridor.
- It passes under the Hooghly River in the city's northeast, with the tunnel 13 meter below the riverbed and 33 meter below ground

level.

- Total length of the tunnel: 520 meter
  - It forms part of the 4.8 kms underground section from Howrah Maidan to Esplanade
  - Once this stretch is open then Howrah will be the deepest Metro station (33 meters below the surface) in the country.
  - The metro is expected to cover the 520-meter stretch under Hooghly river in 45 seconds.
  - The tunnel will have exists for emergencies like earthquakes.
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## DABBA TRADING AND ITS IMPACT ON ECONOMY

### Why in news?

- In the past week, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) issued a string of notices naming entities involved in dabba trading.

- The bourse cautioned retail investors to not subscribe (or invest) using any of these products offering indicative/assured/guaranteed returns in the stock market as they are prohibited by law.

## What is 'dabba trading'?

### • About

- Dabba (box) trading refers to informal trading that takes place outside the purview of the stock exchanges.
- In this form of trading, brokers execute trades for clients without placing them on stock exchanges.
- Instead, the brokers maintain their own trading books or 'dabba' and settle trades with clients outside the exchange.
- Traders bet on stock price movements without incurring a real transaction to take physical ownership of a particular stock as is done in an exchange.
- In simple words, it is gambling centred around stock price movements.

### • Example

- An investor places a bet on a stock at a price point, say ₹1,000. If the price point rose to ₹1,500, he/she would make a gain of ₹500.
- However, if the price point falls to ₹900, the investor would have to pay the difference to the dabba broker.
- Thus, it could be concluded that the broker's profit equates the investor's loss and vice-versa.

### • Features

- The primary purpose of such trades is to stay outside the purview of the regulatory mechanism.
- These transactions are facilitated using cash and the mechanism is operated using unrecognised software terminals.
- Other than this, it could also be facilitated using informal or kaccha (rough) records, sauda (transaction) books, challans, DD receipts, cash receipts alongside bills/contract notes as proof of trading.

### • Legal provisions

- ‘Dabba trading’ is recognised as an offence under Section 23(1) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act (SCRA), 1956.
- Upon conviction, one can invite imprisonment for a term extending up to 10 years or a fine up to ₹25 crore, or both.

## STAND OF SC AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON ENCOUNTERS

### Why in news?

- Recently, Gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed’s son Asad and his aide Ghulam were killed in an encounter.
- On these extra-judicial killings, popularly known as encounters, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and subsequently, the Supreme Court have laid down proper guidelines and procedures to be followed.

### What is Encounter Killing?

- The term Encounter Killing is used to describe alleged extra-judicial killings by police or armed forces, supposedly in self-defence when they encounter suspected gangsters or terrorists.
- The term police encounter is not defined specifically in the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal procedure.

### What has the Supreme Court said on “encounters”?

- In September 2014, SC issued detailed guidelines enumerating 16 points to be followed in the matters of investigating police encounters in the cases of death.
- The guidelines came in the case “**People’s Union for Civil Liberties v State of Maharashtra**”.
- Some of these guidelines included:
  - The registration of a first information report (FIR) as mandatory along with provisions for magisterial inquiry;
  - The next of kin of the deceased must invariably be associated in such inquiry;
  - Keeping written records of intelligence inputs;
  - Investigation to be carried out by an independent agency, such as the CID, to ensure a fair and impartial investigation;

## What did the NHRC say on encounters?

- The NHRC, in 1997, under its former chairperson Justice MN Venkatachaliah, had given a set of guidelines in cases where death is caused in police encounters.
- These included:
  - The police's duty to enter all information received about encounter deaths in an appropriate register;
  - Provisions for investigation by independent agencies like the State CID;
  - The grant of compensation to the deceased's dependents may be considered where police officers may be convicted and prosecuted after investigation;
- **In 2010, these were amended** under the then NHRC chief Justice GP Mathur, to include:
  - Provisions for registration of an FIR,
  - magisterial inquiry and reporting of all death cases to the NHRC by a Senior Superintendent of Police or Superintendent of Police of the District within 48 hours of such death.
  - Three months after the encounter, a second report must be sent to the NHRC, providing information, inclusive of the post mortem report, inquest report and the enquiry findings.

## UTTARAMERUR INSCRIPTION

Recently, the Prime Minister of India referred to the Uttaramerur inscription in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, while discussing India's democratic history.



### Why in news?

- While Uttaramerur has multiple inscriptions spanning centuries, the most famous one being referred to by the Prime Minister is from the reign of **Parantaka I (907-953 AD) who belongs to the Chola dynasty.**

### About the inscription:

- The famous inscription from Parantaka I's reign is found on the walls of the **Vaikunda Perumal Temple.**
- The inscription gives details of **the functioning of the local Sabha**, i.e., the village assembly.



- A Sabha was an **assembly exclusively of brahmins** and had specialised committees tasked with different things.
- This gave details about **how members were selected, the required qualifications**, their roles and responsibilities, and even the circumstances in which they could be removed.
- **Required qualifications:**
  - It includes ownership of a certain **amount of land**, having a house, being between the age of 35 and 70 and “**knowing mantras and Brahmanas**” (from the Vedic corpus).
  - An exception can be made on land ownership if the person has learnt at least “**one Veda and four Bhashyas**”. One must also be “well-versed in business” and “virtuous”.

### What was the Selection procedure for the Sabha?

- It says there were **30 wards**. Everyone living in these 30 wards would assemble and select one representative for the village assembly.
- All those eligible and willing would write their **names on palm leaf tickets** following which, the representative would be chosen based on **an elaborate draw of lots**, conducted by priests in the inner hall of the building where the assembly meets.
- **Disqualification:** The inscription then lists several factors which disqualify someone and their family like:
  - Not **having submitted accounts** while previously serving on a committee.
  - Committing any of the first four of the five ‘great sins’ (killing a Brahmin, drinking alcohol, theft and adultery)
  - Being associated with outcasts, and eating ‘forbidden’ dishes.

### A-HELP PROGRAM

Recently, the ‘A-HELP’ (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) programme was launched in the State of Uttarakhand.



#### About A HELP Program:

- It is an initiative of the **Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal**

## Husbandry & Dairying and the Ministry of Rural Development.

- ‘A-HELP’ are **community-based women activists**, who assist **veterinarians** in local departmental activities help livestock farmers to take loans for entrepreneurship development, fill out applications, mark the ear tagging of animals and register them in the INAF portal and help with insurance etc.
- They assist in implementing various schemes and in providing information to the farmers at the grassroots level.
- They will give vital contributions to preventing various infectious diseases of animals, artificial insemination **under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)**, tagging animals and animal insurance.

## Key Facts about the Rashtriya Gokul Mission

- It is being implemented for the **development and conservation of indigenous bovine** breeds since December 2014.
- It is continued under the umbrella scheme Rashtriya Pashudhan Vikas Yojana **from 2021 to 2026**.
- **Objectives**
  - To **enhance the productivity of bovines** and increase milk production in a sustainable manner using advanced technologies.
  - To propagate the **use of high genetic merit bulls** for breeding purposes.
  - To enhance Artificial insemination coverage through strengthening the breeding network and delivery of Artificial insemination services at farmers' doorstep.
  - To promote indigenous cattle & buffalo rearing and conservation in a scientific and holistic manner.