

NEWS TODAY

Annual National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) Way Forward Report, 2023

- Report released by **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** highlights initiatives taken towards enhancing e-Service delivery.
 - ⊕ **e-Service Delivery** involves delivery of public/ other services such as receipt of forms and applications, issue/ grant of license, receipt or payment of money, etc., through electronic mode.
- **Key Highlights of the report**
 - ⊕ **Jammu and Kashmir provides maximum (1117) number of e-Services**, across States/UTs.
 - ⊕ **76% Mandatory e-services** are available, an increase from 48% under NeSDA 2019.
 - ⊕ **Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Assam and Odisha provide 100% of their services through their identified Single Unified Service Delivery Portal.**
 - ⊕ **Tourism sector achieved highest saturation for provision of all mandatory e-services** in 23 out of 36 States/UTs.
- **Significance of e-Service Delivery**
 - ⊕ **For Citizens:** Empowerment and participation, improved access to services by removal of intermediaries, etc.
 - ⊕ **For Governments:** Informed data-driven decision making, resource optimization and cost efficiency by reducing **inclusion and exclusion errors**, etc.
- **Challenges:** Digital divide, lack of standardization and interoperability, issue of change management due to bureaucratic inertia, concerns related to cyber-security, etc.

Some Best Practices on e-Service Delivery

- **eUNNAT (Jammu & Kashmir):** Unified Service Delivery Portal.
- **Nivesh Mitra (Uttar Pradesh):** For Ease of Doing Business.
- **Seva Sindhu (Karnataka):** To deliver Government services at doorsteps of citizens.

Supreme Court (SC) Criticises National Green Tribunal (NGT's) Trend of Passing Ex-Parte Orders

- A Division Bench of SC was hearing an **appeal against an ex-parte order in suo motu proceedings by NGT** which directed appellants for payment of compensation.
 - ⊕ **Ex-Parte orders** are those that can be granted without waiting for a response from other side.
- **Key observations of SC regarding NGT**
 - ⊕ Recurrent engagement in **unilateral decision making**, provisioning **ex-post-facto review hearing**, and routinely dismissing it has become a norm.
 - ⊕ **Imposition of huge sums** for damages proved to be **counterproductive in safeguarding environment.**
 - ⊕ Tribunal must ensure **procedural integrity** to ensure **harmonious balance** between **justice and due process.**
- **About NGT**
 - ⊕ **Statutory body** established under **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.**
 - ⊕ It is a **specialized body** equipped with necessary expertise to handle **environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.**
 - ⊕ It is guided by **principles of natural justice.**
 - ◆ **Not bound by Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 or Indian Evidence Act, 1872.**
 - ⊕ **Composition:** Headed by **Chairperson** who sits in the Principal Bench, and
 - ◆ at least 10 but not more than 20 **judicial members**, and
 - ◆ at least 10 but not more than 20 **expert members.**



NGT has jurisdiction over all civil cases under following Acts:

- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977.
- Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991.
- Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) under PMMSY

- **PM-MKSSY** is a **Central Sector Sub-scheme** under the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**.
 - ⊕ **PMMSY (2020)** aims to bring the Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in India.
 - ◆ The other component of scheme is **Centrally sponsored scheme**.
- **PM-MKSSY** aims to formalize the fisheries sector and to support fisheries micro and small enterprises.
- **Key Features of PM-MKSSY**
 - ⊕ **Period-** FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 in all States/Union Territories.
 - ⊕ **Funding-**Total outlay of Rs. 6,000 crore.
 - ◆ 50% by public finance including the **World Bank** and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) of France.
 - ◆ 50% will be invested from the beneficiaries/ private sector leverage.
 - ⊕ **Intended Beneficiaries-**
 - ◆ Fishers, Fish (Aquaculture) Farmers, Fish workers, Fish Vendors,
 - ◆ Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs), Cooperatives, Federations,
 - ◆ Village Level Organizations like Self Help Groups (SHGs), Fish Farmers Producer Organizations (FFPOs).
 - ⊕ **Components (Implementation Strategy):**
 - ◆ **Formalization of fisheries sector and facilitating access to fisheries microenterprises.**
 - » For this purpose, a **National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP)** will be created.
 - ◆ **Facilitating adoption of aquaculture insurance**
 - ◆ **Supporting microenterprises to improve fisheries sector value chain efficiencies.**
 - ◆ **Adoption and expansion of fish and fishery product safety and quality assurance systems.**
 - ◆ **Project management, monitoring and reporting (proposed to set up Project Management Units (PMUs))**

Related Development

- **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)**
 - ⊕ Union cabinet has extended FIDF (launched in 2018-19) for another 3 years upto 2025-26.
 - ⊕ It aims to create and modernize fisheries infrastructure.
 - ⊕ **National Fisheries Development Board**, Hyderabad is a nodal implementing agency.
 - ⊕ **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**, National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC), all scheduled Banks are nodal lending institutions.

Detecting Methane Emissions from Space in India: A study by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)

- Study was conducted **using satellite data to identify methane emission hotspots**, marking a first-of-its-kind effort in India.
 - ⊕ Study employed data from **NASA's Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation (EMIT)** and **European Space Agency's Sentinel-5P TROPOMI**.
- **Key Findings:**
 - ⊕ **Enhancement of methane point sources** are detected over various urban centres in India.
 - ⊕ Out of total carbon emissions in India, **14.43%** is attributed to **methane**.
 - ⊕ **A Sewage outlet in Central Mumbai, Ahmedabad's Pirana landfill and Surat's Khajod landfill** are three worst methane hotspots in India.
- **About Methane:**
 - ⊕ **Methane (CH₄)** is a potent greenhouse gas with a **global warming potential 28 times higher than CO₂** over 100-year period.
 - ◆ It is **second largest contributor to climate change** after CO₂.
 - ⊕ Methane is a **Short-Lived Climate Pollutant** and has a **more immediate and intense warming effect** on atmosphere.
 - ⊕ It is also a key precursor gas of **harmful air pollutant, tropospheric ozone**.
- **Sources of Methane:**
 - ⊕ **Solid waste/landfills** (accounting for around 20% of India's anthropogenic methane emissions)
 - ⊕ **Fossil fuels** – Leakage from natural gas, oil and gas field and oil refineries
 - ⊕ **Agriculture** - Enteric fermentation from livestock rearing and rice cultivation.
 - ⊕ Wetlands, Textile industries etc.

Initiatives taken to reduce methane emissions:

- **Global initiatives:**
 - ⊕ **UNEP Global Methane Initiative** advancing cost-effective near-term methane abatement
 - ⊕ **The Global Methane Pledge** to cut methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030 from 2020 levels. (Not signed by India)
- **India's initiatives:**
 - ⊕ **Gobar (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) Dhan** scheme for conversion of waste into resources and reduction of methane emissions.
 - ⊕ **National Biogas and Manure Management Program** which helps capture and utilise methane emissions from organic waste sources.

'Smart Cities Mission (SCM): An Evaluation' Report presented to Lok Sabha

- Report by Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs assesses issues and challenges affecting progress of SCM.
- **Key issues highlighted in the report**
 - ⊕ **Project management and implementation:** Frequent changing and dropping of projects, lack of adequate financial progress, and intercity disparity in physical progress of implementation.
 - ◆ **Lack of integrated monitoring mechanism** and lack of **cross-city learning**.
 - ◆ **Lesser emphasis on core infrastructure** projects such as social infrastructure, smart energy, etc.
 - ⊕ **Governance and capacity:** Frequent **transfer of Smart City CEOs**, lack of defined **governance structure and monitoring capacity**, and inadequate **consultation with public representatives**.
 - ◆ **Lack of execution capability** in smart cities of Himalayan and North-East region and Small UTs.
- **Recommendations**
 - ⊕ **Master Plan for Greenfield development** should be spearheaded by Union ministry.
 - ⊕ **Fixed tenure for CEOs** of Smart Cities' Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs).
 - ⊕ **Third party assessment** of SCM projects.
 - ⊕ **Launch of Phase II of the SCM** covering larger number of cities and areas utilizing experience and expertise of SPVs.
 - ⊕ **Emphasize more on Pan City projects** focusing on implementing technology-driven solutions for ensuring comprehensive and holistic development.

Smart Cities Mission

- **Launched in:** 2015
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- **Objective:** Promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment, and give decent quality of life through application of 'smart solutions'.
- Till date, **100 cities** selected through City Challenge Process in four rounds.

Parliamentary Standing Committee Report on "Review of the working of Legal aid under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987"

- Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act 1987 aims to establish a nationwide network for providing **free and competent legal services to society's weaker sections**.
 - ⊕ It gives effect to **Article 39A** (free legal aid to poor and weaker sections of society).
 - ⊕ It constitutes **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** as apex organization, which frames and monitors legal aid policies and activities.
 - ⊕ It also provides for **Supreme Court Legal Service Committee (LSC)** in Supreme Court, **State LSAs** in every state, **High Court LSCs** in every high court, and **District LSAs** in districts.
 - ⊕ **Activities of LSAs** include legal aid and advice, implementing alternative dispute resolution mechanism (Lok Adalat and Mediation), and implement victim compensation schemes.

Identified Issues with LSAA	Recommendations of the committee
Lack of awareness and legal education	Extensive mass media campaign for legal education.
Static grants-in-aid to NALSA and decline in allocated funds	Substantial increase in grant-in-aid to NALSA.
Reluctance of lawyers to provide pro bono services	NALSA should compensate lawyers adequately and monitor efficacy and accountability of legal aid services.
Challenges in Lok Adalats due to limited powers, lack of proper procedure and inadequate infrastructure	Strengthen Lok Adalats with adequate powers, proper procedure, infrastructure, staff and modern technology
Underutilization of Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs assist LSAs and Lok Adalats)	Capacity building of PLVs along with adequate compensation and support.

Also in News



Conservation Reserve

- Telangana's State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) approved the corridor area between **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** and **Kawal Tiger Reserve** as a **conservation reserve**.
 - ⊕ SBWL is established under the **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment (WPA) Act, 2002**, headed by Chief Minister or Administrator in case of UT.
- **About Conservation Reserve:**
 - ⊕ A protected area under the '**Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA), 1972**' (added through the WPA Act of 2002).
 - ⊕ Acts as **buffer zone** to or **connectors** and migration corridors between national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas.
 - ⊕ Declared by the **State Government**, after consulting with the central government and the local communities.
- It is administered with the help of the **Conservation Reserve Management Committee**.



Natural gas flare

- Recently, natural gas flare samples collected in USA **revealed high variation in nitrogen oxides emission estimates**.
- **About Natural gas flare:**
 - ⊕ It is the **burning of the natural gas** associated with oil extraction.
 - ⊕ The flare's combustion converts hydrocarbons to carbon dioxide and water.
 - ⊕ The process lessens the climate impact and reduces the safety concerns of the natural gas.
 - ⊕ However, it also produces **nitrogen oxides or NOx**.
 - ◆ **NOx includes the highly reactive gasses** such as nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide which directly and indirectly **impacts air quality**.
 - ⊕ In 2015, the **World Bank and the United Nations**, launched the **Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 (ZRF)** initiative.



Key Fact Statement (KFS)

- Reserve Bank of India has mandated that **all regulated entities provide a KFS to retail and MSME borrowers.**
- **About KFS**
 - ⊕ It is a document that clearly **explains lending terms and has key information regarding a loan agreement** in a simple and easy-to-understand format.
 - ⊕ **It enhances transparency in lending** and enables customers to make **informed decisions.**



Kilkari programme

- **Union Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare** launched Kilkari programme for beneficiaries in local content in Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- **About Kilkari programme**
 - ⊕ **Kilkari'** (meaning 'a baby's gurgle'), is a centralized interactive voice response (IVR) based mobile health service.
 - ⊕ **Centrally hosted** by Union **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.**
 - ⊕ **Delivers free, weekly, time-appropriate 72 audio messages** about pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare directly to families' mobile phones **from second trimester of pregnancy until child is one year old.**



Initiatives under PMFBY

- Union Government launched 3 new initiatives under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
 - ⊕ **PMFBY** is comprehensive crop insurance **from pre-sowing to post-harvest period.**
- **Krishi Rakshak Portal and Helpline (KRPH) 14447:** To provide multilingual support, transparent communication and real-time grievance resolution.
- **Learning Management System (LMS)** to train stakeholders in efficient crop insurance and agricultural credit.
- **SARTHI Portal:** To extend coverage to health, life, home, shop, agriculture implements, motor, and parametric products.
 - ⊕ SARATHI is a **digital insurance platform** launched in collaboration with **UNDP India.**



Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport (KMTT) Project

- Myanmar rebel's capture of Paletwa town adversely impacts KMTT project.
- **About KMTT Project**
 - ⊕ Aims to provide **connectivity between India and Myanmar from Ports on India's eastern seaport to Myanmar's Sittwe Port, and further to North East India.**
 - ⊕ **4 stages –**
 - ◆ Kolkata to Sittwe port via Bay of Bengal.
 - ◆ Sittwe to Paletwa inland (River Kaladan).
 - ◆ Paletwa to India-Myanmar border post in Mizoram.
 - ◆ Border to Lawngtlai in Mizoram (NH 54).
 - ⊕ **Significance:** Improved access to South East Asia, improved connectivity to north eastern states, etc.



Support to Students for Participating in Competitions Abroad (SSPCA)

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) launched SSPCA to **bolster global competitiveness of Indian students in technical education.**
- **Objectives:** To provide **travel assistance registration fee** to a team of **minimum 2 to 10 Bachelor students** for attending competition on **scientific event at international level.**
- **Eligibility:** A team of Students in the field of technical education enrolled and undergoing a **technical course notified by AICTE** in an **AICTE-approved technical institution.**
- **Grant:** Entire amount subject to a maximum 1 lakh per student.



Aubrites Meteorite

- Study of **Meteorite** fragments from the Asteroid 2024 BX1 found that they are part of aubrites Meteorite.
 - ⊕ Meteor that reaches the Earth is called a meteorite.
- **About Aubrites Meteorite**
 - ⊕ Are rare meteorites **originating** from an extremely **reduced differentiated parent** body in the solar system.
 - ⊕ Named after the meteorite, which fell in 1836 near Aubres, France.
 - ⊕ They are **coarse-grained igneous rocks** formed under extremely reducing conditions or by little or no free oxygen.
 - ⊕ Contain a variety of exotic minerals not found on Earth.

Places in News



Iceland (Capital: Reykjavik)

- Recently, a volcano erupted in Iceland.
- **Political features:**
 - ⊕ An island country, located in North Atlantic Ocean.
 - ⊕ Part of the **Nordic Countries.**
 - ◆ Other Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.
 - ⊕ Bounded by **Greenland Sea (North); Norwegian Sea (East); Atlantic Ocean (South and west); Denmark Strait (Northwest).**
- **Geographical Features**
 - ⊕ It is underlain by **basalt**, a dark rock of igneous origin.
 - ⊕ Lies on the **Mid Atlantic Ridge.**
 - ◆ Ridge is formed at divergent plate boundary where the **North American Plate** and the **Eurasian Plate** are moving away from each other.
 - ⊕ **Highest Peak:** Hvannadals Peak
 - ⊕ **Major river:** Thjórs River

