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News Analysis (07 Jan, 2021)

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Helping Hand to Sri Lanka

Why in News

An India-funded **free ambulance service** is playing a vital role in Sri Lanka's **Covid-19** response.



Key Points

- **Background:**
 - India provided a **grant of 7.56 million USD** for the **Suwa Seriya** [vehicle or journey for good health] **service** which was launched in 2016, on a pilot basis. Later, this was extended throughout the country with additional grants from India.
 - **India also helped with Capacity Building:**
Training and refresher programmes for **Sri Lankan emergency medical technicians** which further **generated employment** for the local population.
- It is India's **second largest grant project to Sri Lanka** after the **housing project** of more than **60,000 houses**, with a nearly 400 million USD grant.

India Sri Lanka Relations

- **Geopolitical Significance of Sri Lanka:**

Sri Lanka's location in the **Indian Ocean region** has been of strategic geopolitical relevance to several major powers.

 - China's **string of pearl's strategy** is aimed at encircling India to establish dominance in the Indian Ocean.
China is building state of the art gigantic modern ports all along the Indian Ocean and to the south of it, in Gwadar (Pakistan), Chittagong (Bangladesh, Kyauk Phru (Myanmar) and **Hambantota (Sri Lanka)**. Thus Sri Lanka is vital for China's **String of Pearls strategy**.
 - Sri Lanka has a list of **highly strategic ports** located among **busiest sea lanes of communication**.
- **Political Relations:**
 - **The Reserve Bank of India** (RBI) has signed an agreement for extending a **USD 400 million currency swap** facility to Sri Lanka to boost the foreign reserves and ensure financial stability of the country, which is badly hit by Covid-19 pandemic.
 - Political relations between India and Sri Lanka have been marked by **high-level exchanges of visits at regular intervals**.
 - Sri Lanka is a member of regional groupings like **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and **SAARC** in which India plays a leading role.
 - India and Sri Lanka conduct **joint Military (Mitra Shakti)** and **Naval (SLINEX)** exercises.

- **Commercial Relations:**

- Sri Lanka is one of India's **largest trading partners among the SAARC countries**. India in turn is Sri Lanka's **largest trade partner globally**.
- India's exports to Sri Lanka amounted to 5.3 billion USD in 2015-17 whereas its imports from the country were at 743 million USD.
- Trade between the two countries grew particularly rapidly after the **India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement** which came into force in March 2000.

- **Cultural and Educational Relations:**

- The Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo actively promotes awareness of Indian culture by offering classes in **Indian music, dance, Hindi and Yoga**. Every year, cultural troupes from both countries exchange visits.
- The **India-Sri Lanka Foundation**, set up in December 1998 as an **intergovernmental initiative**, also aims towards enhancement of scientific, technical, educational and cultural cooperation through civil society exchanges and enhancing contact between the younger generations of the two countries.
- The People of Indian Origin (PIOs) comprise **Sindhis, Borahs, Gujaratis, Memons, Parsis, Malayalis and Telugu** speaking persons who have settled down in Sri Lanka (most of them after partition) and are engaged in various business ventures.
- In April 2019, India and Sri Lanka also concluded agreement on **countering Drug and Human trafficking**.

- **Issues and Conflicts**

- **China Factor:**

- Sri Lanka also handed over the **strategic port of Hambantota**, which is expected to play a key role in **China's Belt and Road Initiative**, to **China on a 99-year lease**.
 - China has also supplied arms as well as provided huge loans to Sri Lanka for its development.
 - The two countries have signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement which is Sri Lanka's first nuclear partnership with any country.

- **Fishermen issue:**

- Given the proximity of the territorial waters of both countries, especially in the **Palk Straits** and the **Gulf of Mannar**, incidents of straying of fishermen are common.
 - Fishermen often **risk their lives** and cross in to Srilankan rather than return empty-handed, but the Sri Lankan Navy is on alert, and have either arrested or destroyed fishing nets and vessels of those who have crossed the line.
 - The 4th meeting under **Joint Working Group** (JWG) on fisheries was held recently between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India and Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka as the mechanism to help find a permanent solution to the fishermen issue.

Source:TH

Air Pollution and Pregnancy Losses: Lancet Report

Why in News

According to recent study **poor air quality is associated** with a considerable proportion of **pregnancy loss in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh**.

It is the **first study to estimate the effect of air pollution on pregnancy loss** across the region.

Key Points

- **The Study:**
 - They created a model to **examine how exposure to PM 2.5 increased women's risk of pregnancy loss**, calculating risk for each 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ increased in PM 2.5 after **adjusting for maternal age, temperature and humidity, seasonal variation, and long-term trends** in pregnancy loss.
 - Each **increase in 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** was estimated to **increase a mother's risk of pregnancy loss by 3%**.
 - The increase in **risk was greater for mothers from rural areas or those who became pregnant at an older age**, compared to younger mothers from urban areas.
- **Area Specific Report:**

Of the pregnancy loss cases, **77% were from India**, 12% from Pakistan, and 11% from Bangladesh.
- **Limitations:**
 - The study was **unable to distinguish between natural pregnancy loss and abortions**, which may have led to an underestimation of the effect of air pollution on natural pregnancy loss.
 - There was **under-reporting** of pregnancy losses because of **stigma** or **ignoring very early pregnancy losses**.

Air Pollution

- Air pollution refers to any **physical, chemical, or biological change in the air**. It is the contamination of air by harmful gases, dust, and smoke which **affects plants, animals, and humans drastically**.
- **Air Pollutants:** Pollutants are the substances which cause pollution. **Types:**
 - **Primary:** The pollutants that directly cause air pollution or the pollutants that are formed and **emitted directly from particular sources**. Examples are **particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur oxide**.
 - **Secondary:** The pollutants formed by the intermingling and reaction of primary pollutants are known as secondary pollutants. Examples are **ozone and secondary organic aerosol (haze)**.
- **Causes of Air Pollution:** Major sources of air pollution are:
 - Indoor **burning of fossil fuels, woods and other biomass** to cook, heat and light homes.
 - **Industry**, including power generation such as coal-fired plants and diesel generators.
 - **Transport**, especially **vehicles** with diesel engines.
 - **Agriculture**, including livestock, which produces methane and ammonia, rice paddies, which produce methane, and the burning of agricultural waste.
 - Open **waste burning** and organic waste in landfills.

- **Impact of Air Pollution on Human Health:**

- As per the **State of Global Air 2020 (SoGA 2020)** released by the **Health Effects Institute (HEI)**:
 - High PM contributed to the deaths of more than 1,16,000 Indian infants who did not survive their first month.
 - More than half of these deaths were associated with outdoor PM_{2.5} and others were linked to the use of solid fuels such as charcoal, wood, and animal dung for cooking.
- According to the **2017 Global Burden of Disease report** published by the **Lancet Planetary Health journal**:
 - India, which accounts for 18% of the global population, recorded 26% of the global premature deaths and disease burden due to air pollution.
 - **One in every eight deaths in India (2017)** could be attributed to air pollution, which now contributes to more disease burden than smoking.
- Household air pollution causes about **3.8 million premature deaths** each year.
- Air quality has become a **serious health issue** because the pollutants enter deep inside the lungs and the lungs capacity to purify blood gets reduced which affects the person's growth, mental ability and the working capacity especially for **children, pregnant women and elderly people**.
 - In children, it is associated with **low birth weight, asthma, childhood cancers, obesity, poor lung development and autism**, among others.

- **Indian Initiatives to Control Air Pollution:**
 - **The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas:** It coordinates efforts of state governments to curb air pollution, and will lay down the parameters of air quality for the region.
 - **Bharat Stage (BS) VI norms:** These are emission control standards put in place by the government to keep a check on air pollution.
 - **Dashboard for Monitoring Air Quality:** It is a **National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP)** based dashboard, built on data from the **Central Pollution Control Board's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (NAAQM)** Network which was started in 1984-85 and covers 344 cities/towns in 29 states and 6 UTs.
 - **National Clean Air Programme:** Launched in 2019, it is a comprehensive pan-India air pollution abatement scheme for 102 cities.
 - **National Air Quality Index (AQI):** It focuses on health effects one might experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air.
 - **National Ambient Air Quality Standards:** They are the standards for ambient air quality with reference to various identified pollutants notified by the Central Pollution Control Board under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**
 - **Breathe:** It is a 15 point action plan to fight air pollution by **NITI Aayog.**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY):** It aims at providing clean-cooking fuel to the poor households and bringing in qualitative changes in the living standards.
- **International Initiatives:**
 - **Climate and Clean Air Coalition:**
 - Launched in **2019**
 - It is a **voluntary partnership** of governments, intergovernmental organizations, businesses, scientific institutions and civil society organizations **committed to protecting the climate and improving air quality through actions to reduce short-lived climate pollutants.**
 - **India is a member** of the coalition.
 - **United Nations Clean Air Initiative:** It calls on national and subnational governments to commit to achieving air quality that is safe for citizens, and to align climate change and air pollution policies by 2030.
 - **World Health Organization (WHO)'s 4 Pillar Strategy:** WHO adopted a resolution (2015) to address the adverse health effects of air pollution.

PM (Particulate Matter) 2.5

- PM 2.5 is an atmospheric particulate matter of diameter of fewer than 2.5 micrometres, which is around 3% the diameter of a human hair.

- It causes respiratory problems and also reduces visibility. It is an endocrine disruptor that can affect insulin secretion and insulin sensitivity, thus contributing to diabetes.
- It can only be detected with the help of an electron microscope because of them being very small.
- Sources of fine particles include all types of **combustion activities** (motor vehicles, power plants, wood burning, etc.) and certain **industrial processes**.

Way Forward

- There is a need to urgently confront air pollution and strengthen health systems. The short-term respite from air pollution that most big cities in the world experienced was because of **lockdown measures and not a permanent fix**.
- Also there is a need to **increase public awareness on air pollution. Educate and inform people about what they can do to reduce air pollution**. Put out public health messages on the metro, buses, billboards, and radio to help change public behaviour.

Source:IE

Sulfur Dioxide Emission Norms Delayed

Why in News

The **Ministry of Power** has **proposed pushing back the deadlines for adoption of new emission norms by coal-fired power plants**, stating "an unworkable time schedule" would burden utilities and lead to an increase in power tariffs.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - India initially had set a **2017 deadline for thermal power plants** to comply with **emissions standards for installing Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) units** that cut emissions of toxic sulphur dioxide.
 - This was **later changed to varying deadlines for different regions, ending in 2022**.
- **Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FED):**
 - **Removal of Sulfur Dioxide** is called as Flue-gas Desulphurization (FGD).
 - It seeks to remove gaseous pollutants viz. SO₂ from exhaust flue gases generated in furnaces, boilers, and other industrial processes due to thermal processing, treatment, and combustion.

- **Proposal of the Ministry of Power:**

- It has proposed a **"graded action plan,"** whereby areas where plants are located would be graded according to the severity of pollution, with **Region 1 referring to critically polluted areas, and Region 5 being the least polluted.**
 - **Strict control of emissions** shall be required in such key areas for thermal power stations categorised under **Region 1.**
 - Plants in **Region 2** could begin to **take action one year after those in Region 1.**
 - Presently **no action** is required for power plants that are situated under **Region 3, 4 & 5.**
- According to the Ministry, the target should be to maintain **uniform ambient air quality** across the country and **not uniform emission norms** for thermal power plants.

This could avoid immediate increase in power price in various relatively clean areas of the country (and) avoid unnecessary burden on power utilities/consumers.

Sulfur Dioxide Pollution

- **Source:**

- The largest source of SO₂ in the atmosphere is the **burning of fossil fuels** by power plants and other industrial facilities.
- Smaller sources of SO₂ emissions include: industrial processes such as extracting metal from ore; **natural sources such as volcanoes**; and locomotives, ships and other vehicles and heavy equipment that burn fuel with a high sulfur content.

- **Impact:** SO₂ can affect both **health and the environment.**

- **Short-term exposures** to SO₂ can **harm the human respiratory system** and make breathing difficult. People with asthma, particularly children, are sensitive to these effects of SO₂.
- SO₂ emissions that lead to high concentrations of SO₂ in the air generally also lead to the **formation of other sulfur oxides (SOx).** SOx can react with other compounds in the atmosphere to form small particles. These particles **contribute to particulate matter (PM) pollution.**

Small particles may penetrate deeply into the lungs and in sufficient quantities can contribute to health problems.

- **India's Case:**

- India's sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions **recorded a significant decline of approximately 6% in 2019 compared to 2018**, the steepest drop in four years, according to a report from Greenpeace India and the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

However, India remained the **largest emitter of SO₂**.

- In **2015**, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** introduced **Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) emission limits for coal power stations**.
- **Air Quality sub-index** has been evolved for **eight pollutants** (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO₂, SO₂, CO, O₃, NH₃, and Pb) for which short-term (upto 24-hours) **National Ambient Air Quality Standards** are prescribed.

Source:TH

Longitudinal Ageing Study of India

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** has released the **Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1 Report** on the virtual platform.

Key Points

- **About LASI:**

- **About:**

- It is a full scale **national survey of scientific investigation of the health, economic, and social determinants and consequences of population ageing** in India. It was **commissioned in 2016**.
 - It is India's **first and the world's largest ever survey that provides a longitudinal database** for designing policies and programmes **for the older population** in the broad domains of social, health, and economic well-being.

- **Agencies Involved:**

The **National Programme for Health Care of Elderly**, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has undertaken the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India, through **International Institute for Population Sciences, (IIPS), Mumbai** in collaboration with **Harvard School of Public Health, University of Southern California, USA, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** and **National Institute on Ageing**.

- **Coverage:**

The **first national wave of the LASI (Wave 1)** covered a **baseline sample of 72,250** individuals **aged 45 and above and their spouses**, including elderly persons aged **60** and above and oldest-old persons aged **75** and above from all States and Union Territories (UTs) of India (excluding Sikkim).

- **Methodology:**

It collects detailed data on health and biomarkers together with information on family and social network, income, assets, and consumption.

In medicine, a biomarker is a **measurable indicator of the severity or presence of some disease state**. More generally a biomarker is anything that can be used **as an indicator of a particular disease** state or some other physiological state of an organism.

- **Findings:**

- In the 2011 census, the **60+ population accounted for 8.6% of India's population**, accounting for **103 million elderly people**.
- Growing at around **3% annually**, the number of elderly people will rise to **319 million in 2050**.
- **75%** of the elderly people suffer from one or the other **chronic disease**. **40%** of the elderly people have **one or the other disability** and **20%** have issues related to **mental health**.
- The self-reported prevalence of diagnosed **cardiovascular diseases (CVDs)** is **28%** among older adults aged **45 and above**.
- The prevalence of **multi-morbidity conditions** among the elderly age **60 and above** is **much higher in the states/UTs** of Kerala (52%), Chandigarh (41%), Lakshadweep (40%), Goa (39%) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (38%). The prevalence of **single morbidity and multi-morbidity** conditions increases with age.

- **Significance:**

- The evidence from LASI will be used to further strengthen and broaden the **scope of the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly** and also help in establishing a range of preventive and health care programmes for the older population and most vulnerable among them.
- The study holds significance in light of the ongoing **Covid-19** pandemic with the elderly and persons with **comorbidities** being at the highest risk of contracting the disease.

Comorbidity simply means **more than one illness or disease occurring in one person at the same time** and **multimorbidity means more than two illnesses** or diseases occurring in the same person at the same time.

National Programme for Health Care of Elderly

- **About:**

The programme is being implemented under the **Non-Communicable Disease (NCD)** flexible pool within the overarching umbrella of the **National Health Mission** for Districts and below in the States.

- **Vision:**

- To provide **accessible, affordable, and high-quality long-term, comprehensive and dedicated care services** to an Ageing population.
- Creating a new “**architecture**” for Ageing.
- To build a framework to create an enabling environment for “**a Society for all Ages**”.
- To promote the concept of **Active and Healthy Ageing**.

- **Funding Pattern:**
The Centre bears 75% of the total budget and the State Government contributes **25%** of the budget, for activities up to district level.
- **Eligible Beneficiary:**
All elderly People (above 60 Years) in the country.
- **Types of Benefits:**
Free, Specialized health care facilities exclusively for the elderly people through the State health delivery system.

Source:PIB

Payment Infrastructure Development Fund Scheme

Why in News

Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India** (RBI) has announced the operationalisation of the **Payment Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme**.

Key Points

- **Objective:**
Develop **payment acceptance infrastructure in tier-3 to tier-6 cities** (centres), with a special focus on the **north-eastern states of the country**.
- **Time Period:**
The fund will be operational for **three years** effective from **1st January, 2021** and may be extended for **two more years**.
- **Management:**
An **Advisory Council (AC)** under the chairmanship of RBI **deputy governor BP Kanungo** has been constituted for managing the PIDF.
- **Fund Allocated:**
 - The PIDF presently has a corpus of **Rs. 345 crore**, with **Rs. 250 crore** contributed by the RBI and **Rs. 95 crore** by the major **authorised card networks in the country**. The **authorised card networks** shall contribute in all **Rs. 100 crore**.
 - Besides the initial corpus, PIDF shall also receive annual contributions from **card networks and card issuing banks**.
 - For example, Card networks will have to chip in **0.01 paisa per rupee of transaction**.
 - The role of a **card network** is to facilitate transactions between merchants and card issuers. E.g. Mastercard, Visa.

- **Implementation:**

- The focus shall be to target those merchants who are yet to be **terminalised (merchants who do not have any payment acceptance device)**.

Merchants engaged in services such as **transport and hospitality, government payments, fuel pumps, public distribution system (PDS) shops, healthcare and kirana shops** may be included, especially in the targeted geographies.

- The fund will be used to **subsidize banks and non-banks for deploying payment infrastructure**, which will be contingent upon specific targets being achieved.

- The **Advisory Council will devise a transparent mechanism for allocation of targets** to acquiring banks and non-banks in different segments and locations.

- The **implementation of targets shall be monitored by the RBI** with assistance from card networks, the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) and the Payments Council of India (PCI).

- **Acquiring banks (also acquirers or merchant banks)** are financial institutions processing debit and credit card transactions on behalf of a merchant or business.

- Tentatively, **tier-3 and tier-4 centres** will be allocated **30%** of the acceptance devices, **tier-5 and tier-6 centres** will get **60%** and the **north eastern states will be given 10%**.

- Multiple payment acceptance devices and infrastructure supporting underlying card payments, such as **physical Point of Sale, mobile Point of Sale, General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) , Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) and QR code-based payments** will be funded under the scheme.

- **Breakup of Subsidy:**

- A subsidy of **30% to 50% of cost of physical PoS and 50% to 75% subsidy for Digital PoS** shall be offered.

- The subsidy shall be granted on a **half-yearly basis**, after ensuring that performance parameters are achieved, including conditions for **'active'** status of the acceptance device and **'minimum usage'** criteria, as defined.

- **Fixing Accountability:**

Acquirers of the subsidy shall submit **quarterly reports** on the **achievement of targets to the RBI**.

- **Other Related Steps:**

- The setting of PIDF is in line with the measures proposed by the **vision document on payment and settlement systems in India 2019-2021**.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constructed a composite **Digital Payments Index** (DPI) to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.

Anubhava Mantapa in Basavakalyan: Karnataka

Why in News

Recently, the Chief Minister of Karnataka has laid the foundation stone for the ‘**New Anubhava Mantapa**’ in **Basavakalyan**, the place where **12th century poet-philosopher Basaveshwara** lived for most of his life.

Key Points

- **About the New Anubhava Mantapa:**
 - It will be a six-floor structure in the midst of the 7.5-acre plot and **represent various principles of Basaveshwara’s philosophy.**
 - It will **showcase the 12th Century Anubhava Mantapa** (often referred to as the “**first Parliament of the world**”) established by Basaveshwara in Basavakalyan where philosophers and social reformers held debates.
 - The building will adopt the **Kalyana Chalukya style of architecture.**
Later Chalukyas, popularly known as the Chalukyas of Kalyan or Kalyani Chalukyas form an integral part of ancient Karnataka history of early medieval period. Kalyan Chalukya rulers patronised temple construction, dance and music, as their predecessors did.
 - The grand structure **supported by 770 pillars** will have an auditorium with a seating capacity of 770 people.
It is believed that **770 Sharanas** (followers of Basaveshwara) led the **Vachana reformist movement** in the 12th Century.
 - On its top, the structure would have a **Shiva Linga placed on a large pedestal.**
 - The project also envisages **state-of-the-art robotic system**, open-air theatre, **modern water conservation system**, terrace garden, library, research centre, prayer hall, yoga centre and so on.

- **Basaveshwara:**

- **Brief Profile:**

- **Basaveshwara (1134-1168)** was an Indian philosopher, social reformer and statesman who attempted to create a casteless society and fought against caste and religious discrimination.



- **Basava Jayanthi** is an **annual event** celebrated in the honour of the birth of Vishwaguru Basaveshwara.
 - He was **born in Bagevadi** (of undivided Bijapur district in Karnataka).
 - The **tradition of Lingayatism** is known to have been founded by him.

- **Philosophy:**

- His spiritual discipline was based on the **principles of Arivu (true knowledge), Achara (right conduct), and Anubhava (divine experience)** and it brought social, religious and economical revolution in the 12th century.
- This path **advocates a holistic approach of Lingangayoga** (union with the divine). This comprehensive discipline encompasses **bhakti (devotion), jnana (knowledge), and kriye (action)** in a well balanced manner.
- He **went to Kalyana (now called Basavakalyan)** probably in the year A.D. 1154. His achievements in the short span of twelve or thirteen years of his stay at Kalyana are striking.
 - The **Gates of Dharma were thrown open to all** without any barriers of caste, creed or sex (**Kalyana Rajya - Welfare State**).
 - He **established the Anubhava Mantapa**, which was a common forum for all to discuss the prevailing problems of socio, economic and political strata including religious and spiritual principles along with personal problems.

Thus, it was the **first and foremost Parliament of India**, where Sharanas sat together and discussed the socialistic principles of a Democratic set up.

- He gave **two more very important socio-economic principles**. They are:
 - **Kayaka (Divine work):** According to this, every individual of the society should take up the job of his choice and perform it with all sincerity.
 - **Dasoha (Equal distribution):**
 - There must be an equal income for equal work.
 - The worker (Kayakajeevi) may lead his day-today life by his hard earned income. But he should not preserve the money or property for tomorrow. He must utilise the
 - surplus money for the society and poors.

- **Vachana Reformist Movement:**

- The main aim of the **Vachana (poetry)** movement, led by Basaveshwara in 12th century, was welfare of all.
- It **attempted to address class, caste and to some extent gender issues** in a given societal milieu.

Source: TH

Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog

Why in News

Recently, the Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog has announced 'Kamdhenu Gau-Vigyan Prachar-Prasar Exam' with an aim to “infuse curiosity” among people about the importance of cows, and to “sensitise and educate” them about the bovine species.

Key Points

- **Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog** is an agency under the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying)** established for the protection of cows.
- It has been constituted to organize animal husbandry on **modern and scientific lines** and to take steps for preserving and improving breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle.
 - There are 50 well-defined breeds of cattle and 17 breeds of buffaloes in the country.
- It is a **high-powered permanent body** to formulate policies and to provide directions for the implementation of schemes related to cattle so as to lay more emphasis on livelihood generation for small & marginal farmers, women and youth entrepreneurs.
- It functions as an integral part of **Rashtriya Gokul Mission**.
 - Rashtriya Gokul Mission was initiated by Government of India in December 2014 with the aim of development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds, genetic upgradation of bovine population and enhancing milk production and productivity of bovines thereby making milk production more remunerative to the farmers.

Source: IE
