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7. Short News

Andhra Pradesh's Proposed Population Incentive Scheme

Context – The Andhra Pradesh government has proposed incentives for families having three or more children to address declining fertility rates and future ageing-related challenges.

Why is Andhra Pradesh Concerned?

1. Declining Fertility Rate – Andhra Pradesh's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has fallen to 1.5, well below the replacement level of 2.1, raising concerns about future population decline.
2. Ageing Population – Projections indicate that nearly 25% of the State's population may be elderly by mid-century, increasing the old-age dependency burden.
3. Shrinking Workforce – A lower birth rate could reduce the working-age population, affecting economic growth, productivity and the availability of labour in the future.

About the Andhra Pradesh Population Incentive Policy

1. Cash Incentives – ₹30,000 for the third child and ₹40,000 for the fourth child to encourage larger families.
2. Monthly Support – ₹1,000 per month for five years for eligible families with additional children.
3. Education Benefits – Free education up to 18 years of age and enhanced support under the Thalliki Vandanam scheme.
4. Support for Mothers – Longer maternity leave, work-from-home provisions and expanded childcare support through Anganwadis.
5. Objective – To address declining fertility rates, population ageing and the future shortage of working-age population in the State.
6. Concern – Evidence from other countries shows that cash incentives may encourage earlier childbirth but rarely lead to a significant or sustained increase in fertility rates.

Operation Antim Prahar

Context – Gadchiroli was declared free of active Naxalite presence after successful arrests and surrenders under Operation Antim Prahar.

About the Operation Antim Prahar

1. Operation Antim Prahar is a special anti-Naxal operation launched by the Maharashtra Police to eliminate Left-Wing Extremism in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra.
2. Strategy – The operation combines intelligence-based actions, targeted arrests, surrender policies and area domination to weaken Naxalite presence.
3. Achievements – Under the operation, several wanted Naxalites were arrested or surrendered, leading to the recovery of cash, weapons and ammunition.
4. Outcome – The operation contributed significantly to Gadchiroli being declared free from left wing extremism.

Logistics Port Performance Index

Context – The Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) 2024–25 was launched by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways during the 37th Foundation Day celebrations of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority.

1. Four digital initiatives developed by the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) were also released to improve service delivery, transparency and accountability for seafarers and maritime stakeholders.

About the Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI)

1. LPPI is a national benchmarking framework developed under Sagar Aankalan to assess and improve the operational performance of Indian ports.
2. Objective – It aims to enhance port efficiency, transparency, competitiveness and ease of doing business in the maritime sector.
3. Alignment – The index supports PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.
4. Assessment Parameters – Ports are evaluated on indicators such as cargo handled, vessel turnaround time, berth idle time, pre-berthing waiting time, container dwell time and ship berth-day output.
5. Coverage – The index assesses performance across three cargo segments, Dry Bulk, Liquid Bulk and Container Cargo.
6. Continuous Improvement – LPPI gives equal weight to current performance and year-on-year improvement, encouraging ports to continuously enhance efficiency.
7. Significance – It promotes global benchmarking and strengthens India's position as a competitive maritime and logistics hub.
8. Major LPPI Performers (FY 2024–25) –
 1. Dry Bulk Cargo – Paradip Port Authority ranked first among ports handling over 5 million tonnes of dry bulk cargo.
 2. Liquid Bulk Cargo – Sikka Port and Terminals emerged as the top performer in the liquid bulk cargo category.
 3. Container Cargo – Mundra Port secured the highest rank among ports handling more than 0.5 million TEUs of container cargo while Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) secured the second position.

Four Digital Maritime Reforms

1. e-Navik Grievance Redressal Module – 24×7 grievance redressal system for seafarers through portal, helpline, WhatsApp and email.
2. e-Samudra Ship Registration Module – Simplifies vessel registration and aligns India's maritime administration with global standards.
3. Medical Practitioner Module – Streamlines registration and monitoring of doctors authorised to certify seafarers and reduces fraudulent certifications.
4. Unified Ship Recycling Credit Note Module – Supports the Ship Recycling Credit Scheme and promotes domestic shipbuilding.

International Security Forum (ISF)

Context – Indian National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval, speaking at the first International Security Forum in Moscow, called for zero tolerance towards terrorism and reforms in global security institutions.

About International Security Forum (ISF)

1. The International Security Forum is a high-level multilateral platform for dialogue on global security, strategic stability, terrorism, cyber threats, and geopolitical challenges.
2. Origin – ISF was established in 2016. The forum is associated with Russia-led international security dialogues, particularly those hosted in Moscow, bringing together senior security and defence officials from across the world.

3. **Objective** – To promote cooperation on international security issues, strengthen multilateralism, address emerging threats, and provide a broader platform for non-Western and Global South perspectives.
4. **Key Participants** – The forum attracts representatives from over 140 countries, including members of BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), ASEAN, African nations, Latin American countries, and West Asian states.
5. **India's Participation** – India regularly participates through its National Security Advisor, Defence Minister, Defence Secretary, and other senior officials, using the platform to advance its security and strategic interests.

OMCs to Build 30-Day LPG Reserves

Context – The Centre has directed public sector oil marketing companies to maintain liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) reserves sufficient for at least 30 days amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

Reasons Behind the Centre's Directive to Build LPG Reserves

1. **Critical Household Fuel Dependence** – LPG serves as the primary cooking fuel for over 33 crore Indian households, making supply continuity essential for energy security and public welfare.
2. **Heightened Geopolitical Vulnerability** – The West Asia conflict and potential disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have exposed LPG as one of India's most vulnerable energy imports.
3. **Absence of Strategic LPG Buffer** – Unlike crude oil, India lacks a dedicated strategic LPG reserve.
4. **Around 60% of domestic LPG demand is met through imports, and nearly 90% of these imports transit through the Strait of Hormuz, creating a significant supply-risk concentration.**
5. **Inadequate Emergency Stockpiles** – Existing petroleum stocks are largely commercial inventories maintained by refiners and Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for operational needs, rather than dedicated reserves designed to cushion prolonged supply disruptions or geopolitical shocks.

Other Measures to Ensure Fuel Supply Continuity

1. **Robust LPG Distribution Network** – In the last four days, 1.78 crore LPG refill bookings were received and around 1.8 crore cylinders were delivered, with 96% of deliveries digitally authenticated.
2. **Anti-Hoarding and Enforcement Actions** – Enforcement agencies and OMCs have intensified inspections to curb hoarding and black marketing.
3. **Restoration of Natural Gas Supplies** – Natural gas supplies have been restored to around 99% of industrial and commercial consumers.
4. **Maritime Supply Assurance** – The crude oil tanker Nissos Keros has safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz carrying about 2.7 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil and is expected to reach India soon.

National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) 2025

Context – The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has launched the NeSDA 2025 Portal to strengthen citizen-centric digital governance across India.

About NeSDA 2025

1. **NeSDA is a biennial assessment framework developed by DARPG to evaluate the depth, maturity, and effectiveness of online public service delivery across States, Union Territories, and selected Central Ministries.**
2. **Objective** – NeSDA aims to benchmark e-governance performance, identify service-delivery gaps, promote best practices, and improve citizens' experience in accessing government services online.
3. **Key Framework of NeSDA 2025**

1. The framework is based on the Online Service Index (OSI) of the UN E-Government Survey and is customized to suit India's federal governance structure.
2. Portal Coverage
 - Government Portals of States, UTs, Cities, and Central Ministries.
 - Service Portals delivering specific public services to citizens and businesses.
3. Sectoral Coverage - The framework evaluates Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Government-to-Business (G2B) services across sectors such as -
 - Finance, Labour & Employment, Education, Local Governance & Utilities, Social Welfare, Health, Agriculture, Home Security, Environment, Tourism, Public Grievances and Transport and Travel.
4. Expanded Coverage - NeSDA 2025 expands its scope by including services of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) among the focus sectors.
5. Mandatory Service Assessment - The framework proposes assessment of -
 - 59 mandatory services for every State and Union Territory.
 - 43 mandatory services for Central Ministries and Departments.
6. Assessment Parameters - Accessibility, Content Availability, Ease of Use, Information Security and Privacy, End-to-End Service Delivery, Integrated Service Delivery, Status Tracking, Open Government Data (OGD), E-Participation and Adoption of Emerging Technologies
7. Digital Assessment Platform the NeSDA 2025 Portal serves as a centralized platform for online data submission, monitoring, stakeholder consultations, capacity-building, and review processes.

Significance

1. NeSDA 2025 promotes accountable, transparent, accessible, and technology-driven governance by encouraging continuous improvement in digital public service delivery across India.