



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER, 2024

Week-2

8-14 Sept., 2024

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

8th SEPTEMBER 2024

International Cooperative Alliance's General Assembly

- **Context:** India will host the International Cooperative Alliance's general assembly and global conference for the first time in November this year, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- The theme for this year's conference is "Cooperatives Build Prosperity for All," which is in line with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sahkar se Samridhi'.
- The Conference will also mark the official launch of the UN International Year of Cooperatives – 2025.
 - A commemorative stamp celebrating the International Year of Cooperatives – 2025 will be launched during the event.
- The Conference will be used to showcase Indian Cooperatives' products and services in the 'Haat' setup with the theme of Indian Villages.
 - India is home to one-fourth of the world's cooperatives, both in terms of numbers and membership, and this move will further strengthen the cooperative movement in the country.

About International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)

- It is the premier body for the Global Cooperative movement.
- It was established in 1895 as a non-profit international association to advance the cooperative social enterprise model.
- The ICA's General Assembly meets every year whereas global conferences happen every two years.

INDIAsize Initiative

- **Context:** The Indian government is set to launch the 'INDIAsize' initiative to establish standardized body measurements tailored to Indian body types.

About INDIAsize Initiative

- The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, has approved the INDIAsize project.
- INDIAsize is a scientific research project focused on collecting anthropometric data from a representative sample of the Indian population.
- This data will be used to develop a Size Identification Number for individuals by mapping and categorizing their body shape and size, establishing standardized body size standards for India.
- It aims to establish standardized body measurements tailored to Indian body types.
 - Current sizing systems are based on US or UK standards, which may not fit Indian body types well.
- **Purpose of INDIAsize:** To address fitting issues by developing body size standards specific to the Indian apparel sector.
 - To rectify disparities and inconsistencies in garment fits.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana

- **Context:** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY) has completed 5 years of implementation.

Key Facts

- Launched in 2019, the PM-KMY has been providing social security to all land-holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) across the country.
- It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme.
 - Eligible small and marginal farmers are given a fixed monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 after attaining the age of sixty.
 - Farmers aged between 18 and 40 years need to contribute between Rs. 55 to Rs. 200 per month until they turn 60.
 - The Central Government, through the Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, also contributes an equal amount as contributed by the eligible subscriber, to the pension Fund.

- The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) manages the pension fund, and beneficiary registration is facilitated through Common Service Centres (CSCs) and State Governments.

9th SEPTEMBER 2024

Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

- **Context:** Recently, the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) completes five years since its launch in 2019.

About Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

- It was launched by India in November 2019 at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok, and aims to foster cooperation for a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- IPOI emphasizes maritime security, stability, and development, building on India's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision.
- It operates as a non-treaty-based, voluntary arrangement, relying on existing frameworks like the EAS mechanism.

Key pillars and leadership of IPOI

- IPOI has seven pillars, with countries taking the lead in specific areas:
- **Maritime Security:** UK and India
- **Maritime Ecology:** Australia and Thailand
- **Maritime Resources:** France and Indonesia
- **Capacity Building and Resource Sharing:** Germany
- **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management:** India and Bangladesh
- **Science, Technology, and Academic Cooperation:** Italy and Singapore
- **Trade, Connectivity, and Maritime Transport:** Japan and the US

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the inaugural meeting of the Governing Board of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF).

Key Points

- The meeting focussed on discussion about India's Science and Technology landscape and redesigning of research and development programmes.

About ANRF

- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) was established under the ANRF Act 2023, with the goal of fostering a culture of research and innovation across India.
- The ANRF aims to seed, grow, and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout the country, as outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP).
- The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), which previously handled many of the country's research funding activities, has been subsumed into ANRF.
- The ANRF has a funding target of 50,000 crore for the period 2023-2028.

10th SEPTEMBER 2024

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana – IV

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the Implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana – IV (PMGSY-IV) during FY 2024-25 to 2028-29.

About PMGSY-IV

- Under the scheme 25,000 unconnected habitations of population size 500+ in plains, 250+ in NE & Hill States/UTs, special category areas (Tribal Schedule V, Aspirational Districts/Blocks, Desert areas) and 100+ in LWE affected districts, as per Census 2011 will be covered.
- Also, 62,500 Km of all-weather roads will be provided to unconnected habitations.
- Construction of required bridges along the alignment of the all-weather road will also be provided.

About PMGSY

- Government launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in 2000.
- It aims to provide all-weather access to unconnected habitations.
- The Ministry of Rural Development along with state governments is responsible for the implementation of PMGSY.
- This scheme was centrally funded only up to 2015-16. Since then, the funds have been divided between the Centre and the State.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved extending Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) health coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of income.

Key Points

- Eligible senior citizens will receive a distinct card to access their entitled benefits.
- Seniors already covered by AB PM-JAY will receive an additional top-up of Rs. 5 lakh annually for themselves.
 - This top-up is separate from their family's existing coverage.
- **Options for Other Health Insurance Schemes:** Senior citizens covered under other public health insurance schemes such as the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), and Ayushman Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) can either retain their existing coverage or opt for AB PM-JAY.
 - Senior citizens under private health insurance or the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme are also eligible for AB PM-JAY benefits.

About AB PM-JAY

- AB PM-JAY is the world's largest publicly funded health assurance scheme.

- It provides Rs. 5 lakh annual coverage per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalizations.
- Based on Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011) for rural and urban areas.
- The scheme is being implemented in 33 States/UTs except for the NCT of Delhi, West Bengal, and Odisha.
- Up to 3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days of post-hospitalization expenses (e.g., diagnostics, medicines).
 - No restrictions on family size, age, or gender.
 - Coverage includes all pre-existing conditions from day one.
- So far, it has facilitated over 7.37 crore hospital admissions, benefiting 55 crore individuals across 12.34 crore families.
 - Initially, the scheme covered 10.74 crore vulnerable families (40% of India's population).
 - In January 2022, the base was expanded to 12 crore families to account for population growth.
 - The recent extension also includes free healthcare for 37 lakh ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers, and Helpers (AWWs/AWHs) across the country.

National Florence Nightingale Awards 2024

- **Context:** The President of India has conferred the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2024 to Nurses at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

National Florence Nightingale Awards

- The Award was instituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the year 1973.
- This award is given as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services rendered by the nurses and nursing professionals to society.
- Each award consists of a Certificate of Merit, Cash Award of Rs.1,00,000/- and a medal.

11th SEPTEMBER 2024

Mission Mausam

- **Context:** Cabinet approved 'Mission Mausam' to create a more weather-ready and climate-smart Bharat.

About Mission Mausam

- It is a two-year initiative aimed at enhancing India's capacity to cope with extreme weather and climate challenges.
- The mission, with a financial outlay of 2,000 crore, will be implemented under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
 - The India Meteorological Department, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting— institutions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences— will spearhead the mission's implementation.
- Key components include expanding research in atmospheric sciences, focusing on weather surveillance, forecasting, and modelling.
 - The mission will integrate advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and high-performance computing to improve the accuracy of weather predictions.
- **Importance:** It will enhance weather observation systems and provide better monsoon forecasts, air quality alerts, and extreme weather warnings.
 - The mission will benefit sectors including agriculture, disaster management, and health.

Exercise AL NAJAH

- **Context:** The 5th edition of India-Oman joint military Exercise AL NAJAH began in Salalah, Oman.

Key Facts

- Exercise AL NAJAH has been held biennially since 2015, alternating between India and Oman. Last edition of the same exercise was conducted at Mahajan in Rajasthan.

- Aim of the Joint Exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter terrorism operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
- Exercise AL NAJAH V will allow both sides to exchange best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures for joint operations.

12th SEPTEMBER 2024

International Day of South-South Cooperation

- **Context:** The United Nations International Day of South-South Cooperation was observed. This year's theme is "A better tomorrow through South-South Cooperation."

Key Facts

- It is observed annually on September 12, as established by General Assembly resolution 58/220.
- This date commemorates the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) in 1978, which promotes technical cooperation among developing countries.

About South-South Cooperation

- It refers to the collaboration among countries in the Global South to address common development challenges, share knowledge, and build collective capacities.
- The concept of cooperation among developing countries originated from the Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung in 1955. This Conference led to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and the creation of the Group of 77 (G-77) in 1964. The G-77 mainly promoted South-South Cooperation in the 1960s and 1970s.

Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)

- **Context:** The government is planning to implement a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)-based toll collection system starting April 2025

About Global Navigation Satellite System Toll Collection System

- GNSS-based tolling is expected to be implemented by April 2025, aiming to replace the existing FASTag system.
- Vehicles with GNSS equipment will be able to travel up to 20 km for free each day on national highways and expressways. Unlike the fixed tolls of the FASTag system, GNSS will charge based on the actual distance traveled.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has amended the National Highways Fee Rules, 2008 to incorporate GNSS-based toll collection, including the creation of dedicated GNSS lanes. Currently, both GNSS and FASTag systems will operate simultaneously, but over time, all lanes will transition to GNSS. Vehicles not equipped with GNSS that use these lanes will face double the toll as a penalty.
- GNSS lanes will allow vehicles to pass through tolls without stopping, reducing congestion at toll plazas. To use GNSS, vehicles will need a special on-board unit (OBU), which may eventually come factory-installed in new vehicles.

Exercise Eastern Bridge VII

- **Context:** The 7th edition of Exercise Eastern Bridge, between the Royal Oman Air Force and the Indian Air Force, began at Air Force base Masirah, Oman.

Key Facts

- The 1st edition of bilateral exercise Eastern Bridge was also held at Oman in 2009.
- Exercise Eastern Bridge VII aims to improve tactical and operational skills, foster mutual understanding and bolster the ability of both air forces to collaborate effectively in diverse scenarios.
- The exercise will include complex aerial maneuvering, air to air and air to ground operations, and logistical coordination, reflecting the evolving defense needs and strategic interests of both nations.

13th SEPTEMBER 2024

Delhi Declaration on Civil Aviation

- **Context:** The Prime Minister has announced the adoption of the Delhi Declaration on Civil Aviation.

Major Highlights

- The Declaration was adopted unanimously after the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference in New Delhi.
- The Declaration is a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing regional cooperation, addressing emerging challenges and fostering sustainable growth in the civil aviation sector in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference also celebrates 80 years of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Key Announcements

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's advancements in aviation, highlighting that 15% of Indian pilots are women, well above the global average.
- Proposal for an International Buddhist Circuit to enhance regional tourism and connectivity.
- India aims to establish 350-400 airports by 2047, expanding its global aviation footprint.
- The establishment of a Pacific Small Island Developing States Liaison Office to assist smaller nations in managing aviation challenges.
- Initiatives like the 'Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam' campaign to plant 80,000 saplings in commemoration of ICAO's 80 years. Focus on green aviation and sustainability in future plans.

Sickle Cell Anaemia

- **Context:** India bears the world's second largest burden of Sickle Cell Anaemia, with over a million people affected by the disease.

About Sickle Cell Anaemia

- Sickle cell disease is a hereditary disease caused by mutations in one of the genes that encode the hemoglobin protein.
 - If both parents carry the sickle cell trait, the child has significant chances of being born with the disease.
- While healthy individuals have disc-shaped red blood cells, those with sickle cell disease have red blood cells that take on a crescent or sickle-like shape.
- This condition leads to shortened red blood cell survival, and subsequent anemia.
 - Poor blood oxygen levels and blood vessel blockages in people with sickle-cell disease can lead to chronic acute pain syndromes, severe bacterial infections, and necrosis (tissue death).
 - Individuals affected by sickle cell disease are chronically anemic and experience significant damage to their heart, lungs, and kidneys.
- A majority of the patients are concentrated in the tribal belt running across Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
- The only cure comes in the form of gene therapy and stem cell transplants. Both are expensive and still in developmental stages.

About National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission

- The program aims to improve the care and prospects of all sickle cell disease patients while reducing the prevalence of the disease, particularly among tribal populations of the country.
- It is executed in a mission mode as part of the National Health Mission (NHM).
- It will be implemented in 17 high-focus states across namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.

- Over a period of three years, spanning from the fiscal year 2023-24 to 2025-26, the program targets screening approximately 7.0 crore people.

14th SEPTEMBER 2024

Sri Vijaya Puram

- **Context:** The Indian government has decided to rename Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as Sri Vijaya Puram to remove colonial imprints and honor the islands' role in India's freedom struggle.

Key Facts

- Port Blair is the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- It was originally named after Archibald Blair, a British naval surveyor who explored the area in the late 18th century.
- Blair initially named the natural harbor Port Cornwallis before it was renamed Port Blair.
- The East India Company (EIC) used the islands as a penal colony and strategic base.
- Port Blair was established as a penal colony after the Revolt of 1857, with a significant cellular jail (Kaala Paani) built in 1906 housing freedom fighters like Veer Damodar Savarkar.
- A prominent king of the dynasty, Rajendra Chola, maintained the Nicobar Islands as a naval base to launch attacks on the Srivijaya kingdom based on the Sumatra islands of present-day Indonesia. This naval expedition was a unique event in Indian history and its legacy of peaceful relations with Southeast Asia. During 1014 AD and 1042 AD, the southern islands of this archipelago were used as a strategic naval base by the Chola Dynasty
- The islands, once a Chola naval base and the site of key events like the first Tiranga unfurling by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and the imprisonment of freedom fighters in the cellular jail, are now seen as crucial for India's strategic and developmental goals.

INDUS-X Initiative

- **Context:** Recently, the third edition of India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit concluded in the USA.

About INDUS-X Initiative

- The INDUS-X Initiative was launched in June 2023 by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and Indian Ministry of Defense (MoD).
- The initiative aims to expand the strategic technology partnership and enhance defense industrial cooperation between India and the USA by fostering collaboration among governments, businesses, and academic institutions.
- It connects defense startups from India and the USA, encouraging innovation and technology sharing in defense sectors.
- The INDUS-X initiative is aligned with the U.S.-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET).
- **Steering Agencies:**
 - **iDEX (India):** Innovation for Defence Excellence, representing India's Ministry of Defence.
 - **DIU (USA):** Defense Innovation Unit, under the U.S. Department of Defense.

Zorawar

- **Context:** India has successfully conducted the field firing trials of its new indigenous light tank 'Zorawar', a highly versatile platform capable of deployment in high-altitude areas.

Key Facts

- Zorawar has been developed by the Combat Vehicles Research & Development Establishment (CVRDE), a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with Larsen & Toubro Ltd.
- It is named after the 19th century Dogra General Zorawar Singh, who led military expeditions to Ladakh and Western Tibet.
- The tank will be able to navigate steep mountains and cross water bodies like rivers far more easily than its forerunners such as the heavy-weight T-72 and T-90 tanks.

