



# INNOVATIVE IAS

## Daily News Analysis

23rd December 2019

### GENERAL STUDIES-2

#### Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana

##### **Why in News?**

- Distribution Companies' (Discom) losses, which had progressively reduced in the first couple of years since the rollout of Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) in November 2015, have rebounded in the financial year 2019.

##### **Key points:**

- Discoms have also missed the year 2019 UDAY target to bring down their Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses to 15%.
- The primary reason is the failure of discoms to collect the full cost that they pay for power — the same issue that had led to the floundering of the previous two schemes - Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) and Restructured APDRP (R-APDRP).

#### UDAY Scheme

- The Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) was launched by the Ministry of Power in November 2015 to help turn around the poor financial situation of state discoms.
- Critical Components
  - Takeover of 75% of discom debt by state governments,
  - Reduction in AT&C losses,
  - Timely tariff revisions and elimination of the gap between the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and Average Revenue Realised (ARR) by the financial year 2019.
- It also envisages development of renewable energy sector and availability of 24\*7 Power For All at an affordable price.
- There are several other operational efficiency targets under UDAY, such as feeder metering, smart metering and feeder segregation etc.
- The Scheme will wind up in March 2020.

#### The Sino-India boundary talks

##### **Why in News?**

- Completion of the 22nd round of the Sino-India boundary talks under the framework of Special Representatives' dialogue.

##### **Key points:**

- The recent meeting was significant as it happened in the backdrop of China's criticism of India's August 5 decision to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the region into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.



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- India had retorted by reiterating Delhi's claims over the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir by urging China to stop its activities in that region.
- The Indian and Chinese leaders last met at the Mamallapuram informal summit in October 2019.
- The Special Representatives resolved to intensify their efforts to achieve a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the India-China boundary question.
- The two sides would actively advance boundary negotiations in line with the Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question.
- Officials resolved to respect each other's sensitivities for the sake of better ties.

### Significance:

- Both sides agree that it is important to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas for the “overall bilateral relationship” to flourish.
- The two countries need to approach the question of boundary settlement from the “strategic perspective of India-China relations”. A solution to this long pending but solvable question holds immense significance given that it would remove any impedance in taking the bilateral relations to the next level. A flourishing bilateral relation between India and China would not only be in the interest of the two countries but also of the Asian region and the world at large.
- The two countries are planning 70 events to celebrate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2020.

### Nagpur- resolution

#### Why in news?

- Recently, the 'Nagpur Resolution- A Holistic Approach for Empowering Citizens' was adopted during the session on 'Improving Public Service Delivery – Role of Governments', in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

#### Key points:

- The conference was organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Government of India, in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra and the Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Public Services.
- The emphasis of the government is on Minimum Government, Maximum Governance to promote transparency, citizen centricity and participation.
- For good governance, Shillong Declaration and Jammu Resolution have been adopted earlier.
- DARPG organised the conference in Jammu after the formation of J&K and Ladakh as Union Territories.



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### Nagpur Resolution: A Holistic Approach for Empowering Citizens

- The Conference resolved that Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra shall collaborate to-
- Better Service Delivery: To empower the citizens by policy interventions for better service delivery through timely updation of citizens charters, implementation of enactments and benchmarking standards for continuous improvement.
- Grievance Redressal: To adopt a holistic approach of systemic public grievance reforms through improved mapping, formulation of monitoring matrix, data collection and evaluation in quality of grievance redressal. To empower citizens by adopting a bottom-up approach to bring massive improvements in quality of grievance redressal and reduction in timelines of it.
- Use of Technology: To provide an enabling environment for States and Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India for creating web portals and to adopt a holistic approach for improved service delivery through digital platforms.
- Dynamic Policy Making: To focus on dynamic policy making and strategic decisions, monitoring of implementation, appointment of key personnel, coordination and evaluation.
- Exchange of Technical Expertise: To achieve a sense of common identity by exchange of technical expertise in the areas of Improved Service Delivery between the paired States under the Ek Bharat – Shreshtha Bharat Program.
- Good Governance Index: To ensure timely publication of Good Governance Index to identify the quality of governance in 10 sectors especially those pertaining to welfare and infrastructure at the Union, State and District levels.

### Spandana

#### Why in news?

- Spandana, an Andhra Pradesh Government initiative to make police stations more approachable for the public, especially women, is winning accolades and awards.

#### Key points:

- Spandana (means response) centres have been established within the premises of all District Collector offices and police stations.
- These centres mostly have a female receptionist and other staff members who are trained, briefed and sensitised in handling women victims and complainants.
- There are two broad reasons why Spandana initiative has succeeded:
  - One is the use of technology. With Spandana centres spread across the district, each having video conferencing facility, it is easier and cheaper for people to lodge complaints. They no longer have to travel to the district headquarters to follow up.
  - The second reason is the special attention to women complainants.



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### General studies-3

#### Microplastics

##### **Why in news?**

- Recently, National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) conducted a study which states that beaches in Maharashtra are more polluted with microplastics and macroplastics than those in Goa and Karnataka.

##### **Key Points:**

- The assessment of macro and microplastic contamination was conducted for two years on 10 beaches along the western coast of India and their toxic effects on marine organisms.
- Plastics less than five millimeters in length are called 'microplastics' and the relatively larger particles, of more than five millimeters, are classified as 'macroplastics'.
- Reasons for Pollution: Land-based contaminants coming from near shore plastic industries, port areas, petroleum industries and high tourism activities.
- Recommendations: The government should frame policies to [shun single-use plastic](#), increase its recycling and also conduct community awareness programmes to prevent the marine environment from being affected by plastic contaminants.

#### National Institute of Oceanography

- It is a multi-disciplinary oceanographic research institute and is one of the constituent laboratories of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi.
- Its headquarter is at Dona Paula, Goa with regional centres at Kochi (Kerala), Mumbai (Maharashtra) and Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).
- It was established on 1 January 1966 following the International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE) in the 1960s.
- The principal focus of research has been on observing and understanding special oceanographic characteristics of the Indian Ocean.

#### 'KisanDiwas'

##### **Why in news?**

- The 'KisanDiwas' or National Farmers Day is observed across the country on 23rd December to celebrate the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India.

##### **Key points:**

- It is celebrated to promote awareness among the citizens to understand the importance of the contributions of the farmers to the society and overall economic and social development of a country.



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- Government also aims to encourage the farmers across the country by organizing various activities like debates and seminars on agriculture.

### Chaudhary Charan Singh

- He was born in 1902 at Noorpur in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh and was the Prime Minister of India from 28 July 1979 to 14 January 1980.
- Being a proponent of rural and agricultural development he made continuous efforts for keeping agriculture at the centre of planning for India.
- He took a leading part in formulation and finalisation of the Debt Redemption Bill 1939, in order to give relief to the peasantry from moneylenders.
- He was instrumental in bringing about the Land Holding Act, 1960 which was aimed at lowering the ceiling on land holdings to make it uniform throughout the State.
- He was the author of several books and pamphlets, including 'Abolition of Zamindari', 'Co-operative Farming X-rayed', 'India's Poverty and its Solution', 'Peasant Proprietorship or Land to the Workers' and 'Prevention of Division of Holdings Below a Certain Minimum'.

### Global Tobacco use

#### Why in news?

The World Health Organization on December 19, 2019, released its report on Global Tobacco use trends. According to the report, number of males using tobacco has declined globally for the first time. The report says that the anti-smoking campaigns all over the world is the main reason for the number of tobacco users to reduce.

#### Key points:

- Globally the number of tobacco users has declined by 60 million people. In 2000, the overall tobacco users were 1.397 billion and it has come down to 1.337 billion in 2018.
- The report says despite the reduction in numbers, the global target set by governments to reduce the use of tobacco by 30% by 2025 remains off track. So far only 32 countries are on track to reach the target.
- Around 43 million children (of age 13-15) are using tobacco in 2018. The number of women using tobacco was 244 million. Of all the regions of the world, South East Asian region has the highest use of tobacco. The only region on track to achieve the target is the Americas.
- According to the report, India is off track to achieve the target of 30% reduction by 2025 as compared to 2010 level. Along with India 163 countries are off the track.
- However, the consumption rate in India is going down by 21.6% as compared to 2010



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### Railway unveils a new signalling system

#### Why in news?

- Modernization of the signalling system in the Indian railways.

#### Key points:

- The Railways will roll out its new signalling system from April 2020 onwards.
- The implementation will begin with four sections of about 640 route kilometres with an estimated cost of around Rs. 1,810 crores.
- This is expected to be a pilot project for pan-India implementation of the nearly Rs. 78,000 crore project to modernize the signalling system.

#### Significance:

- The new signalling system is expected to make train travel faster and safer.
- The implementation of these new systems will also improve safety, reduce congestion, increase line capacity and improve punctuality.
- The system will act as a pilot for signal modernization across the 70,000 km network of the Railways.

#### Technology:

- The modernization of the signalling system will include implementation of technologies such as the automatic train protection system that helps in adhering to permissible speed limits without driver intervention and the 4G-based mobile train radio communication system, which can be used for emergency communications.
- A centralized traffic control system similar to the air traffic control system is being envisaged.
- A remote diagnostic and predictive maintenance system will also be implemented to supplement the proposed upgrade.

#### Prelims facts:

### Flying squads will monitor projects in villages

- After launching PallePragati, a programme aimed at comprehensive development of rural areas, the Telangana government has focused its attention on ascertaining the quality of works by constituting flying squads.
- The squads would undertake surprise checks of the projects launched from January 1 and submit reports from time to time.
- Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said the squads would consist of IAS, IPS and IFS officers and each would be given the charge of inspecting works in 12 mandals randomly allotted to them. These checks would not only reveal the progress but also enable the government to elicit suggestions to improve works.



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- The inspections could be construed as a test of the performance of the officials and elected representatives. The government would not hesitate to initiate stringent action against officials as well as non-performing sarpanches if they were found wanting in the discharge of duties.

### Arunachal to mark schools as 'hard' and 'soft'

- Arunachal Pradesh will soon have schools marked 'hard', 'soft' and 'medium'. Geography, lack of infrastructure and reluctance of teachers to work beyond their comfort zones are the reasons for this categorisation, officials said.
- Teacher absenteeism has been a major issue across 3,513 government schools, including 211 community schools in the state. The student-teacher ratio has consequently been skewed in favour of urban centres with better connectivity. The Education Department has been facing difficulties in posting 16,594 regular teachers in remote areas where schools have adequate students, but hardly anyone to teach them.
- Under the new policy, all government schools will be divided into three categories — hard, medium and soft — based on topography, accessibility and degrees of difficulty in staying at the place of posting. All new recruits will be given a hard posting for a mandatory three years-period, inclusive of their probation period. The next five years will be in schools with levels of medium difficulty, followed by posting in soft schools.
- The government approved the Arunachal Pradesh Teachers' Transfer & Posting Policy, 2020, for ensuring need-based distribution of teachers to protect the academic interest of students and optimise job satisfaction among the teachers in a free and transparent manner. The policy also entails the transfer of teachers through online requests.

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