

WHAT IS THE LIFE MISSION?

The Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and the Indian Consulate General in Birgunj recently held a series of events on the LiFE mission.



LiFE
Lifestyle for
Environment

About LiFE Mission:

Mission LiFE, or Lifestyle for Environment, is an India-led global mass movement to nudge individual and community action to protect and preserve the environment.

- It was launched by the Indian Prime Minister at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021.
- The program hopes to “mobilize one billion Indians as well as people in other countries to become individuals who practice sustainable lifestyles.
- The global movement will showcase sustainable goals and climate actions taken by countries and individuals around the world.
- It makes the fight against climate change democratic, in which everyone can contribute with their respective capacities.
- It emboldens the spirit of the P3 model, i.e., Pro Planet People.
- It functions on the basic principles of ‘Lifestyle of the planet, for the planet and by the planet’.

It aims at following a three-pronged strategy for changing people's collective approach towards sustainability,

- nudging individuals to practice simple yet effective environment-friendly actions in their daily lives (demand)
- enabling industries and markets to respond swiftly to the changing demand (supply)
- to influence government and industrial policy to support both sustainable consumption and production (policy).

WHAT IS THE GOBARDHAN PORTAL?

Over 1,200 biogas plants have registered on the Gobardhan portal since it was launched, according to an official release.



About Gobardhan portal:

- It serves as a **centralized repository for assessing investment and participation in the Biogas/CBG (Compressed Biogas) sector** at a pan-India level.
- **Primary objective:** To streamline the process of setting up CBG/Biogas plants in the country.
- **It allows any government, cooperative or private entity operating or intending to set up a Biogas/ CBG/ Bio-CNG plant in India to obtain a registration number** by enrolling in the portal.
- **This registration number will enable them to avail a multitude of benefits** and support from the Ministries and Departments of the Government of India.

Key Facts about GOBARDhan Scheme:

- **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan** is a crucial umbrella initiative of the Government of India.
- The government launched the Gobardhan scheme in 2018 as a **national priority project under the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen-Phase II program.**

Aim:

- To generate wealth and energy by converting cattle dung, agricultural residue, and other organic waste into Biogas, CBG and bio-fertilizers.
- It adopts a whole-of-government approach and aims to convert waste into wealth, thereby promoting a circular economy.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, **Ministry of Jal Shakti.**

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION SCIENCES



Recently, the Central government has suspended the Director of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) citing irregularity in recruitment.

About International Institute for Population Sciences:

- It was formerly known as the Demographic Training and Research Centre (DTRC) till 1970.
- It was established in July 1956 under the **joint sponsorship of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Government of India and the United Nations.**
- It serves as a regional centre for Training and Research in **Population Studies for the ESCAP region.**
- The Institute was re-designated to its present title in 1985 to facilitate the expansion of its academic activities.
- It was declared as a 'Deemed to be University' on August 14, 1985, under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- The recognition has facilitated the award of recognized degrees by the Institute itself and paved the way for further expansion of the Institute as an academic institution.
- IIPS holds a unique position among all the regional population centres.
- It was the first such centre started, and it serves a much larger population than any of the other regional centres.
- The Institute is under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.**
- Institute had conducted many prime surveys like National Family Health Survey (NFHS), District Level Household Survey (DLHS), Assessment of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), YOUTH in India Project etc.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020: EDUCATION IN MOTHER TONGUE A KEY STEP TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Why in News?

- Speaking at an event to mark the **third anniversary** of the National Education Policy (NEP), Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi pitched for education in the mother tongue.
- He said that through the NEP, the country has started leaving behind the inferiority complex generated after portraying the country's rich languages as "backward".

About National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:

- The National Education Policy, approved by the Union Cabinet in 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system.
- The committee that drafted the NEP 2020 was headed by **Shri K Kasturirangan**.
- NEP 2020 focuses on five pillars: **Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability** – to ensure continual learning.
- The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986 and forms a comprehensive framework to transform both elementary and higher education in India by 2040.
 - This is the 3rd such education policy since India's independence.
 - The earlier two were launched in **1968 & 1986**.
- There is much emphasis upon multi-disciplinarity, digital literacy, written communication, problem-solving, logical reasoning, and vocational exposure in the document.

Major Features of the NEP 2020:

- **Schooling to begin from the age of 3 years** –
 - The revised policy expands the age group of mandatory schooling from 6-14 years to 3-18 years.
 - This new system will include 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre-schooling.
 - The existing 10+2 structure of school curriculum will be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively.
- **Mother tongue as medium of instruction** –
 - The NEP has directed focus on students' mother tongue as the medium of instruction even as it sticks to the 'three language formula' but also mandates that no language would be imposed on anyone.

- Under the ‘three language formula’, the students must learn two Indian languages, with English not to be considered as one.
- It also says that the freedom to choose the two Indian languages should be left to the states, regions or students.
- The policy indicates that the medium of instruction till at least Grade 5, but preferably up till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the mother tongue/local language/ regional language in both public and private schools.
- **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) –**
 - The HECI will be now a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education.
 - The same set of norms for regulation, accreditation, and academic standards, to be applied to both public and private higher education institutions.
 - The Government aims to phase out the affiliation of colleges in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges.
- **Separation between subject streams to be blurred –**
 - As per NEP 2020, the rigid separations between subjects' stream will be done away with.
 - Students will have the liberty to choose subjects they would like to study across streams.
 - Vocational education to be introduced in schools from Class 6 and will include internships as well.
- **Return of the FYUP Programme and No More Dropouts –**
 - The duration of the undergraduate degree will be either 3 or 4 years.
 - Students will also be given multiple exit options within this period.
 - Colleges will have to grant –
 - a certificate to a student if they would like to leave after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas,
 - a diploma after 2 years of study, or
 - a Bachelor’s degree after completing a three-year programme.

- An Academic Bank of Credit will be established by the Government for digitally storing academic credits earned from different Higher Educational Institutions so that these can be transferred and counted towards the final degree earned.

Challenges for the Implementation of the NEP:

- The NEP only provides a broad direction and is **not mandatory to follow**. Karnataka, in 2021, became the first state to implement NEP 2020.
- Since education is a **concurrent subject** (both the Centre and the state governments can make laws on it), the reforms proposed can only be implemented collaboratively by the Centre and the states.
- The Central government plans to set up subject-wise committees with members from relevant ministries at both the central and state levels to develop implementation plans for each aspect of the NEP.
- Sufficient funding is also crucial; the 1968 NEP was hamstrung by a shortage of funds.

UDAN SCHEME: TURBULENCE HITS SCHEME, 50% ROUTES GROUNDED

Why in News?

- Out of the 479 airport routes that were revived by the Union Government, under the Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN, 225 have ceased operations.

About Regional Connectivity Scheme – UDAN:

- UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional connectivity scheme launched by the Government of India, as a part of the National Civil Aviation Policy in **2016**.
- UDAN, which will be in operation for a period of **10 years (2016-26)**, envisages providing connectivity to **un-served and underserved airports** through revival of existing airports and air strips.
- The objective of the scheme is **to take flying to the masses** by improving air connectivity for tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and subsidising air travel on these routes.

- The routes are awarded after a **bidding process**, and the winning airlines are given certain incentives, along with **viability gap funding** (or a subsidy) equivalent to 50% of the seating capacity on their aircraft.
 - In return, the airlines sell 50% of their seats at a flat rate of **Rs 2,500 per hour of flight**, in order to make air travel affordable.
- Implementing Agency: **Airport Authority of India (AAI)**

Different Phases of the Scheme:

- **UDAN 1.0:** 5 airlines companies were awarded 128 flight routes to 70 airports.
- **UDAN 2.0:**
 - In Phase 2, helipads were also connected.
 - In this phase, Central government awarded contracts to 15 airliners to operate in 325 routes across hilly, remote areas.
 - It involved connecting 56 new airports and helipads to 36 existing aerodromes, as per the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- **UDAN 3.0:**
 - Inclusion of Tourism Routes under Phase 3 in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism.
 - Inclusion of Seaplanes for connecting Water Aerodromes.
 - Bringing in a number of routes in the North-East Region under the ambit of UDAN.
- **UDAN 4.0:** Phase 4 of the scheme was launched in December 2019 with a special focus on North-Eastern Regions, Hilly States, and Islands.
- **UDAN 4.1:**
 - Launched in March 2021, the UDAN 4.1 round is focused on connecting smaller airports, along with special helicopter and seaplane routes.
 - In addition to these, some new routes have been proposed under the **Sagaramala Seaplane Services** in consultation with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- **UDAN 5.0:**
 - Launched in April 2023, the UDAN 5.0 round is focused on Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats) aircrafts.

- There is no restriction on the distance between the origin and the destination of the flight.
 - Airlines would be required to commence operations within 4 months of the award of the route; earlier this deadline was 6 months.
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INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY: HOW PROJECT TIGER SAVED THE BIG CAT IN INDIA

Why in News?

- July 29 is celebrated world over as the International Tiger Day in a bid to raise awareness on various issues surrounding tiger conservation.

About the International Tiger Day:

- It was **first instituted in 2010** at the Tiger Summit in St Petersburg, Russia when the 13 tiger range countries came together to create Tx2, the global goal to double the number of wild tigers by the year 2022.
- However, the designated date for achieving the goals of Tx2 saw **uneven progress**.
- According to the Wildlife Institute of India's (WII) **5th tiger census** (quadrennial), **India's tiger population increased to 3,682 in 2022** (revised from 3,167 recently), up from 1,411 in 2006.
- In 2022, the maximum number of tigers (785) were reported to be in **MP**, followed by Karnataka (563), Uttarakhand (560), and Maharashtra (444).
- The successes in India can be attributed largely to the success of **Project Tiger**, which celebrated its **50th anniversary** earlier this year (2023).

What is Project Tiger?

- Project Tiger was launched by the Central government on **April 1, 1973**, at the Jim Corbett National Park (Uttarakhand) **to promote conservation of the tiger**.
- According to reports, while there were 40,000 tigers in the country at the time of the Independence, **they were soon reduced to below 2,000 by 1970** due to widespread hunting and habitat destruction.
- In 1970, the IUCN declared the tiger as an **endangered**

- The programme was initially started in 9 tiger reserves of different States such as Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, UP and West Bengal, covering over 14,000 sq km.
- Notably, Project Tiger didn't just focus on the conservation of the big cats. It also ensured the preservation of their natural habitat as tigers are at the top of the food chain.

Successes and Setbacks of the Project Tiger:

- The number of tigers in India began to rise and by the 1990s, their population was estimated to be around 3,000.
- However, the success story of Project Tiger suffered a major setback when the local extermination of tigers in Rajasthan's Sariska made headlines in 2005.
- This led to the setup of a task force and the government reconstituted Project Tiger and established the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in 2005.

Fifty years of Project Tiger:

- Today, there are 54 tiger reserves across India, spanning 75,000 sq km.
- Nearly 75% of the global tiger population (in the wild) can today be found in India.
- The goal of Project Tiger is to have a viable and sustainable tiger population in tiger habitats based on a scientifically calculated carrying capacity.
- This means the tiger population of the country cannot be increased at the same pace because that will result in an increase in conflict with human beings.