

INDIA'S HUNGER PARADOX: SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN PRODUCTION DOESN'T MEAN FOOD SECURITY

Context

To achieve the goal of zero hunger, India should consider a strategic initiative aimed at eliminating food insecurity in India and ensuring affordable access, with a special and immediate focus on India's youngest children.

WHO Recommended Calorie Intake and Situation in India

- At six months of age, **33 per cent of the daily calorie** intake is expected to come from food. It is presumed that the child obtains the remaining calories through **"on-demand" breastfeeding**.
- The fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data highlighted **the problem of "Zero-Food" among infants and children in India**. For example,
 - Among mothers with a child between ages 6-23 months, **18 per cent** reported that their child did not eat any food referred to as **"zero-food" in the 24 hours preceding the survey**.
 - More than **80 per cent** had not consumed any protein-rich foods for an entire day (**"zero-protein"**).
 - Close to **40 per cent** did not eat any grains (roti, rice, etc) for an entire day, and **six out of 10 children do not consume milk** or dairy of any form every day (**"zero-milk"**).

India's Efforts to Achieve SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):

- **Mission Poshan 2.0**, the overarching flagship programme **dedicated to maternal and child nutrition**, has evolved in the right direction by targeting SDG 2.
- **The National Food Security Act 2013**, including flagship supplementary nutrition programme service.
- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana

Challenges to Food Security

- Disruptions in global food production and distribution systems triggered by Covid-19 and further accentuated by Ukrainian-Russian conflict, have made food insecurity a global issue.
- The US recently made ending hunger by 2030 a priority and launched a high-level White House initiative on hunger, nutrition and health.

Conclusion

- In order to achieve the SDG of zero hunger, **elevating food intake among young childrens** of primary importance.
- This can be ensured by affordable access to sufficient quantity and quality of nutritionally diverse food.

PADMA AWARDS-2024

Recently, online nominations/recommendations for the Padma Awards 2024 have opened.



About Padma Awards:

- The Padma Awards namely, **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri**, are amongst the highest civilian awards of the country.
- These Awards were **instituted in 1954** and they are announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day.
- The award seeks to **recognize ‘work of distinction’** and is given for distinguished and **exceptional achievements/service in all fields/disciplines**, such as- Art, Literature and Education, Sports, Medicine, Social Work etc.
- **Eligibility for the nomination-**
 - **All persons without distinction** of race, occupation, position, or sex are eligible for these Awards.
 - **Government servants** including those working with PSUs, **except Doctors and Scientists**, are **not eligible** for Padma Awards.
 - Awardees receive a **Sanad (Certificate) and Medallion**, a small size replica (miniature) of the main medal is separately handed over to the recipient **but no monetary grant** is attached to these Awards.

- **Who decides the winner?**
 - All nominations received for Padma Awards are placed before the **Padma Awards Committee**, which is **constituted by the Prime Minister every year**.
 - The Padma Awards Committee is **headed by the Cabinet Secretary** and includes Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members.
 - The Prime Minister and the President of India **finally review and approve** the recommendations.
- **Result announcement**
 - The result will be announced on the occasion of Republic Day to recognize the ‘work of distinction’ of the people for their distinguished and exceptional achievements/service in all fields/disciplines.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA 2023

The 50-day countdown to International Yoga Day has begun at Shri Bhavani Niketan College in Jaipur, Rajasthan and Yoga Mahotsav is being celebrated to mark the occasion.



Why in News?

- The **Ayush Ministry** is organising the event with active support and cooperation of the state government of Rajasthan, local authorities and various institutions with an objective to boost **Medical Value Travel through Yoga**.
- This year, the Ministry of Ayush is also exploring the possibility of organising **Common Yoga Protocol (CYP)** demonstrations at important ports across globe covering all oceans and at all functional **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)** spread across the country and Ayush Gram in each state.

About Yoga:

- Yoga is the basic foundation of Indian culture which is the biggest medium of **self-development**.
- More than 50 centuries ago, yoga's journey as an ancient Indian science of healing and exercise started somewhere in the Indus-Sarasvati civilisation in northern India.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- The word "yoga" means "to yoke or join". It means the "union", the ultimate union between our consciousness and the higher consciousness, which some call God or divine.
- The word also refers to the **union of body, mind and spirit**, which we can achieve through various practices and postures.

Benefits:

- Yoga exercises such as 'Bhastrika', 'Kapalbhati', 'Anulom Vilom' and 'Bhramari', among others can make both the body and mind healthy.
- Decreases the levels of cortisol, or the stress hormone in our body.
- Helps with insomnia, and improves digestion, both of which are impacted by stress.
- Eases depression, anxiety, and mood swings by restoring dopamine and serotonin in the brain.
- Specific yogic breathing techniques like Ujjayi breath and Brahmari breath help tone the vagus nerve.

SMART CITIES MISSION

Why in news?

- The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has extended the deadline of its Smart Cities Mission from June this year to June 2024.
- The deadline has been extended to enable all 100 smart cities to not only complete their projects but also document and disseminate the learnings from the mission.

What is the Smart Cities Mission?

- The Smart Cities Mission is an initiative of the **Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry**.
- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 25, 2015.
- Cities across the country were asked to submit proposals for projects to improve municipal services and to make their jurisdictions more liveable.
- Between January 2016 and June 2018 (when the last city, Shillong, was chosen), the Ministry selected 100 cities for the Mission over five rounds.
- The projects were supposed to be completed within five years of the selection of the city, but in 2021 the Ministry changed the deadline for all cities to June 2023.

- **Objective**

- The main objective of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of ‘smart solutions’.
- The Mission aims to drive economic growth and improve quality of life through comprehensive work on social, economic, physical and institutional pillars of the city.

- **Funding**

- The Mission is operated as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- Central Government will give financial support to the extent of Rs. 48,000 crores over 5 years i.e., on an average Rs.100 crore per city per year.
- An equal amount on a matching basis is to be provided by the State/ULB.
- Additional resources are to be raised through convergence, from ULBs’ own funds, grants under Finance Commission, innovative finance mechanisms such as Municipal Bonds, other government programs and borrowings.

Fundamental principles on which the concept of Smart Cities is based

- There is no standard definition or template of a smart city.
- However, in the context of India, the six fundamental principles on which the concept of Smart Cities is based are:

INSURGENCY IN ASSAM

Why in news?

- Recently, the Dimasas National Liberation Army (DNLA), an insurgent group operating mostly in Assam's Dima Hasao district, signed a peace agreement with the government.
- Both Union Home Minister and Assam Chief Minister declared that this peace settlement marked the end of the tribal insurgency in Assam.

Insurgency in Assam

- Assam has seen insurgency by various tribal militant groups, particularly from the 1980s onwards.

- This was even after Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh were carved out of Assam.
- The core demand of most of these groups has been greater political autonomy, primarily through separate statehood demands.

Reasons behind the insurgency in Assam

● Ethnic minefield

- The Assam region has a long history of tensions between the indigenous ethnic groups.
- There are 15 recognised tribes in the autonomous districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills and 14 recognised tribes in the rest of the state.
- Of these, the major tribes are **Bodo** (35% of the state's tribal population), **Mishing** (17.52%), **Karbi** (11.1%), **Rabha** (7.6%), **Sonowal** **Kachari** (6.5%), **Lalung** (5.2%), **Garos** (4.2%), and **Dimasas** (3.2%).
- Of these, the most sustained and violent movement for autonomy has been carried out by Bodo groups.
- However, there have also been Karbi and Dimasas groups that waged militant operations over the decades.

● Immigration

- The large-scale immigration of Bengali-speaking Muslims from the neighboring country of Bangladesh has been a major source of tension in the region.
- The Assamese people see this immigration as a threat to their identity, culture, and economic well-being.

● Political factors

- This region saw movements which ask for recognition of sub-regional aspirations.
- These movements often came in direct conflict with the State Governments or even the Autonomous Councils.
- E.g., All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) stepped up the movement in 1987 for a separate state of Bodoland on the North Bank of the Brahmaputra.

● Economic factors

- The isolation of the region after partition was a big blow to the economy of the region.
- The perception of exploitation of NE resources by the government in Delhi boosted insurgency.

Way forward

- **Caution is the key**
 - While settlements with all active tribal militant groups have been arrived at in recent years, history has seen breakaway factions.
 - Hence, caution should be exercised as the possibility of other groups coming to the fore remains open
- **Establish North East Security Council**
 - New Delhi must set up a North East Security Council to both comprehend and administer the region holistically.
- **Challenge in the form of Paresh Baruah-led ULFA (I)**
 - While talks with these tribal militant groups have been carried out, the biggest challenge for the government remains the Paresh Baruah-led ULFA (I), which continues to hold fast to the demand for sovereignty.

ARTICLE 142: SC RULES IT CAN DIRECTLY GRANT DIVORCE TO COUPLES

Why in News?

- A constitution bench of the Supreme Court of India recently held that it can exercise its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to directly grant divorce to consenting parties, in cases of irretrievable breakdown of marriage.

What is the Current Procedure for Getting a Divorce in India?

- **The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 (HMA)** lays down the procedure to obtain a divorce by **mutual consent**.
- It states that **both parties can file a petition for dissolution** of their marriage in the district court, on the grounds that
 - They have been living separately for a year or more or
 - They have not been able to live together or have mutually agreed to dissolve their marriage.

- These provisions apply when **at least one year has elapsed** since the marriage took place and can be sought by either spouse on grounds like
 - **Adultery, cruelty, desertion, religious conversion,**
 - Insanity, leprosy, venereal disease, renunciation and presumption of death.
- Further, both parties seeking divorce **have to wait between 6 to 18 months** from the date on which they presented their petition to obtain the divorce decree.
 - **The six-month period is given** so that the parties have ample time to withdraw their plea.
- After the passage of the mandated period and hearing from both parties, **if the court is satisfied, it may conduct an inquiry and pass** a decree of divorce.
- Issues with the current process is that **it is time-consuming and lengthy**, owing to a large number of cases **pending** before the courts.

Article 142 of Indian Constitution

- **Powers of SC under this article**
 - The Art. 142 confers on the **Supreme Court plenary power** to pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice.
 - The SC can do so in **any cause or matter pending before it.**
- **Noticeable Use of Art. 142**
 - 142 remained unnoticed till the SC gave its decision in The Bhopal Gas Disaster Case.
 - It **quashed all criminal proceedings** arising out of the disaster. SC invoked the power given to it under Art 142 to pass the judgement.
- **Limitations on Art 142**
 - SC recognised that the power under Art 142 has certain limitations and fetters.
 - It held that while exercising power under this article:
 - the court should not ignore the substantive rights of a litigant under the existing law.
 - The power could not be used to supplant substantive law applicable to a case.
 - Express statutory provisions cannot be ignored.
 - It cannot exercise the jurisdiction in violation of the statute.

- It clarified that no court has competence to issue a direction contrary to the law. The courts are meant to enforce the rule of law and not to pass orders contrary to law.
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WHAT IS WINDFALL TAX?

India recently slashed the windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to ₹4,100 per tonne from ₹6,400 per tonne.



About Windfall Tax:

- **What is it?** It is a higher tax levied by the government on specific industries when they experience unexpected and above-average profits.
 - **When is it imposed?**
 - When the government notices a **sudden increase in an industry's revenue**, they impose this tax.
 - However, these revenues **cannot be linked to anything the company actively pursued**, such as its business strategy or expansion.
 - Consequently, a Windfall Tax is imposed on an industry's profits when it experiences a **sharp increase in revenue due to unrelated external events**.
 - **Rationale behind the imposition of windfall tax:**
 - **Redistribution of unexpected gains**, when high prices benefit producers at the expense of consumers;
 - To **fund social welfare schemes**;
 - As a **supplementary revenue stream** for the government;
 - As a way for the Government to **narrow the country's widened trade deficit**;
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