



**UPSC
Mentorship**
A Unit of Mentorship India

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

17th June 2024



SOURCES



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GS I

1. Two steps back

Source: The Hindu, Page 8

Prelims: Global Gender Gap report

Mains: Role of Women and Women's Organization

Context: The article discusses the slow progress in achieving global gender parity and India's current standing in the Global Gender Gap report by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Global Gender Gap Status:

- In 2024, the global gender gap stands at 68.5% closed, only a slight improvement from 68.4% in 2023.
- At this rate, full parity is projected to take 134 years.
- Iceland ranks first, having closed 93.5% of its gender gap, the only country to exceed 90%.

India's Ranking and Performance:

- India ranks 129 out of 146 countries in 2024, down from 127 in 2023.
- India has closed 64.1% of its gender gap, indicating a significant opportunity for improvement.
- The decline is attributed to small drops in education and political empowerment.

Education and Employment Gaps:

- Economic participation has shown slight improvement, but India needs 6.2 percentage points to reach its 2012 score.
- Labour force participation rate for women is 45.9%.
- Education gap: Men and women's literacy rate difference is 17.2 percentage points, ranking India 124th in this indicator.

Political Empowerment:

- India has shown better performance in political empowerment, but women's representation in Parliament remains low.
- The 2023 Lok Sabha elections saw a decrease in women MPs from 78 (2019) to 74, which is 13.6% of the total members.
- The Women's Reservation Bill, 2023, which aims to reserve one-third of seats for women in Lok Sabha and State legislatures, is still pending.

Call to Action:

- Measures needed: Preventing dropouts in higher education, providing job skills, ensuring workplace safety, and promoting shared domestic responsibilities.
- WEF Managing Director Saadia Zahidi urges governments to create conditions for business and civil society to work together towards gender parity as an economic imperative.



2. Rising cases under PoSH Act point to better reporting

Source: The Hindu, Page 9

Prelims: POSH Act

Mains: Role of Women and Women's Organization

Context: The article examines the rising number of workplace sexual harassment cases reported under the PoSH Act and the challenges in its implementation.

Women's Participation in STEM and Corporate Sector:

- Increasing number of women enrolling in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) courses.
- Resulting in higher employment rates for women in corporate sectors, particularly in IT firms.
- Proportion of women in leading corporate firms has increased significantly over time.

Higher Attrition Rates Among Women:

- Higher attrition rates for women compared to men in corporate sectors.
- Reasons include societal pressures post-marriage, pregnancy, work-life balance issues, and workplace harassment.
- Instances of workplace harassment (verbal, sexual, etc.) contribute to higher attrition rates.

Workplace Harassment and PoSH Act:

- The PoSH Act (Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act) aims to protect women from sexual harassment at the workplace.
- Notable increase in reported cases under the PoSH Act in top IT firms like Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, and HCL.
- Despite the rise in reported cases, many incidents remain unreported.

Societal Context and Implementation Challenges:

- Societal norms and restrictions limit women's freedom and decision-making power.
- Only a minority of women are allowed to travel alone or make major household decisions.
- The Supreme Court highlighted lapses in PoSH Act implementation: many firms lack Internal Complaints Committees or have inadequately staffed committees.
- Increased reporting should be seen positively, indicating better awareness and courage among women to report harassment.



GS II

3. On the size of council of ministers

Source: The Hindu, Page 10

Prelims: Council of Ministers, Constitutional Limits

Mains: Organization and Functioning of the Executive

Context: The Union Council of Ministers, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was sworn in on June 9, 2024.

Composition of the Council of Ministers:

- Article 74 of the Constitution mandates a Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister to aid and advise the President.
- Members must be part of either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, or become members within six months of their appointment.
- The Council of Ministers comprises:
 - Cabinet Ministers: manage major portfolios
 - Ministers of State with independent charge: report directly to the Prime Minister
 - Ministers of State: assist Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers

Constitutional Limits:

- The first Council of Ministers post-independence had 15 Ministers led by the Prime Minister.
- Over the years, the size increased to around 50-60 Ministers.
- The 91st Constitutional Amendment (2003) limited the number of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to 15% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly.
- No minimum requirement at the Central level; smaller States must have at least 12 Ministers.
- For Union Territories like Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir, the limit is set at 10% of their Assembly's total strength.

Issues and Challenges:

- Appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries (PS) in various States to circumvent the constitutional limit on the number of Ministers:
 - Originates from the British system; first appointed in India in 1951.
 - Sporadically used at the Central level; last appointment in 1990.
 - States continue to appoint PS despite the 91st Amendment.
- The Supreme Court declared Assam's 2004 law for appointing PS unconstitutional in 2017.
- Discrepancy in the number of Ministers for smaller States vs. Union Territories:
- Smaller States like Sikkim and Goa have a minimum of 12 Ministers despite smaller populations (7-40 lakhs).
- Union Territories like Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir, with larger populations (over 2 crore and 1.5 crore respectively), are limited to 7 and 9 Ministers respectively.



GS III

4. What is SWM cess and why is it levied on waste generators?

Source: The Hindu, Page 10

Prelims: SWM Cess

Mains: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation

Context: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has proposed a Solid Waste Management (SWM) Cess of ₹100 per month per household. The proposal has led to debate and criticism among residents and stakeholders.

Rationale Behind SWM Cess

- SWM Rules, 2016: Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are mandated to collect user fees or cess for SWM services. ULBs typically charge ₹30-50 per month, collected with property tax.
- The proposal aims to revise these rates and impose higher charges on bulk waste generators to cover SWM service costs.

Components of SWM Services

- Four components: Collection, transportation, processing, and disposal.
- Collection and transportation: Resource and labor-intensive, constituting 85-90% of the SWM budget. And processing and disposal cover 10-15% of the budget.

Challenges in SWM

- Low yield from converting wet waste into compost or biogas (10-12%).
- Revenue from waste processing covers only 35-40% of operational expenses.
- Clearing open drains, Preventing open littering and Seasonal changes in waste generation.
- Disposal of non-compostable and non-recyclable waste is costly due to long-distance shipping to treatment facilities.
- Large cities such as Bangalore spends about 15% of its budget on SWM, with negligible revenue.
- Smaller cities tend to spend up to 50% of their budget on SWM, also with negligible revenue.

Proposed Solutions

- Segregation of wastes at source - reduces overall expenditure on SWM.
- Reducing single-use plastic helps in Minimising waste generation.
- Decentralised composting will lower processing costs.
- Information, Education, and Awareness (IEC) to prevent open littering.
- Bulk waste generators should be encouraged to process their own waste.
- Balanced approach, combining marginal user charges with efficient operations, could help make our cities cleaner



Editorial, Ideas and Opinions

5. Tackling the fatty liver disease epidemic

Source: The Hindu, Page 9

Context: Theme for International Fatty Liver Day 2024: 'Act Now, Screen Today Emphasizes the urgency of screening for liver health. Aims to raise awareness about liver diseases, particularly non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Liver Diseases:

- Liver diseases traditionally linked to excessive alcohol use.
- Emerging threat: Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).
- NAFLD was reclassified as Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD).
- MASLD is linked to metabolic and cardiac health, and cancer risk.

Growing Burden of Fatty Liver Disease:

- MASLD has a global prevalence of 25-30%.
- In India, 2022 meta-analysis: 38.6% prevalence among adults, 36% prevalence among obese children.
- MASH (Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatohepatitis) is a progressive form causing liver inflammation and scarring.
- MASH is projected to become the leading cause of chronic liver disease and liver transplantation.

Link with Metabolic Syndrome:

- High prevalence of MASLD among individuals with, Diabetes: 55.5%-59.7%, Obesity: 64.6%-95%.
- Severe metabolic syndrome: 73%.
- Excessive carbohydrate intake leads to metabolic problems, insulin resistance, and fatty liver.

Challenges in Early Detection:

- Often goes undetected in early stages, Diagnosis usually occurs at advanced stages with significant liver damage.
- Early diagnosis requires comprehensive health screenings: Physical examination, Blood tests.
- Ultrasound of the abdomen is critical for screening but often missed due to limited availability of radiologists and regulatory issues.

Advanced Diagnostic Tools:

- Liver fibrosis assessment using vibration-controlled transient elastography, a non-invasive tool measuring liver stiffness helps assess early stages of liver fibrosis and monitor progression and treatment responses.
- Integrated approach: Ultrasound, comprehensive metabolic screening, elastography.



- Screening tests and frequency should be personalized based on: Family history, lifestyle, pre-existing health conditions.
- Age and physical markers alone are insufficient for risk assessment.

Importance of Awareness and Proactive Health Management:

- The liver is a 'silent organ' with damage often unnoticed until advanced stages.
- Awareness of lifestyle impacts and frequent screenings are essential.
- Active control of health through informed choices and regular health checks is vital for long-term well-being.

Conclusion:

- Screening and Awareness: Emphasize the need for proactive screening and awareness to prevent and manage liver diseases.
- Integrated Health Approach: Combine medical screenings with lifestyle modifications to address the growing burden of liver diseases.



In Brief

6. India ready to host its first multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti' in August

Source: The Hindu, Page 1

Context: Indian Air Force's first multinational air exercise ,Tarang Shakti will be held in August 2024.

Tarang Shakti-2024

- Participating countries, 10 countries, with additional countries acting as observers.
- Contingents from Australia, France, Germany (fighter jets and an A-400M transport aircraft), Japan, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. Observer countries: others not specified.
- **Scheduled in two phases**, Phase 1 - Southern India, first two weeks of August and Phase 2:- Western sector, end of August to mid-September.

Significance:

- Strategic Collaboration: Strengthens defense ties and cooperation with multiple nations.
- Operational Readiness: Improves the Indian Air Force's readiness and capability in a multinational setting.
- Geopolitical Impact: Demonstrates India's commitment to regional and global security partnerships.

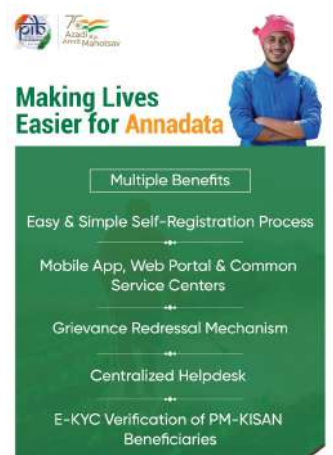
7. PM to release Kisan Samman Nidhi fund

Source: The Hindu, Page 5

Context: Release of 17th instalment of PM - KISAN Samman nidhi is expected soon.

PM-KISAN

- Central-Sector Scheme:Funded 100% by the Government of India.
- It supplements the financial needs of farmers i.e. ₹6,000 per year provided in three equal installments for procuring inputs to ensure proper crop health and yields.
- Effective from December 1, 2018.
- Beneficiaries: All land-holding farmer families which includes husband, wife, and minor children.
- State Governments and UT administrations identify eligible farmer families as per scheme guidelines.
- Direct Bank transfer to beneficiaries' bank accounts.



The infographic features the PM-KISAN logo and a farmer in a blue shirt and red cap. The text reads: "Making Lives Easier for Annadata". Below this, a list of benefits is shown in a green box: "Multiple Benefits", "Easy & Simple Self-Registration Process", "Mobile App, Web Portal & Common Service Centers", "Grievance Redressal Mechanism", "Centralized Helpdesk", and "E-KYC Verification of PM-KISAN Beneficiaries".



8. Orchid blossoms with new drug to treat anti-microbial resistance

Source: The Hindu, Page 13

Context: Orchid Pharma received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India to make and sell Enmetazobactam.

Enmetazobactam

- Discovered in India, is the first India-discovered drug to get U.S. FDA approval.
- Effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which kills about 5 million people annually.

Impact on Pharma Industry:

- Domestic Innovation: Enmetazobactam's approval signifies a milestone for Indian pharmaceutical innovation.
- Global Positioning: Strengthens India's position in the global pharmaceutical market, particularly in combating AMR.
- Economic Benefits: Backward integration and new drug ventures are expected to boost Orchid Pharma's growth and profitability.

9. PESB finds no one suitable for HPCL top post

Source: IE, Page 13

Context: PESB has rejected all candidates it interviewed for the top job at HPCL.

Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB)

- Establishment: Non-statutory body constituted by the Government through a resolution in 1987.
- Functions: Advise the Government on the appointments to the highest posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises. The final approval for the appointments is given by Cabinet Committee on Appointments.
- Composition of PESB: Chairman + 3 members
- Tenure and Age Limit: Hold office for a term of three years or until the age of 65 years whichever is earlier.



Daily Quiz

1. Consider the following statements regarding the PM-KISAN scheme:

1. PM-KISAN is a Central-Sector Scheme funded entirely by the Government of India.
2. The scheme provides income support of ₹6,000 per year in three equal installments to all land-holding farmer families.
3. The scheme has been effective since January 1, 2019.
4. Funds are directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All of the above

2. Which of the following statements accurately describes the composition and constitutional limits of the Council of Ministers as mandated by Article 74 of the Constitution?

- A. The Council of Ministers is headed by the President and must include members from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- B. The 91st Constitutional Amendment (2003) limits the number of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to 10% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly.
- C. The Council of Ministers includes Cabinet Ministers who manage major portfolios, Ministers of State with independent charge who report directly to the Prime Minister, and Ministers of State who assist Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers.
- D. There is a minimum requirement for the number of Ministers at the Central level, and Union Territories like Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir must have at least 12 Ministers.

3. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Gender Gap Report 2024 and India's performance:

1. In 2024, the global gender gap stands at 68.5% closed, only a slight improvement from 68.4% in 2023.
2. Iceland ranks first, having closed 93.5% of its gender gap, and is the only country to exceed 90%.
3. India ranks 129 out of 146 countries in 2024, down from 127 in 2023.
4. Economic participation for women in India shows rapid improvement.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All of the above

4. Which of the following statements about the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) is correct?

- A. The PESB is a statutory body established by an act of Parliament in 1987.
- B. The PESB consists of a Chairman and three members, and advises the Government on appointments to top posts in Central Public Sector Enterprises, with final approval given by the Cabinet Committee on Appointments.
- C. The primary function of PESB is to regulate financial transactions of Central Public Sector Enterprises.
- D. Members of the PESB hold office for a term of five years or until the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.



5. Consider these statements regarding workplace harassment and women's participation in STEM and the corporate sector:

1. The PoSH Act (Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act) aims to protect women from sexual harassment at the workplace.
2. There has been a notable increase in reported cases under the PoSH Act in top IT firms like Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, and HCL.
3. The increasing number of women enrolling in STEM courses has resulted in higher employment rates for women in corporate sectors, particularly in IT firms, and a significant increase in the proportion of women in leading corporate firms over time.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All of the above
- D. None of the above

6. Which of the following statements correctly describes Enmetazobactam?

- A. Enmetazobactam, discovered in India, is the first India-discovered drug to receive U.S. FDA approval and is effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- B. Enmetazobactam is a drug discovered in the U.S. and is effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- C. Enmetazobactam is a drug discovered in India and is primarily used for treating viral infections.
- D. Enmetazobactam, discovered in India, is the first drug to receive U.S. FDA approval but is not effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

7. What is the rationale behind the SWM (Solid Waste Management) Cess as per the SWM Rules, 2016?

- A. To reduce the number of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) involved in waste management.
- B. To eliminate the need for property taxes by charging only for SWM services.
- C. To fund only the disposal component of SWM services, which constitutes 85-90% of the SWM budget.
- D. To collect funds for SWM services, typically charging ₹30-50 per month, with a proposal to revise rates and impose higher charges on bulk waste generators to cover costs.

8. Which of the following statements best describes the emerging threat and growing burden of liver diseases?

- A. Liver diseases are exclusively linked to excessive alcohol use, with no new emerging threats.
- B. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) has been reclassified as Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD), linked to metabolic and cardiac health, and cancer risk, with a global prevalence of 25-30%.
- C. Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatohepatitis (MASH) is a non-progressive form of liver disease that rarely causes inflammation or scarring.
- D. MASLD is projected to decline globally, with no significant impact on chronic liver disease and liver transplantation rates.



Solutions

Answer 1: C

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct. PM-KISAN is a Central-Sector Scheme funded 100% by the Government of India.
- Statement 2 is correct. The scheme provides ₹6,000 per year in three equal installments to all land-holding farmer families to supplement their financial needs.
- Statement 3 is incorrect. The scheme has been effective from December 1, 2018.
- **Statement 4 is correct.** Funds are directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

Hence, option C is correct.

Answer 2: C

Explanation:

- Option A is incorrect. The Council of Ministers is headed by the Prime Minister, not the President.
- Option B is incorrect. The 91st Constitutional Amendment (2003) limits the number of Ministers to 15% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly, not 10%.
- Option C is correct. The Council of Ministers includes Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State with independent charge, and Ministers of State.
- Option D is incorrect. There is no minimum requirement for the number of Ministers at the Central level; however, smaller States must have at least 12 Ministers, and for Union Territories like Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir, the limit is set at 10% of their Assembly's total strength.

Answer 3: C

Explanation

- Statement 1 is correct. The global gender gap stands at 68.5% closed in 2024, a slight improvement from 68.4% in 2023.
- Statement 2 is correct. Iceland ranks first, having closed 93.5% of its gender gap, and is the only country to exceed 90%.
- Statement 3 is correct. India ranks 129 out of 146 countries in 2024, down from 127 in 2023.
- Statement 4 is incorrect. Economic participation for women in India shows slight improvement

Hence, option C is correct.

Answer 4: B

Explanation:

- Option A is incorrect. The PESB is a non-statutory body, not established by an act of Parliament but through a government resolution in 1987.
- Option B is correct. The PESB consists of a Chairman and three members and provides advice on appointments, with final approval from the Cabinet Committee on Appointments.
- Option C is incorrect. The primary function of the PESB is to advise the Government on appointments to the highest posts in Central Public Sector Enterprises, not to regulate financial transactions.
- Option D is incorrect. Members of the PESB hold office for a term of three years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

Hence, option B is correct.



Answer 5: C

Explanation

- Statement 1 is correct. The PoSH Act aims to protect women from sexual harassment at the workplace.
- Statement 2 is correct. There has been a notable increase in reported cases under the PoSH Act in top IT firms like Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, and HCL.
- Statement 3 is correct. The increasing number of women enrolling in STEM courses has resulted in higher employment rates for women in corporate sectors, particularly in IT firms, and a significant increase in the proportion of women in leading corporate firms over time.

Answer 6 : A

Explanation:

- Option A is correct. Enmetazobactam, discovered in India, is the first India-discovered drug to receive U.S. FDA approval and is effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which kills about 5 million people annually.
- Option B is incorrect. Enmetazobactam was discovered in India, not the U.S.
- Option C is incorrect. Enmetazobactam is not primarily used for treating viral infections; it is effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- Option D is incorrect. While Enmetazobactam is the first India-discovered drug to receive U.S. FDA approval, it is indeed effective against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Answer 7: D

Explanation:

- Option A is incorrect. The SWM Cess is not aimed at reducing the number of ULBs.
- Option B is incorrect. The SWM Cess is collected along with property tax, not in place of it.
- Option C is incorrect. While the disposal component is part of the SWM services, it only constitutes 10-15% of the budget, not 85-90%, which is for collection and transportation.
- Option D is correct. The SWM Rules, 2016 mandate ULBs to collect user fees or cess for SWM services, typically charging ₹30-50 per month, with a proposal to revise these rates and impose higher charges on bulk waste generators to cover SWM service costs.

Answer 8: B

Explanation:

- Option A is incorrect. Liver diseases are not exclusively linked to excessive alcohol use; there is an emerging threat from non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).
- Option B is correct. NAFLD has been reclassified as MASLD, which is linked to metabolic and cardiac health, and cancer risk, with a global prevalence of 25-30%.
- Option C is incorrect. MASH is a progressive form of MASLD that causes liver inflammation and scarring, not a non-progressive form.
- Option D is incorrect. MASLD is projected to become the leading cause of chronic liver disease and liver transplantation, indicating a significant impact on these rates, not a decline.





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