



## News Analysis (10 Jul, 2019)

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### Feminization of Agriculture

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As per the 10<sup>th</sup> Agriculture Census (2015-16), the percentage of female operational holdings in the country have increased from about 13% percent during 2010-11 to around 14% during 2015-16.

- Agriculture, contributing around 16% of the GDP, is increasingly becoming a female activity.
- Agriculture sector employs 80% of all economically active women; they comprise 33% of the agricultural labour force and 48% of self employed farmers.
- About 18% of the farm families in India, according to NSSO Reports are headed by women.
- According to the Economic Survey 2017-18, a rise in migration of men from rural to urban areas has resulted in feminization of agriculture.

#### **Agriculture Census**

- It is conducted at an interval of every five years by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.
- Data on structural aspects of operational holdings in the country is collected through the census.
- The first census was conducted with reference year 1970-71.

#### **Operational Holding**

All land which is used wholly or partly for agricultural production and is operated as one technical unit by one person alone or with others without regard to the title, legal form, size or location.

### Challenges Faced by Women Farmers

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- Lack of ownership of land
- Lack of access to financial credit
- Lack of access to resources and modern inputs (most farm machinery is difficult for women to operate)
- Increased work burden (on-farm and off-farm productive activities) with lower compensation

## Steps Taken by Government

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- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)**
  - Implemented by Ministry of Rural Development, it is a programme exclusively for women farmers.
  - It is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission.
  - It aims to empower women by enhancing their participation in agriculture and to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for them.
  - Upto 60% (90% for North Eastern States) of the funding support for such projects is provided by the government.
  - It is in line with the provisions of the National Policy for Farmers (2007).
- **At least 30% of the budget allocation has been earmarked for women beneficiaries** in all ongoing schemes/programmes and development activities.
- Government has **increased its focus on women self-help group (SHG)** to connect them to micro-credit through capacity building activities and to provide information and ensuring their representation in different decision-making bodies.
- Recognizing the critical role of women in agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has declared **15<sup>th</sup> October of every year as Women Farmer's Day.**

## Way Forward

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- **Provision of credit without collateral** under the microfinance initiative of the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development** should be encouraged.
  - Manufacturers should be incentivised to produce **tools and machineries suited to women's needs.**
  - **Krishi Vigyan Kendras** in every district can be assigned an additional task to educate and train women farmers about innovative technology along with extension services.
  - Government flagship schemes such as the National Food Security Mission, **Sub-mission on Seed and Planting Material** and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana should include women-centric strategies and dedicated expenditure.
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## Manual Scavenging in India

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According to the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, despite a ban on manual scavenging from 1993, 620 cases of deaths of sanitation workers (while cleaning septic tanks and sewers) have been reported, of which 88 occurred in the past three years.

## Manual scavenging

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- Manual scavenging refers to the practice of manually cleaning, carrying, disposing or handling in any manner, human excreta from dry latrines and sewers.
- The practise of manual scavenging is linked to India's caste system where so-called lower castes were expected to perform this job.
- Manual scavengers are amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in India.
- Frequent deaths occur as manual scavengers don't even have adequate tools and protective gear to clean the manhole. It often involves using the most basic of tools such as buckets, brooms and baskets.

## Issues Related to Manual Scavenging

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- However, while manual scavenging for many may have ended as a form of employment, the stigma and discrimination associated with it lingers on.
  - This makes it difficult for liberated manual scavengers to secure alternative livelihoods.
  - People could once again return to manual scavenging in the absence of other opportunities to support their families.
- Correctly identifying manual scavengers remains a key challenge.

## Government Intervention

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- In 1993, the Government of India enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act.
  - The act prohibited the employment of manual scavengers for manually cleaning dry latrines and also the construction of dry toilets (that do not operate with a flush).
  - It provided for imprisonment of up to a year and a fine.
- In 2013, this was followed by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, which is wider in scope and importance, acknowledging the urgency of rehabilitating manual scavengers.
  - The act seeks to reinforce this ban by prohibiting manual scavenging in all forms and ensures the rehabilitation of manual scavengers to be identified through a mandatory survey.
  - Key features of the Act :
    - Prohibits the construction or maintenance of insanitary toilets.

- Prohibits the engagement or employment of anyone as a manual scavenger violations could result in a years' imprisonment or a fine of INR 50,000 or both.
  - Prohibits a person from being engaged or employed for hazardous cleaning of a sewer or a septic tank.
  - Offences under the Act are cognizable and non-bailable.
  - Calls for a survey of manual scavengers in urban and rural areas within a time-bound framework.
- A Supreme Court order in March, 2014, makes it mandatory for the government to identify all those who died in sewerage work since 1993 and provide Rs.10 lakh each as compensation to their families.
- The Government of India has adopted a two-pronged strategy of eliminating insanitary latrines through demolition and conversion into sanitary latrines and developing a comprehensive rehabilitation package for manual scavengers through a survey
  - A comprehensive rehabilitation package has recently been put together that includes livelihoods and skill development, access to education for children of former manual scavengers and alternate livelihoods.

## Challenges in National Nutrition Mission

India grapples with a malnutrition crisis despite having more than 30 government programmes and schemes for maternal and child health, and nutrition.

- **National Nutrition Mission (NNM)** aims to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, and anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls, besides reducing low birth weight. More than 100 million people are expected to benefit from NNM,
- NNM is backed by a National Nutrition Strategy prepared by the NITI Aayog with the goal of attaining **"Kuposhan Mukh Bharat" or malnutrition-free India**, by 2022.
- The policy aims to map various schemes that address malnutrition and set up a robust convergence mechanism, and an information and communications technology-based real-time monitoring system, besides incentivising states and Union territories to meet the targets.
- It will also incentivise Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) for using IT-based tools, social audits and setting up of nutrition resource centres involving the masses.
- The intent of the policy is clear, but the implementation could be a challenge.
  - Malnutrition is a complex and multi-dimensional issue:
    - It is primarily caused by several factors, including poverty, inadequate food consumption, inequitable food distribution, improper maternal, infant and child feeding, and care practices, inequity and gender imbalances, poor sanitary and environmental conditions, and restricted access to quality

- health, education and social care services.
  - Various ministries and departments related to healthcare often operate in isolation.
  - The scheme also suffers from under-utilisation of allocated funds (only 16% of allocated resources for 2018-19), just like many other government programmes.
  - Lack of real-time data monitoring, sustainability and accountability may impact the National Nutrition Mission (NNM), Thus there is a need to strengthen monitoring and delivery systems.
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## Women Startup Summit 2019

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The Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) is to host the Women Startup Summit in association with the Indian Women Network of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

- The **'Women Startup Summit 2019'**, a one-day event aims at encouraging aspiring women professionals to take up their entrepreneurial journey and developing an inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem in the State.
- Theme of the Summit is **"Developing an Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystem"**.
- About 20 women startups shortlisted from the "She Loves Tech" national grand challenge will be showcased in the summit.
- She Loves Tech is a global competition which was launched in 2015 to provide a platform for women entrepreneurs and startups dedicated to improving the lives of women globally.
  - 2019 Global Startup Competition is the world's largest startup competition focused on women and technology.
  - For the first time She Loves Tech competition will be held in India in association with Kerala Startup Mission, the nodal government organization for promoting the startups in Kerala.
- Kerala has 13% of women participation in the technology startup ecosystem and the state government has taken proactive steps for increasing the participation of women in the sector.

### **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**

- Confederation of Indian Industry is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization, playing a proactive role in India's development process.
- Founded in 1895, it has around 9000 members, from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 300,000 enterprises from around 276 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.
- It works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering industry, Government, and civil society, through advisory and consultative

processes.

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## Automated Facial Recognition System

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**National Crime Records Bureau** (NCRB) has released a request proposal for an **Automated Facial Recognition System** (AFRS) to be used by police officers across the country.

Automated Facial Recognition System can play a very vital role in **crime prevention** and **criminal identification** and **verification** (identifying criminals, missing people, and unidentified dead bodies) by facilitating easy **recording, analysis, retrieval** and **sharing of information** between different organizations.

## Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS)

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- AFRS will be a **mobile** and **web application** hosted in NCRB's (which manages data for police) data centre in Delhi but used by all police stations in the country.
- AFRS works by comparing the new image of an unidentified person often taken from CCTV footage with the existing database (AFRS maintains a database with photos and videos of peoples faces) to find a match and identify the person.

The **artificial intelligence technology** used for pattern-finding and matching is called "neural networks".

## Integrating AFRS with Existing Database

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NCRB has proposed integrating automated **facial recognition system** with **multiple existing databases** like:

- **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems** (CCTNS): managed by NCRB
- **Integrated Criminal Justice System** (ICJS)
- State-specific database systems
- **Khoya paya portal**

### Criminal Tracking Network & Systems

- CCTNS is countrywide **integrated database on crime incidents** and suspects, connecting FIR registrations, investigations, and chargesheets of all police stations and higher offices.
- CCTNS also plans to offer **citizen services**, such as passport verification, crime reporting, online tracking of case progress, grievance reporting against police officers.

**Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS):** It is any computer network, system or architecture that allows justice practitioners and agencies to electronically access and share information between systems and/or across jurisdictional lines.

**Khoya Paya Portal:** Khoya Paya portal is a citizen based website to exchange information on missing and found children developed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY).

## Concerns

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- Cyber experts have cautioned against **government abuse** of facial recognition technology, as it can be used as a tool of control and risks citizens privacy and data.
  - In the absence of **data protection law**, Indian citizens are more vulnerable to privacy abuses.
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## India – ASEAN Troika Trade Ministers’ meeting

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The India – ASEAN Troika Trade Ministers’ meeting was held in New Delhi for informal consultation on the ongoing **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, acting Minister of Commerce of Thailand, Minister of Trade of Indonesia, Secretary General, ASEAN and Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Chair of the RCEP.

## Issues raised by India

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- India emphasized on **adherence to the RCEP guiding principles** to balance high ambition on goods tariff reduction with addressing of sensitives in bilateral pairings like **India-China** through temporary and permanent deviations/ exclusions.
  - China demands that India should eliminate duties on more than 90 % of the items from the country, as it is willing to do in case of the ASEAN, Japan and South Korea.
  - India has tentatively offered to eliminate duties on 74 % items from China as part of the RCEP deal. This has been done to safeguard domestic producers.
- India also stressed on possible mechanism to **address** persistent and **wide imbalances in the trade**.
  - India has a free trade agreement (**FTA**) with **ASEAN**. It has **suffered** due to the same.
  - It has witnessed a surge in goods imports due to the instances of non-adherence to the rules of origin provisions and lack of full cooperation in investigating and addressing such breaches.
  - The utilization of preferential tariffs by India under the **India-ASEAN FTA** is

below 30% because of standards, regulatory measures and other non-tariff barriers in the region.

- Also, it was promised that in services, India will be provided with commensurate offers, but that has not been materialized yet.

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## Basel Committee Lauds RBI on Strict Rules

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According to a regulatory consistency assessment programme (RCAP) conducted by the Basel committee on banking supervision, the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI)** rules on large exposures framework (LEF) are stricter those recommended by the Basel committee.

- The assessment focused on the completeness and consistency of the domestic regulations in force on 7 June 2019, as applied to commercial banks in India.
- **Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS)** is the primary global standard setter for the prudential regulation of banks. It has 45 members, comprising central banks and bank supervisors from 28 jurisdictions.
- The RBI implemented the large exposures framework in December 2016 through a circular modified in June 2019. Most of the requirements came into effect on April 1, 2019.

The requirements apply to all scheduled commercial banks with the exception of regional rural banks.

### Regulatory Consistency Assessment Programme

- The Basel Committee established a comprehensive Regulatory Consistency Assessment Programme (RCAP) in 2012 to monitor and assess the adoption and implementation of its standards, while encouraging a predictable and transparent regulatory environment for internationally active banks.
- The RCAP consists of two distinct but complementary workstreams:
  - **Monitoring:** The transposition of Basel III regulatory standards into domestic regulations is monitored on a semiannual basis based on information provided by each member jurisdiction.
  - **Assessment:** The committee evaluates the consistency and completeness of the adopted standards, including the significance of any deviations from the Basel III regulatory framework. These consistency assessments are carried out on a jurisdictional and thematic basis.
  - **Jurisdictional assessments (consistency) review** the extent to which domestic regulations are aligned with the minimum Basel requirements agreed by the Committee and help identify material gaps in such regulations.
  - **Thematic assessments (outcomes) examine** the implementation of the Basel requirements at the individual bank level and seek to ensure that prudential ratios are calculated consistently by banks across jurisdictions to improve



comparability across outcomes.

## Key Findings

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- While Basel large exposures framework limits the sum of all exposures of a bank to a single counterparty to 25% of Tier 1 capital, Indian regulations establish the large exposure limit at 20%.
  - In exceptional cases, bank's boards may allow an additional 5% exposure of the bank's available eligible capital base.
- In case of India, banks' exposures to global systemically important banks are subject to stricter limits, in line with the letter and spirit of the Basel Guidelines, and the scope of application of the Indian standards is wider than just the internationally active banks covered by the Basel framework.
- The Basel large exposures framework requires banks to identify third parties that may constitute an additional risk factor inherent in the structure itself rather than in underlying assets.
  - Third parties can include originator, fund manager, liquidity provider and credit protection provider.
  - In cases where there are multiple third parties considered to be potential drivers of additional risk, the bank must assign the exposures resulting from the investment in the structures to each of the third parties. However, the RBI's large exposures framework does not specify the identification of additional risks, nor provide instructions for banks to group these exposures.

## RBI's Response

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- Based on these findings, the RBI has decided to incorporate economic interdependence criteria for determining a group of connected counterparties in all cases where the sum of all exposures to each such counter-party exceeds 5% of the eligible capital base.
- In order to provide time to the banks to adjust to the new requirement, the introduction of economic interdependence criteria in the definition of connected counterparties will be effective from April 1, 2020.

## Integrated Management of Public Distribution System

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The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution has launched a new **central sector scheme**- Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IMPDS). It will be implemented during 2018-19 and 2019-20.

The IMPDS system is already operational in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana,

Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura, wherein a beneficiary can avail his share of foodgrain from any district in the state.

## Key Objectives

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- Implementation of **nation-wide portability of ration cards** to lift foodgrains from any fair price shop (FPS) across the country, moving towards '**one nation one ration card**'.
- Creation of **national level data repository**- for de-duplication of beneficiary data (Aadhaar based).
- **Use of advanced data analytics techniques** to bring about continuous improvements.

## Significance

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- It will bring more **transparency and efficiency in the distribution of foodgrains**.
- It will **improve the mechanism to identify fake/duplicate ration cards** and provide the option to PDS beneficiaries to lift their entitled foodgrains from the Fair Price Shops of their choice at the national level.
- The scheme will ensure **food security of migrant labourers** who move to other states to seek better job opportunities.

## National Electric Mobility Mission: 2020

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Under its National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP), the government is targeting to achieve 6-7 million sales of electric and hybrid vehicles in India by 2020. NEMMP aims to achieve **national fuel security** by promoting **hybrid and electric vehicles** in the country.

- NEMM intends to allow hybrid and electric vehicles to become the first choice for the purchasers so that these vehicles can replace the conventional vehicles and thus reduce liquid fuel consumption in the country from the automobile sector.
- **National Electric Mobility Mission** is a composite scheme using different policy-levers such as:
  - **Demand side incentives** to facilitate the acquisition of hybrid/electric vehicles.
  - Promoting **R&D in technology** including battery technology, power electronics, motors, systems integration, battery management system, testing infrastructure, and ensuring industry participation in the same.
  - Promoting **charging infrastructure**.
  - **Supply side** incentives.
  - Encouraging **retro-fitment of on-road vehicles** its hybrid kit.
- Under NEMMP 2020, Government has launched **Faster Adoption and**

**Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles** in India (FAME India) scheme to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology.

## Objectives

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- Achieve national energy security.
- Mitigation of the adverse impact of vehicles on the environment.
- Growth of domestic manufacturing capabilities in the automobile sector.

## Steps Taken by Government for Faster Adoption of Electric Vehicles

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- A tax cut has been announced on the loan amount taken for the purchase of electric vehicle in India.
  - GST rates on electric vehicles have been slashed from the earlier 28% with cess to 12% with no cess.
  - The sale of electricity has been allowed as a 'Service' for the charging electric vehicles which is set to provide huge incentives in order to attract investments into charging infrastructure.
  - Ministry of Road Transport Highways issued notification regarding exemption of permit in case of battery-operated vehicles.
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## Measles

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The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, has declared **Sri Lanka**, a **measles-free** country.

- Sri Lanka is the **fifth country** in the **WHO southeast Asia region** to eliminate **measles**.
  - The elimination of a disease means that there have been zero new cases of the disease in the last three years.
  - The country reported its last case of measles in May 2016.
  - The other countries in the region which have eliminated measles in their geographical area are **Bhutan, Maldives, DPR Korea** and **Timor-Leste**.
- Sri Lanka has also become the **fourth country** in the region, after Bhutan, Maldives and Timor-Leste, **to eliminate measles and control rubella**, a flagship priority programme of WHO in the region, ahead of the 2020 regional target.
  - Rubella control is achieved when a country reduces the number of rubella cases by 95% as compared to cases in the year 2008.
- Sri Lanka's achievement has come at a time when globally measles cases are increasing.
- According to the latest Global Measles and Rubella Update, **India** had 56,399 confirmed measles cases and 1,066 confirmed rubella cases in the year 2018, thus

quite far from eliminating the diseases in its boundary.

## Rubella and Measles

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- **Rubella** is a **contagious**, generally mild **viral infection** that occurs most often in **children** and **young adults**.
  - **Measles** is a highly **contagious viral disease** and is a cause of death among **young children** globally.
  - Though the diseases are caused by different viruses but share more or less the **same symptoms**, including the **red rashes**.
  - The Measles & Rubella Initiative, a global program, aims at eliminating both these diseases.
  - The **vaccine** for the diseases are provided in the form of measles-rubella (MR), measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), or measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) combination.
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## New Missile Testing Facility

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The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has granted environmental and **Coastal Regulatory Zone clearances** for setting up Missile Testing Launch Facility on the Bay of Bengal coast and Technical Facility at Gullalamoda village in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh.

- Earlier, the DRDO had proposed to set up this project in the **Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary** in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh.
  - **Since this project is a strategic requirement and of national importance and cannot be located anywhere else. It is thus exempted from the public hearing as per EIA notification 2016.**
  - Other missile testing range in India:
    - The Integrated Test Range missile testing facility is located on Dr Abdul Kalam Island, formerly known as Wheeler Island, an island off the coast of Odisha.
    - Missiles like Agni, Prithvi, Brahmos, Astra, Nirbhay etc are tested here.
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## Cancer Causing Bacteria becomes Antibiotic Resistant

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A study by Kasturba Medical College (KMC) and Manipal Academy of Higher Education tertiary care hospital) has found that cancer-causing gut bacteria has become resistant to **antibiotics**.

- **Helicobacter Pylori**, (bacterium that resides in the human stomach and causes ulcers, gastritis and stomach cancers) has gained resistance to three commonly used

antibiotics **Metronidazole, levofloxacin, and clarithromycin.**

- The study was to gain insights on the prevalence and mechanism of **drug resistance in *Helicobacter***-linked diseases so as to help develop strategies with more rational antibiotic combinations for treatment.
  - The study can act as a strong foundation to progress in national **epidemiological surveillance** that will be beneficial in evidence-based treatment and also as a managerial follow-up of eradication of *Helicobacter*, if the first line treatment fails.
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## Plan Bee

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**Plan Bee**, a unique strategy adopted by **Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR)** to keep **wild elephants** away from railway tracks, has won the **best innovation award** by Indian Railways.

- Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR)'s Plan Bee, involves **setting up of devices** (an amplifying system imitating the buzz of a swarm of honey bees) **near tracks**, which emit the 'buzzing' sound of swarming bees, considered as a natural repellent of elephants (elephants have a natural fear of the perilous stings of the insects).  
First one was installed near the **Guwahati railway station**.
  - The sound is audible to elephants **600-700 meters** away and thus helps them in keeping away from the tracks.
  - According to wildlife experts, India has the **highest number of train accidents** involving elephants in the world.
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