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India's Stabilising Population: NFHS-5

Why in News

Recent data from **National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5)** shows that India's **population is stabilising** as the **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** is on **decline.**

Key Points

- **Background:**
    - During **NFHS-3 and 4,** conducted between **2005 and 2016,** there was a **decline in the use of modern methods of contraception** (oral pills, condoms, intrauterine devices) **across 12 of 22 States and UTs.**
        - While, in **NFHS-5, 11 of 12 States where there was a slump earlier, saw an increase in their use.**

- **NFHS- 5 Data:**
  - **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** The total fertility rate in a specific year is defined as the **total number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years** and give birth to children in alignment with the prevailing age-specific fertility rates.
    - The TFR across **most Indian states declined** in the past half-a-decade, more so among urban women. This implies that **India's population is stabilizing.**
    - **Sikkim** recorded the **lowest TFR,** with one woman bearing 1.1 children on average. **Bihar** recorded the **highest TFR** of 3 children per woman.
    - In 19 of the 22 surveyed states, TFRs were found to be **'below-replacement level'.**
      - **Replacement level fertility** is the total fertility rate that is the average number of children born per woman at which a **population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, without migration.**
      - This rate is **roughly 2.1 children per woman** for most countries, although it may modestly vary with mortality rates.
  - **Use of Contraceptives;**
    Overall **Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)** has **increased substantially** in most States/UTs and it is the highest in HP and WB (74%).
- **Implications:**
  - The data implies that most States have attained **replacement level fertility.**
  - NFHS-5 provides evidence of an **increase in the use of modern contraceptives in rural and urban areas,** an improvement in these demands being met, and a **decline in the average number of children borne by a woman.**

- **Measures for Population Control:**
  - **Prime Minister's Appeal:** During his **Independence Day Speech** in 2019, the Prime Minister appealed to the country that **population control was a form of patriotism.**
  - **Mission Parivar Vikas-** The Government has launched Mission Parivar Vikas in **2017** for substantially increasing **access to contraceptives and family planning services in146 high fertility districts with TFR of 3 and above** in seven high focus states.
  - **National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme (NFPIS) :** This scheme was launched in the year **2005** under this scheme clients are **insured in the eventualities of death, complication and failure following sterilization.**
  - **Compensation scheme for sterilization acceptors** - Under the scheme **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** provides **compensation for loss of wages to the beneficiary** and also to the service provider (& team) for conducting sterilizations from the **year 2014.**
- **Contradiction :**
  As the data from **NFHS-5** prove that the **country's population is stabilising,** the government's appeal for population reduction and fears over a **"population explosion"** and calls for a **"two child policy"** appears to be misguided.

National Family Health Survey

- **NFHS is a large-scale, multi-round survey** conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
  The **Phase-I** provides data for 22 states/UTs and the fieldwork in the remaining 14 **(Phase-II)** States/UTs is under progress.
- All NFHSs have been conducted under the stewardship of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,** Government of India, with the **International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Mumbai, serving as the nodal agency.**

Way Forward

- India's population has **already crossed 125 crores and India is expected to surpass the world's most populous nation-China** in the next couple of decades.
- However, **restricted child policy will create a shortage of educated young people** needed to carry on India's technological revolution.
  The problems like **gender imbalance, undocumented children, etc.** faced by China (as a result of the one-child policy) might be experienced by India as well.
- The data in NFHS-5 gives **requisite input for strengthening existing programmes and evolving new strategies for policy intervention.**

- The government and authorities should make required changes to the current policies and programs in accordance with the data given by NFHS-5.

Source:TH

Parliamentary Committee on Management of Covid-19

Why in News

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs on the management of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, has recently submitted its report.

Key Points

- The Committee has made a detailed assessment of **four aspects:**
  - Preparedness,
  - Augmentation of Health Infrastructure,
  - Social Impact, and
  - Economic Impact.
- **Preparedness:**
  - **Issues:**
    > Migrant labourers, factory workers, daily wage earners were the worst affected due to **lack of timely dissemination of the information** in the district areas about the arrangements being made for food, shelter and other facilities leading to their exodus.
  - **Solutions:**
    - Draw up a national plan and guidelines under **National Disaster Management Act** 2005 and **Epidemic Diseases Act**, 1897.
    - A **separate wing** shall be formed in the NDMA that will specialise in handling pandemics like Covid-19 and take a **leading role in building a partnership of government** with the public sector, corporates, **NGOs** and other stakeholders.
    - An **effective functional institutional mechanism** is needed for coordination between the Centre, states, and Union Territories for quick response to such a crisis in future.

- **Augmentation Health Infrastructure:**
  - **Issue:**
    - **Disproportionate** availability of **ICU beds** in private and public sector hospitals.
    - Private hospitals are either **inaccessible** or not **affordable** for everyone. **Overcharging by hospitals, denial of the cashless facility, variation in levying charges towards consumables** such as PPE kits, gloves, and masks, etc., or on other non-medical expenditure.
  - **Solution:**
    - Comprehensive **Public health Act** at the **national level:**
      - To support the Government in keeping **checks and controls over the private hospitals.**
      - Keep a check on the **black marketing of medicines** and ensure product standardization.
      - **Regulatory oversight** on all hospitals working in the country to prevent refusal to accept insurance claims.
      - The target should be to make Covid-19 treatment cashless for all people that are having **insurance coverage.**

- **Social Impact:**
  - **Issues:**
    Ineffective implementation of the **Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1979.**
    - The task of **identifying the location and disbursing relief measures** to the migrant workers became **very difficult** as the Central Government did not have any data of the migrant workers and had to seek it from the States.
  - **Solutions:**
    - A **national database on migrant workers** be launched at the earliest helping in identification as well as delivering rations and other benefits.
    - The database may also include **"records of returning migrant labourers including details about their source and destination, earlier employment details and the nature of their skills.**
      - This would **"help in skill development and planning for the transit of migrant workers"** in a similar emergency in the future.
    - It recommended that until the **One Nation, One Ration Card** is implemented in all states/UTs, inter-state operability of ration cards should be allowed.
    - **Continuation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme.**
      - Ensure that the local administrations are delivering the **rations/allowances in time** and this should be continued **until the schools reopen.**
- **Economic Impact:**
  - **Issues:**
    - Poor Implementation of Government Schemes.
    - Delay in Loan Disbursal.
    - Consumption had been severely curtailed due to huge job losses and fall in income due to the lockdown.
  - **Solutions:**
    More interventions and schemes required to support the **recovery and to sustain this economic revival** especially for the **MSME** (Micro,Small and Medium Enterprises).

Parliamentary Committees

Broadly, parliamentary committees are of two kinds: **Standing Committees** and **Ad Hoc Committees.**

- **Standing Committees : Permanent** (constituted every year or periodically) and work on a **continuous basis.** They can be categorized into following broad groups:
  - Financial Committees
  - Departmental Standing Committees (24)
  - Committees to Inquire
  - Committees to Scrutinise and Control
  - Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House
  - House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees
- **Ad Hoc Committees:** Ad hoc committees are temporary and cease to exist on completion of the task assigned to them.

Source:IE

Fraud Cases in Public Sector Banks

Why in News

Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have been **reviewing loan accounts** and are expected to report more fraud cases in accounts which have earlier been put under their **Early Warning Signals** (EWS) system.

- The **Reserve Bank of India** (RBI) developed the EWS framework as it noticed a delay in the detection and reporting of banking frauds.
- The **objective of the EWS framework** is to prevent and detect these offences, to provide timely reporting to regulators and to initiate staff accountability proceedings thereby ensuring that the operations and risk-taking ability of the banks is not impacted.

Key Points

- **Data Analysis:**
  - The **total cases of frauds** (involving Rs. 1 lakh and above) reported by banks and financial institutions **shot up by 28% by volume** and **159% by value during 2019-20** despite the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) tightening the supervision and vigilance.
  - While there were 6,799 frauds involving Rs. 71,543 crore as of March 2019, the number of frauds jumped to 8,707 involving Rs.1,85,644 crore, says the **RBI's Annual Report 2020.**
  - **PSBs topped the fraud table** with 4,413 cases involving Rs. 1,48,400 crore.
  - **Private banks** reported 3,066 frauds involving Rs. 34,211 crore.

- **Current Scenario:**
  - Banks are **going through their accounts which were put on alert earlier.** They will **report fraud** wherever such instances are found in case of large accounts, and **make 100% provision against them.**
    - These are being reviewed thoroughly to **ensure that banks have adequately provisioned balance sheets.**
  - The RBI also indicated that the **frauds registered during 2019-20 actually occurred** in the **loans sanctioned during 2010-2014.**
    - The **average lag between the date of occurrence of frauds and their detection** by banks and financial institutions was 24 months during 2019-20.
    - In **large frauds,** of Rs. 100 crore and above, the **average lag was 63 months.**
  - After **forensic audit and investigation** into these accounts, **diversions and other issues** were found.
    - RBI defines **diversion of funds** as utilisation of short-term working capital funds for long-term purposes not in conformity with the terms of sanction; deploying borrowed funds for purposes/activities other than those for which the loan was sanctioned; and transferring borrowed funds to subsidiaries/group companies or other corporates by whatever modalities.
- **Reasons:**
  - Weak implementation of EWS by banks.
  - Non-detection of EWS during internal audits.
    - **Internal audits** evaluate a **company's internal controls, including its corporate governance and accounting processes.**
    - They ensure compliance with laws and regulations, help maintain accurate and timely financial reporting and data collection.
  - Non-cooperation of borrowers during forensic audits.
    - **Forensic audit** is an **examination and evaluation of a firm's or individual's financial records** to derive evidence that can be used in a court of law or legal proceeding.
  - Inconclusive audit reports.
  - Lack of decision making in Joint Lenders' meetings account.

- **Overcoming Measures:**
  - The EWS mechanism is getting **revamped alongside the strengthening of the concurrent audit function,** with **timely and conclusive forensic audits** of borrower accounts under scrutiny.
  - RBI is engaged in **interlinking various databases and information systems** to improve fraud monitoring and detection.
  - Online reporting of frauds by the **Non-Banking Financial Companies** (NBFC) and the **Central Fraud Registry** (CFR) portal of **Scheduled Commercial Banks** (SCBs) augmented with new features, are **likely to be operational by January 2021.**
    - RBI has put in place CFR, which is a **searchable database to help banks detect instances of fraud** by borrowers early on.

Source: IE

Investment for Creating Gas Infrastructure

Why in News

The government will invest around **60 billion USD** in creating gas infrastructure in the country till **2024** and increasing **gas's share** in the energy mix upto **15%** by **2030.**

Currently, gas accounts for **6% in the country's total energy mix.**

Key Points

- **Proposed Infrastructure Plan:**
  - It includes **pipelines, LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) terminals** and **CGD (City Gas Distribution) networks.**
  - It has been envisaged to develop **additional about 14,300 km pipelines** to complete the **National Gas Grid** and are at various stages of development.
  - At present, the country has **6 operational LNG regasification terminals.**
    - The government has further planned to have **1,000 LNG fuel stations** across the country.
  - Coverage of CGD projects is being expanded to 232 geographical areas spread over 400 districts, with potential to cover about **53% of the country's geography and 70% of population.**

- **National Gas Grid:**
  - Since a **National Gas Grid (NGG)** was conceptualized in 2000, India has built more than 16,000 km of gas network. Recent initiatives include:
    - **Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project:** It seeks to cater to the energy requirements of **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.**
    - **North East Region (NER) Gas Grid:** It will pass through Assam, Sikkim, Mizoram, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya in a phased manner.
- **City Gas Distribution (CGD) Network:**
  - Under the **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board** (PNGRB) **Act 2006,** PNGRB grants the authorization to the entities for **developing a CGD network** in a specified Geographical Area (GA) of the country.
  - The CGD sector has four distinct segments – **Compressed Natural Gas** (CNG) predominantly used as **auto-fuel,** and **Piped Natural Gas** (PNG) used in **domestic, commercial and industrial segments.**
- **Related Government Initiatives:**
  - **Natural Gas Marketing Reforms:** Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the **Policy framework on reforms in the exploration and licensing sector** for enhancing domestic exploration and production of oil and gas.
  - **Indian Gas Exchange:** India's first automated **national-level gas trading platform** was unveiled in June 2020, to promote and sustain an efficient and robust gas market and foster gas trading in the country
  - **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:** It aimed to provide **free cooking gas connections** to poor families.
  - **Gas4India Campaign:** It is a multimedia, multi-event campaign to communicate to people, the national, social, economic and ecological benefits of using natural gas as the fuel.
  - **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP):** It is a **contractual and fiscal model** for award of hydrocarbon acreages towards exploration and production (E&P). It provides a **single, or uniform, license** for the exploration and production of all conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons from an entire contract area.
  - Promotion to **Compressed Natural Gas based Public Transport.**
- **Transnational Gas Pipelines:**
  - Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline.
  - Middle East to India Deepwater Pipeline

Natural Gas

- Natural Gas is mainly extracted from the **petroleum deposits deep beneath the earth.** It occurs **just above the layer of crude oil, as gases are lighter than oil. High temperatures and pressure leads** to the conversion of the **remains of plants and animals buried under the earth** into naturally occurring gas along with petroleum and coal.
- In India, **Jaisalmer, Krishna Godavari delta, Tripura** and some areas offshore in **Mumbai** have natural gas resources.
- The **Gas Authority of India Limited** was set up in 1984 as a public sector undertaking to transport and market natural gas.
- **Need for Gas-based Economy:**
    - **Energy efficient:**
        Natural gas produces more energy than any of the fossil fuels in terms of **calorific value.**
    - **Cleaner fuel:**
        Natural gas is a superior fuel as compared with coal and other liquid fuels; being an **environment-friendly, safer and cheaper fuel.**
    - **Emission commitments:**
        India made a commitment to **COP-21 Paris Convention** in December 2015 that by 2030, it would reduce carbon emission by 33%-35% of 2005 levels.
    - **Diverse applications:**
        Natural gas can be used as **domestic kitchen fuel,** fuel for the **transport sector** as well as a fuel for fertilizer **industries** and commercial units.
    - **Pacing up the progress line:**
        On the global front, switching to natural gas is bringing commendable results. The latest report released by the **International Energy Agency** shows that the electricity produced by natural gas worldwide was more than that of coal for the first time ever.

Source:TH

Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020

Why in News

Recently, the government has notified the **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020,** which would allow consumers in India to access a continuous supply of reliable electricity.

Electricity is a **Concurrent List or List-III (Seventh Schedule)** subject and the central government has the authority and the power to make laws on it.

Key Points

- **Coverage:**
  The rules cover **various aspects of power supply to consumers** in the country, including obligations of distribution licensees, metering arrangements, the release of new connections, modifications of existing connections, grievance redressal and compensation mechanisms.
- **Significance:**
  - This will make the **distribution companies more accountable** to consumers, thus **reducing their monopolies** and **giving consumers more alternatives.**
  - To ensure compliance, the government will **apply penalties that will be credited to the consumer's account.**
  - These rules are also an important step towards **furthering the ease of doing business** across the country.
  - Implementation of these Rules shall ensure that new electricity connections, refunds and other services are given in a **time-bound manner.**

Areas Covered in the Rules

- **Rights and Obligations**
  - Duty of every distribution licensee to supply electricity on request made by an owner or occupier of any premises in line with the provisions of Act.
  - Right of consumers to have minimum standards of service for the supply of electricity from the distribution licensee.
- **Release of New Connection and Modification in Existing Ones**
  - Transparent, simple and time-bound processes.
  - An applicant has an option for online application.
  - The maximum time period of 7 days in metro cities and 15 days in other municipal areas and 30 days in rural areas identified to provide new connections and modify an existing connection.
  - Disconnection and Reconnection Provisions
- **Metering Arrangement**
  - No connection shall be given without a meter.
  - Meter shall be the smart prepayment meter or a prepayment meter.
  - Provision of Testing of meters.
  - Provisions for replacement of defective or burnt or stolen meters specified.
- **Billing and Payment**
  - Transparency in applicable consumer tariff and bills.
  - A consumer shall have the option to pay bills online or offline.
  - Provision for advance payment of bills.

- **Reliability of Supply**
  - The distribution licensee shall supply 24x7 power to all consumers. However, lower hours of supply for some categories of consumers like agriculture could be specified.
  - The distribution licensee shall put in place a mechanism, preferably with automated tools to the extent possible, for monitoring and restoring outages.
- **Consumer as Prosumer**

  While the prosumers will maintain consumer status and have the same rights as the general consumer, they will also have the right to set up **Renewable Energy** (RE) generation units including **rooftop solar photovoltaic** (PV) systems.
  A prosumer is an individual who **both consumes and produces.**
- **Standards of Performance of License**
  - Standards of performance for the distribution licensees will be notified.
  - Compensation amount to be paid to the consumers by the distribution licensees for violation of standards of performance.
- **Compensation Mechanism**

  Automatic compensation shall be paid to consumers for which parameters on standards of performance can be monitored remotely.
- **Call Centre for Consumer Services**
  - Distribution licensee shall establish a centralised 24x7 toll-free call centre.
  - Licensees shall endeavour to provide all services through a common **Customer Relation Manager** (CRM) **System** to get a unified view.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism**
  - **Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum** (CGRF) to include consumer and prosumer representatives.
  - It has been made easy by making it multi-layered and the number of consumer's representatives have been increased from one to four.
  - The licensee shall specify the time within which various types of grievances by the different levels of the forums are to be resolved. **Maximum timeline of 45 days** specified for grievance redressal.

Source: IE

Green National Highways Corridor Project

Why in News

The **government and the World Bank** has signed **a $500 million project** for implementation of the **Green National Highways Corridor Project.**

Key Points

- **Green National Highways Corridor Project:**
  - The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** had launched a **National Green Highways Mission (NGHM)** following the promulgation of 'Green Highways Policy' in September 2015.
  - The **Green National Highways Corridor Projects (GNHCP)** supports the **implementation of the NGHM** and the provision of **green and safe transport.**
  - The **objective** of the Project is to demonstrate **safe and green <u>National Highway</u> corridors in selected States** and enhance the institutional capacity of the MoRTH in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.
- **Three Components of the Project:**
  - **Green Highway Corridor Improvement and Maintenance:**
    - This includes upgradation and maintenance for **five years** of about **783 km of selected existing National Highways** in the states of **Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.**
  - **Institutional Capacity Enhancement:**
    - It will support the capacity enhancement of MoRTH in its pursuit to **conserve natural resources and improve climate vulnerability** of the National Highways network and **reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.**
  - **Road Safety:**
    - It will provide support to **improve <u>road safety</u> data analytics and highway safety monitoring** and implementation.
- **<u>About the Pact between the Government and the World Bank:</u>**
  - The USD 500 million loan from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD),** an arm of the World Bank, has a **maturity of 18.5 years** including a five-year grace period.
- **Significance of the Project:**
  - The **National Highways of India carry about 40% of road traffic.** However, several sections of these highways have **inadequate capacity, weak drainage structures and black spots prone to accidents.**
  - The ultimate objective of transport infrastructure is to **provide seamless connectivity and reduce logistics costs.**
  - Historically, the transport sector in India has offered limited employment opportunities for women. The project will **support the ministry with an in-depth analysis of gender-related issues in the transport sector** along with help in creating jobs for women by training women-led micro enterprises and women collectives to implement green technologies in the highway corridors.
  - It will also support the **Bharatmala Pariyojana Program (BPP).**

Key Features of Green Highways Policy 2015

- Promote greening and development of eco-friendly National Highway corridors across the country with participation of farmers, private sector and government institutions including the Forest Department.
- It addresses the issues that lie in the road of development and shows the way towards **sustainable development.**
    - Planting of trees in any particular area will depend on the soil suitability and climatic conditions.
- Its objective is to **reduce the impact of air pollution and dust** by planting trees and shrubs along the National Highways. They will act as natural sinks for air pollutants and **arrest soil erosion** at the embankment slopes.

World Bank

- **History: Founded** at the **Bretton Woods conference in 1944,** the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—soon called the World Bank—has expanded to a closely associated group of **five development institutions.**
- **Five Development Institutions:**
    - **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** provides loans, credits, and grants.
    - **International Development Association (IDA)** provides low- or no-interest loans to low-income countries.
    - The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** provides investment, advice, and asset management services to companies and governments.
    - The **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)** insures lenders and investors against political risk such as war.
    - The **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)** settles investment-disputes between investors and countries.
        India is not a member of ICSID.
- Recently, the World Bank has released **new Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs)** for reference year 2017, under **International Comparison Program (ICP)** that adjusts for differences in the cost of living across economies of the world.
- It has also developed the **Logistics Performance Index.**
- **Reports Published by World Bank:**
    - **Human Capital Index Report**
    - **Global Economic Prospects**
    - **Ease of Doing Business**
    - **South Asia Economic Focus Report**
    - **Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report**
    - World Development Report

Source: IE

Recognition of Prior Learning Programme

Why in News

The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** (MSDE) is conducting a **Special Recognition of Prior Learning** (RPL) programme for workers, with the **Department of Panchayati Raj** (DoPR).

> The programme, implemented under **Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) Programme** of MSDE, has been rolled out in **Varanasi** and **Chandauli,** Uttar Pradesh (UP).

Key Points

- **RPL Programme:**
    - It aims to **promote decentralization** and **local governance for better planning and implementation** of skill development programmes.
    - It is being implemented by the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).**
    - It **recognizes the value of learning** acquired outside a formal setting and provides a **government certificate** for an individual's skills.
    - Candidates receive **exposure to concepts of digital and financial literacy** and **accidental insurance coverage for three years** at free of cost.
    - **No fee is charged** from a candidate for participating in the RPL programme and every **successfully certified candidate receives Rs. 500.**
    - MSDE is supporting the **State Skill Development Missions** (SSDMs) and **District Skill Committees** (DSCs) in the selection and onboarding of the Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) and facilitating the successful execution of the programme.
    - **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** (MoPR) **along with MSDE is monitoring** it and are being supported by Directorate of Panchayati Raj, UP and the SSDM, UP.
    - This initiative is part of a larger programme on **'Skill Development Planning at the level of Gram Panchayat'** that focuses on introducing RPL in a structured manner in various gram panchayats across the country.

- **Significance:**
  - The inclusion of gram panchayats is **crucial for the success of District Skill Development Plans** (DSDPs) and will provide a huge **fillip to the <u>Skill India Mission.</u>**
  - RPL will **align the competencies of the pre-existing workforce** of the country to the standardized framework and will provide confidence, respect and recognition to the candidates.
  - Supporting formalization of the informal learning of youth will **supplement their efforts in finding sustainable livelihood opportunities** and **reduce inequalities** based on privileging certain forms of knowledge over others.
  - It will also **link them with work opportunities** emanating from the Gram panchayat's development work.
  - Down-streaming the skill development planning to the gram panchayat level would **contribute to decentralization.**

Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion

- It is an **outcome-oriented programme of MSDE** with a special focus on **decentralised planning and quality improvement.**
- It is a **<u>Centrally Sponsored Scheme</u>** which is collaborated with the **<u>World Bank.</u>**
- It aims to implement the mandate of the **<u>National Skill Development Mission</u>** (NSDM).
- It contributes to the **development of rational and realistic state skill development plans,** leading to a well-grounded national plan for skill development.
- **Objectives:**
  - **Convergence:** Creating convergence among all skill training activities, both State-led and Government of India funded, at the state level.
  - **Quality:** Improving the quality of skill development programs through building a pool of quality trainers, developing model curriculum and content, and standardizing assessment and certification.
  - **Evaluation System:** Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system for skill training programs.
  - **Inclusiveness and Opportunity:** Providing access to skill training opportunities to the disadvantaged sections. Creating industry-led and demand-driven skill training capacity.

<u>Source: PIB</u>

Kilauea Volcano: Hawaii

Why in News

Recently, **Kilauea <u>volcano</u>** in **Hawaii's Big Island** erupted which was followed by an **<u>earthquake</u> of magnitude 4.4.**

Key Points

- **Kilauea Volcano:**
  - **Kilauea, also called Mount Kilauea** ("Much Spreading" in Hawaiian), is located in **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park** on the southeastern part of the island of Hawaii, U.S.A.
    - Kilauea's **slopes merge** with those of the nearby volcano **Mauna Loa** on the west and north.
  - It ranks among the **world's most active volcanoes**. It is an **elongated dome built of lava eruptions** from a central crater and from lines of craters extending along east and southwest rifts, or fissures.
  - The volcano's 4,090-foot (1,250-metre) summit has collapsed to form a **caldera,** a broad shallow depression nearly 3 miles (5 km) long and 2 miles (3.2 km) wide with an area of more than 4 square miles (10 square km).
    - A **caldera** is a **depression** created after a volcano partially collapses after releasing the majority of its magma chamber in an **explosive eruption.**
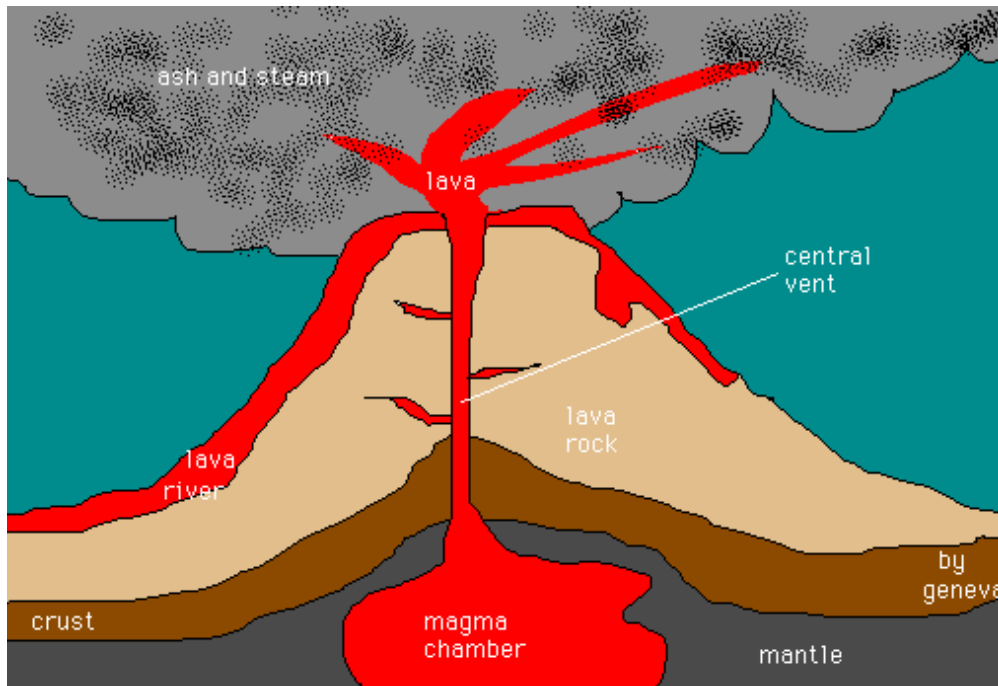 - **Eruptive History:**
    - The caldera was the site of nearly **continuous activity** during the **19th century** and the early part of the **20th century.**
    - Since 1952, Kīlauea has **erupted 34 times.**
    - From **1983 to 2018 eruptive activity** was **nearly continuous** along the volcano's East Rift Zone.

- **Volcanoes in India:**
  - **Barren Island,** Andaman Islands **(India's only active volcano)**
  - **Narcondam,** Andaman Islands
  - **Baratang,** Andaman Islands
  - **Deccan Traps,** Maharashtra
  - **Dhinodhar Hills,** Gujarat
  - **Dhosi Hill,** Haryana

Volcano

- A volcano is an **opening on the surface** that allows material warmer than its surroundings to escape from its interior.
- When this material escapes, it causes an **eruption. An eruption can be explosive, sending material high into the sky. Or it can be calmer, with gentle flows of material.**
- On Earth, the erupted material can be **liquid rock** ("lava" when it's on the surface, "magma" when it's underground), **ash, cinders, and/or gas.**

- There are **three reasons** why magma might rise and cause eruptions onto Earth's surface:
    - Magma can rise when pieces of Earth's crust called **tectonic plates slowly move away from each other.** The magma rises up to fill in the space. When this happens underwater volcanoes can form.
    - Magma also rises when these **tectonic plates move toward each other.** When this happens, part of Earth's crust can be forced deep into its interior. The high heat and pressure cause the crust to melt and rise as magma.
    - A final way that magma rises is over **hot spots.**

        Hot spots are the hot areas inside of Earth. These areas heat up magma. The magma becomes less dense. When it is less dense it rises. Each of the reasons for rising magma are a bit different, but each can form volcanoes.

Source:IE

Legion of Merit: USA

Why in News

Recently, the **USA has awarded** the **'Legion of Merit'** to the Prime Ministers of **India, Japan and Australia.**

All these four countries were **key to reviving the Quadrilateral grouping** since **2017,** which is part of the **Indo-Pacific strategy** and is aimed at countering the growing dominance of China in the region.

Key Points

- **About the Award:**

  - **One of the USA's highest military decorations,** the award was instituted in **1942** by former President **Franklin D. Roosevelt.**
  - It is **awarded** to **members of the USA armed forces** and also **members of foreign** (i.e. non-USA) **armed forces** and sometimes **heads of state or government.**
  - The award is presented to foreign recipients in **four categories:** Chief Commander, Commander, Officer and Legionnaire.
  - There have been **two Indian recipients** of the honour in the past: **Field Marshal K M Cariappa** in 1950, and **Gen S M Srinagesh** in **1955.**
- **Current Receivers:**
  - **Indian PM** has been given this award for his role in **"advancing the India-USA relationship".**
    - The award **recognises the efforts of the people** of India and the USA **to improve bilateral ties,** reflected in the bipartisan consensus in both countries about the **Indo-USA Strategic Partnership.**
  - **Australian PM** was presented the award for **"addressing global challenges and promoting collective security".**
  - **Japanese PM** for his **"leadership and vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific".**

Mock Egg

Why in News

Recently, a team of scientists from IIT Delhi won an **innovation contest (Innovate 4 SDG)** organised by the **United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) Accelerator Lab India** for their innovation of a **"plant based mock egg".**

- **UNDP Accelerator Lab India** seeks to address some of the most pressing issues facing India, such as **air pollution, sustainable water management and client-resilient livelihoods through innovation.**
- The team secured the **first prize** and won **5,000 USD** for their innovation.

Key Points

- **Mock Egg:**
    - It has been developed from very simple farm based crop proteins, which not only looks and tastes like an egg but is also very close in nutritional profile to poultry eggs.
    - The development of the mock egg meets the protein needs of the diet-specific, health conscious, vegan and vegetarian people.
- The team has also developed **meat analogues for chicken and fish from plant sources using fruits and vegetables.**
- The plant based textured foods which resemble egg, fish and chicken have been developed with an aim **to address the longstanding battle for malnutrition and clean protein food for people.**

Source:IE