CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR 23ST NOVEMBER 2024

INDEX

CHINMAYA ACADEMY FOR CIVIL SERVICES

(Coaching For Civil Services-IAS,IFS,IPS,IRS etc.,)

(ACADEMY WHICH CARES TO BE DIFFERENT)

1. Reforming Undertrial Detention in India

Context:

The Supreme Court and the Union Government have prioritized the issue of undertrial prisoners, introducing measures like Section 479 of the BNSS, 2023, to address the growing concerns effectively.

State of Undertrial Prisoners in India

1. **High Proportion of Undertrials:**

   o   As per NCRB's *Prison Statistics India 2022*, 75.8% of incarcerated individuals (4,34,302 out of 5,73,220) were undertrials.

2. **Women Undertrials:**

   o   76.33% of women prisoners (18,146 out of 23,772) were undertrials, highlighting their disproportionate representation.

3. **Prolonged Detention:**

   o   Around 8.6% of undertrials had been imprisoned for over three years, exacerbating the justice delivery system's inefficiencies.

Key Challenges

1. **Prison Overcrowding:**

   o   The undertrial population contributes significantly to overcrowded facilities, leading to poor living conditions.

2. **Gender-Specific Vulnerabilities:**

   o   Women face additional challenges like inadequate facilities and the mental toll of prolonged uncertainty.

3. **Judicial Delays:**

o The massive backlog of pending cases prolongs incarceration.

4. **Delayed Implementation of Reforms:**

   o By October 2024, only 19 out of 36 states/UTs had submitted reports on eligible undertrials for release under Section 479.

Provisions under Section 479 of the BNSS, 2023

1. **Applicability:**

   o The law applies retrospectively to cases before July 1, 2024.

2. **Exemptions:**

   o It excludes individuals facing multiple cases or pending investigations.

3. **Relaxed Bail Norms:**

   o Undertrials not accused of crimes warranting death or life imprisonment can seek bail if detained for more than half the maximum sentence.

   o First-time offenders are eligible for release after serving one-third of their maximum sentence.

4. **Role of Jail Authorities:**

   o Jail superintendents are tasked with informing courts about eligible cases for initiating bail processes.

Supreme Court's Interventions

1. **Retrospective Implementation:**

   o The Court directed that Section 479 should apply to cases prior to BNSS enactment for maximum impact.

2. **Mandatory Reporting:**

   o States and UTs were ordered to submit data on eligible undertrials and report actions taken.

3. **Accountability Mechanisms:**

   o Jail superintendents were made responsible for identifying and flagging eligible cases promptly.

Advantages of the BNSS Provisions

1. **Reduced Overcrowding:**

   o Simplified bail provisions can alleviate strain on overburdened prisons.

2. **Focus on Rehabilitation:**

   o Timely release facilitates reintegration into society, reducing the stigma of incarceration.

3. **Support for First-Time Offenders:**

   o Ensures that individuals accused of minor or non-violent crimes are not unduly penalized.

Challenges in Implementation

1. **Coordination Issues:**

    o Slow response from states and UTs hampers progress.

2. **Administrative Shortcomings:**

    o Prisons lack adequate infrastructure to track eligible undertrials and submit timely reports.

3. **Limited Awareness:**

    o Many undertrials and their families remain uninformed about their rights under Section 479.

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Jail Administration:**

    o Equip prison staff with the tools and resources needed to identify and process eligible undertrials efficiently.

2. **Strict Timelines for Compliance:**

    o Set enforceable deadlines for states and UTs to adhere to Supreme Court directives.

3. **Judicial Efficiency:**

    o Increase judicial capacity and adopt fast-track courts to address case backlogs.

4. **Awareness Drives:**

    o Conduct campaigns to educate undertrials and their families about the benefits and provisions of Section 479.

5. **Focus on Women and Marginalized Groups:**

    o Implement gender-sensitive reforms and ensure priority attention to the needs of vulnerable undertrials.

Q. Critically examine the provisions of Section 479 of the BNSS, 2023, aimed at addressing undertrial detention in India. Discuss its advantages, challenges in implementation, and suggest measures to enhance its effectiveness.

Upload your answers to https://forms.gle/dVsmLfHqNpFCczGi8

2. Cross-Border Payments

Context:
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) have signed an agreement aimed at promoting the use of local currencies—the Indian Rupee (INR) and the Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR)—in cross-border transactions.

About Cross-Border Payments (CBPs)

Cross-border payments involve financial transactions where the payer and the recipient belong to different countries. These payments are crucial for international trade, investment, and personal remittances.

Types of Cross-Border Payments

1. **Wholesale Cross-Border Payments:**
    - Transactions occur between financial institutions.
    - Used for activities like foreign exchange trading, large-scale imports and exports, and intergovernmental transfers.
    - Primarily employed by governments, large corporations, and financial markets.

2. **Retail Cross-Border Payments:**
    - Include individual and business-level transactions, such as:
        - **Person-to-Person (P2P):** Migrants sending remittances to their families.
        - **Person-to-Business (P2B):** Cross-border online shopping or bill payments.
        - **Business-to-Business (B2B):** Payments for goods and services between companies.
    - Remittances play a significant role in this category.

Market Trends in Cross-Border Payments

- The global CBP market was valued at **USD 181.9 trillion in 2022** and is projected to grow to **USD 356.5 trillion by 2032**, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.3%.

Cross-Border Payments in India

- India manages significant cross-border flows:
    - **Inbound Remittances:** Approximately **USD 80 billion**.
    - **Outbound Remittances:** Around **USD 19 billion**.

Evolution of Cross-Border Payment Systems in India

1. **Pre-Technology Era:**
    - Non-resident Indians (NRIs) relied on demand drafts, often sent via courier services, for remittance.

2. **IMPS Integration:**
    - The launch of the **Immediate Payment Service (IMPS)** enabled near-instant credit, completed in under 3 minutes.

3. **Online Remittances:**
    - The **National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT)** system introduced secure and direct payment mechanisms.
    - NEFT is operated centrally by the RBI.

4. **UPI Integration for Foreign Inward Remittance:**
    - The inclusion of the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** further simplified and accelerated foreign inward remittances.

RBI Initiatives in Cross-Border Payments

- The **Payment Aggregators of Cross-Border Transactions (PA-CB Regulation)**:
    - Established to regulate all cross-border transactions, including those for imports and exports.
    - Replaces earlier guidelines and ensures all involved entities come under RBI's regulatory oversight.

Benefits of Local Currency Agreements like INR-MVR Framework

1. **Reduced Dependence on Third-Party Currencies:**
    - Minimizes reliance on globally dominant currencies like the US Dollar.

2. **Lower Transaction Costs:**
    - Direct currency usage avoids conversion fees, reducing the cost of transactions.

3. **Enhanced Trade and Investment:**

o   Facilitates smoother and more affordable trade between partner countries.

4. **Economic Stability:**

   o   Boosts demand for local currencies and stabilizes exchange rates.

Q. Evaluate the significance of the INR-MVR framework signed by the RBI and Maldives Monetary Authority for cross-border payments. Discuss its potential benefits, challenges, and the impact on trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Upload your answers to https://forms.gle/dVsmLfHqNpFCczGi8

3. Modi's Historic Visit to Guyana

Context:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Guyana, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 56 years. The visit highlights India's commitment to strengthening ties with Latin American and Caribbean nations.

About Guyana

- **Location:** Situated in northeastern South America, Guyana serves as a gateway to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

- **Geography:** Shares borders with Brazil, Venezuela, and Suriname, making it strategically important for regional cooperation.

Key Agreements Signed During the Visit

1. **Energy Sector Collaboration:**

   o **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for joint efforts in crude oil sourcing, natural gas, and hydrocarbon value chain development.

   o Supports India's energy security strategy by diversifying energy sources.

2. **Digital and Financial Cooperation:**

   o Deployment of India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** in Guyana to foster financial inclusion and digital transformation.

3. **Affordable Healthcare:**

   o Establishment of a **Jan Ausadhi Kendra** to provide affordable medicines in Guyana.

   o An agreement for supplying medicines to CARICOM countries under the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**.

4. **Military and Defense Cooperation:**

   o Scholarships, skill development programs, and defense capacity-building initiatives for Guyana's military.

   o Delivery of **two Dornier aircraft** to enhance Guyana's defense capabilities, along with an extended defense Line of Credit.

5. **Food Security and R&D:**

   o **MoU for joint research and development (R&D)**, personnel exchange, and food security initiatives.

   o India's contribution of millet seeds to support Guyana's food security and agricultural development.

Strategic Importance of the Visit

1. **Energy Security:**
   Guyana's growing prominence as an oil hub offers India opportunities for diversifying its energy sources and securing long-term oil imports.

2. **Regional Cooperation:**
   PM Modi co-chaired the **India-CARICOM Summit**, strengthening India's influence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. **Economic Growth:**
   The visit focused on expanding trade and investment across various sectors, including agriculture, IT, and biofuels.

4. **Cultural Diplomacy:**
   A symbolic sapling planting under the **Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam** initiative underscored the cultural ties between India and Guyana.

Benefits of Strengthened Relations

1. **Economic Cooperation:**

   o Enhanced trade in key sectors such as hydrocarbons, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals.

2. **Defense Preparedness:**

   o Strengthened Guyana's military capacity through Indian support and technology transfer.

3. **Food Security:**

   o Addressing agricultural challenges in Guyana through Indian expertise, particularly in sustainable farming practices.

4. **Global South Alliances:**

   o Strengthened ties with developing nations for mutual growth and shared prosperity.

Challenges to Overcome

1. **Geographical Distance:**

- o The logistical challenges in enhancing trade and operational ties between India and Guyana due to the geographical gap.

2. **Geopolitical Competition:**

   - o Managing partnerships and balancing influence from global powers like China and the United States.

3. **Infrastructure Deficit:**

   - o Guyana's underdeveloped infrastructure hinders its rapid economic growth and modernization.

4. **Climate Vulnerability:**

   - o The country faces rising sea levels and extreme weather events that can impede development efforts.

Opportunities for Growth

1. **Oil and Gas Reserves:**

   - o Guyana's vast oil reserves, with new discoveries expected to make it a major oil producer, potentially surpassing Venezuela by 2026.

2. **Emerging Energy Hub:**

   - o Guyana is poised to become a key player in the global energy market, with over 11.2 billion barrels of discovered oil.

3. **Technological Integration:**

   - o UPI adoption will play a critical role in transforming Guyana's digital economy.

4. **Agricultural Innovation:**

   - o Collaborations in food security and sustainable farming can improve agricultural productivity.

5. **Cultural Diplomacy:**

   - o Guyana's large Indian diaspora (43.5% of the population) provides a solid foundation for strengthening bilateral ties.

Way Forward

1. **Energy Collaboration:**

   - o Establish long-term partnerships in hydrocarbons and renewable energy to meet future energy demands.

2. **Digital & Technological Innovations:**

   - o Expand UPI adoption and promote public digital literacy to boost financial inclusion.

3. **Capacity Building:**

   - o Increase scholarships and training programs in defense, governance, and technology to enhance Guyana's capabilities.

4. **Regional Engagement:**

   - o Position Guyana as a strategic hub for India's engagement with CARICOM and South America.
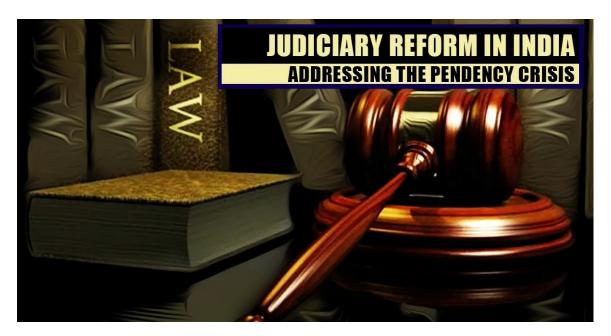
5. **Cultural Exchange:**

   o Strengthen people-to-people ties through initiatives that involve Guyana's Indian diaspora and cultural diplomacy.

4. Judiciary Reform in India: Addressing the Pendency Crisis

Context:
India's judiciary is facing a severe pendency crisis, with over 45 million cases pending in the court system, particularly in subordinate courts. These delays undermine the efficiency of the judicial system and hinder access to justice.

Issues in the Indian Judicial System

1. **Case Pendency and Adjournments:**

   o More than 85% of pending cases are in subordinate courts.

   o Around 50% of listed cases face daily adjournments, contributing to prolonged litigation.

2. **Administrative Burden on Judges:**

   o Judges are overwhelmed by administrative duties, spending approximately 55% of their time on non-judicial tasks, primarily due to a lack of skilled support staff.

3. **Workforce Shortages:**

   o India faces a 21% shortage of judicial officers and a 27% shortage of non-judicial staff.

   o In some states, vacancies can be as high as 50%, worsening delays in case resolutions.

4. **Infrastructure Deficiencies:**

   o There is a significant shortage of courtrooms and outdated technology, limiting the effectiveness of court operations.

   o Limited use of video conferencing for hearings further hampers efficiency.

5. **Outdated Laws:**

   o The **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) of 1973** and the **Civil Procedure Code (CPC) of 1908** contribute to frequent adjournments and delays in trials.

6. **Gender Disparity and Undertrial Population:**

o Only 11 women judges have served in the Supreme Court, reflecting a significant gender gap in the judiciary.

o In 2020, 76% of prison inmates were undertrials, highlighting the justice delays that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

Impact on Justice Delivery

1. **Delayed Justice:**
   Prolonged litigation and backlog of cases erode public trust in the judicial system.

2. **Economic Burden:**
   The delay in legal proceedings discourages business activities, impacting the economy.

3. **Financial Stress:**
   Extended proceedings increase litigation costs, imposing a financial burden on litigants.

4. **Erosion of Trust:**
   Inefficiency and inaccessibility cause citizens to lose faith in the judicial system.

Steps Taken for Effective Judicial Service Delivery

1. **National Mission for Justice Delivery (2011):**

   o Aimed at enhancing access to justice and improving accountability in the judicial system.

2. **Virtual Courts & e-Sewa Kendras:**

   o Facilitate remote legal processes and provide digital access to justice services.

3. **National Judicial Data Grid:**

   o Monitors the status of cases and tracks the pendency across courts, promoting transparency.

4. **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):**

   o Platforms like **Lok Adalats**, **Gram Nyayalayas**, and **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)** provide faster, more cost-effective resolutions to cases.

5. **Fast-Track Courts:**

   o Special courts for women, children, and senior citizens expedite justice for vulnerable groups.

6. **Judicial Appointments:**

   o Between 2014 and 2022, 769 High Court judges were appointed to address the shortage of judicial officers.

7. **Gram Nyayalaya Portals:**

   o Implemented for improved data management and transparency in rural justice delivery.

Recommendations for Enhancing Judicial Efficiency

1. **Promote All India Judicial Services (AIJS):**

   o Establish a unified recruitment system to ensure a consistent standard of judicial appointments across the country.

2. **Expedite Judicial Recruitment:**

   o Speed up the recruitment process and provide skill-specific training programs to meet the growing demands of the judiciary.

3. **Delegate Non-Judicial Tasks:**

   o Assign non-judicial tasks to skilled managers under high court supervision, freeing judges to focus on their core responsibilities.

4. **Introduce Performance-Based Incentives:**

   o Provide incentives for judges and administrative staff based on their performance, improving motivation and productivity.

5. **Infrastructure Modernization:**

   o Invest in digital tools, IT infrastructure, and additional courtrooms to support judicial functions.

   o Establish public dashboards to track case progress, increasing transparency and public trust.

6. **Expand Technology Integration:**

   o Implement e-filing, digitization, and AI-based tools for more efficient case tracking.

   o Use video conferencing for routine court procedures, reducing delays.

7. **Ensure 50% Representation of Women:**

   o Work towards achieving gender parity in the judiciary to improve inclusivity and decision-making quality.

8. **Coordinated Implementation:**

   o Collaboration among state law secretaries, high court registrars, and district judges to onboard skilled administrative personnel.

9. **Procedural Simplification:**

   o Revise outdated procedural laws to reduce adjournments and delays.

   o Expand ADR mechanisms to encourage out-of-court settlements.

10. **Utilize External Expertise:**

   o Involve retired professionals from sectors like railways and postal services to assist in court administration, leveraging their experience and skills.

Advantages of External Expertise in Judiciary

1. **Enhanced Efficiency:**
   Retired professionals can handle administrative tasks, allowing judicial officers to focus on adjudicating cases.

2. **Cost-Effectiveness:**
   Retired personnel are often paid adjusted salaries against their pensions, which reduces costs for the judiciary.

3. **Improved Productivity:**
   Skilled administrative support can expedite case resolution, improving overall productivity in courts.

5. Need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) in India

Context:
India's rapid economic growth has led to a surge in pollution levels, which are now threatening both public health and economic progress. This has led to calls for the creation of an **Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA)** to tackle pollution-related health issues and ensure a coordinated approach to environmental health.

Current Challenges Facing Environmental Health in India

1. **Rising Pollution Levels:**
   Pollution is severely impacting air, water, and soil quality across India, exacerbating health risks for millions of people.

2. **Health Impact of Pollution:**

   o **PM2.5 Exposure:** Long-term exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is linked to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular problems, metabolic conditions, adverse pregnancy outcomes, child developmental issues, and mental health disorders.

3. **Vulnerable Populations:**

   o **Children, the elderly, and economically disadvantaged groups** are particularly vulnerable to pollution-related health risks.

4. **Lack of Integration Between Environmental and Health Sectors:**

   o The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** and the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** focus primarily on environmental concerns, while the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** handles disease surveillance.

   o There is **no integrated framework** that coordinates actions between environmental and health ministries, leading to inefficient responses to pollution-related health problems.

5. **Data Integration Issues:**

o The lack of data sharing between environmental and health sectors hampers effective policymaking and hinders coordinated actions to address pollution's impact on health.

Need for Integration Between Environmental and Health Policies

1. **Optimizing Resources and Policies:**

   o Integrating environmental and health data and policies would allow for better coordination, ensuring that resources are optimized and action plans are more effective in addressing pollution-related health issues.

2. **Improving Policy Efficiency:**

   o A unified approach will streamline actions, reduce duplications, and create long-term solutions to mitigate the effects of pollution on public health.

3. **Global Inspiration:**

   o Countries like **the U.S., Germany, and Japan** have successfully integrated environmental and health policies, achieving more effective results in tackling environmental health risks.

Advantages of Establishing an EHRA

1. **Science-Driven Framework:**

   o The EHRA can commission studies on India-specific environmental health issues, such as **heavy metal exposure** and **climate change-related health risks**, using evidence to drive policy decisions.

2. **Health Impact Assessments (HIAs):**

   o **HIAs** would be incorporated into infrastructure and urban planning projects to proactively address potential health risks before they arise.

3. **Integrated Governance:**

   o The EHRA would centralize data from both the **environmental** and **health sectors**, ensuring cohesive policy-making and better mitigation of health impacts caused by pollution.

4. **Cumulative Accountability:**

   o The agency would hold **multiple sectors** accountable for environmental health outcomes, fostering a more **collaborative approach** to solving pollution-related problems.

5. **Enhanced Public Trust:**

   o A transparent, **data-driven** decision-making process would help **increase public confidence** in the system and ensure that policies are grounded in scientific evidence.

6. **Sustainable Development:**

   o Promoting **green technologies** and **sustainable practices** would align environmental health goals with economic development policies, ensuring long-term resilience.

7. **Economic Growth and Green Jobs:**

   o The creation of green jobs and the integration of environmental health into economic policies can boost **long-term resilience** while driving **economic growth**.

8. **Global Commitments:**

   o Establishing EHRA would strengthen India's efforts to meet **international agreements** such as the **Paris Agreement** and contribute to global efforts on **transboundary environmental health issues**.

Challenges in Implementing EHRA

1. **Bureaucratic Inertia:**

   o Resistance to change within the bureaucracy may hinder the swift implementation and enforcement of EHRA's policies and regulations.

2. **Industry Resistance:**

   o The **industrial sector** may resist the adoption of stricter environmental health standards and regulations, slowing down the effectiveness of EHRA.

3. **Regional Disparities:**

   o Differences in infrastructure and resources across states could lead to **uneven application** of EHRA's policies, especially in rural or economically disadvantaged areas.

Way Forward: Steps to Establish EHRA

1. **Establish EHRA:**

   o Establish a **robust Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA)** to monitor and address health outcomes due to environmental factors.

   o Involve **grassroots organizations** to ensure bottom-up accountability and ensure policies reflect local needs.

2. **Unified Database:**

   o Develop a **comprehensive database** that integrates both health and environmental metrics, facilitating better decision-making and policy implementation.

3. **Policy Effectiveness:**

   o Ensure that environmental health policies are **adaptable** and actionable, backed by **data-driven insights** to address regional and industrial challenges effectively.

4. **Nationwide Education and Awareness:**

   o Integrate **environmental health** topics into national education and awareness campaigns to promote understanding of the health risks posed by pollution.

5. **Promote Sustainable Development:**

   o Address India's environmental health crisis urgently to promote **sustainable development** and ensure the health and well-being of future generations.

6. **Governance Transformation:**

   o Establishing EHRA can **transform India's governance** by aligning **health, environment**, and **economy** to create a more sustainable future for the country.

7. **Align EHRA with Global Best Practices:**

- o Model EHRA's policies after successful frameworks in other countries to ensure **adaptive and effective governance** for environmental health.

6. Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

Context:

The **Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty** initiative was launched during the **G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil** to address critical global challenges related to poverty, hunger, and inequalities, with a focus on accelerating progress towards the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** by 2030.

The Need for the Alliance

1. **Poverty Projections:**

   o By 2030, **622 million people** are projected to live below the extreme poverty line of **$2.15 per day**. This underscores the urgent need for coordinated global efforts to address poverty and hunger.

2. **Hunger Projections:**

   o **582 million people** are expected to suffer from hunger by 2030, maintaining the same level as in 2015, highlighting the slow progress in combating food insecurity globally.

3. **Global Conflicts:**

   o **Ongoing conflicts** disrupt **food systems** and **economic stability**, pushing more people into hunger and poverty by hindering agricultural productivity, trade, and economic growth.

4. **Climate Change:**

   o **Increasing climate-related disasters** (such as droughts, floods, and heatwaves) have negative effects on agriculture, further exacerbating **food insecurity** and making it difficult for vulnerable populations to recover.

5. **Socio-Economic Inequalities:**

- o **Inequalities**—whether in terms of income, access to resources, or education—continue to widen, particularly in low-income regions, limiting the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts and further complicating efforts to tackle hunger.

About the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

1. **Aim:**

   - o The **Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty** aims to address the setbacks in achieving the **SDGs**, particularly in the context of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, **global conflicts**, and **climate change**, by accelerating progress toward **ending hunger** and **poverty** by 2030.

2. **Objective:**

   - o The Alliance seeks to **connect countries needing assistance** with partners willing to offer **expertise** or **financial support** to eradicate hunger and poverty.

3. **Members:**

   - o The Alliance comprises **81 countries** (including **India**), **26 international organizations**, **9 financial institutions**, and **31 NGOs** and **philanthropic foundations**.

4. **Funding:**

   - o The Alliance does **not have an exclusive fund**. Operational costs, which are estimated at **$2-3 million annually**, are covered by **contributions from members** and institutions like the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, **UNICEF**, and the **World Bank**.

Key Initiatives of the Global Alliance

1. **School Meals Programs:**

   - o The Alliance supports **school meal programs**, which provide children with nutritious meals to improve their health, cognitive development, and educational outcomes, especially in regions facing food insecurity.

2. **Water Access Solutions:**

   - o Access to **clean water** is a critical aspect of addressing hunger and poverty. The Alliance works on initiatives that improve access to water for communities, ensuring that people have reliable sources of clean water for drinking, sanitation, and irrigation.

3. **Support for Smallholder and Family Farming:**

   - o Many of the world's poorest people depend on **smallholder and family farms** for their livelihoods. The Alliance supports these farmers through technical assistance, access to markets, and improved agricultural practices to increase productivity and income.

4. **Maternal and Early Childhood Interventions:**

   - o **Maternal and early childhood health** programs are key to addressing poverty and hunger. The Alliance supports initiatives that focus on **nutrition**, **health care**, and **education** for mothers and children to reduce malnutrition and ensure a better start in life for future generations.

5. **Cash Transfers:**

- o **Cash transfer programs** provide direct financial assistance to vulnerable populations, helping them meet their basic needs, improve their living conditions, and invest in education and healthcare.

6. **Socio-Economic Inclusion Initiatives:**

- o The Alliance promotes **socio-economic inclusion** by supporting initiatives that empower marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and indigenous populations, to improve their social and economic status.

7. Various Initiatives in India's Fisheries Sector

Context:

On **World Fisheries Day**, the Indian government unveiled multiple projects aimed at boosting the **fisheries sector** in India, focusing on sustainability, innovation, and improved management practices.

Key Initiatives in the Fisheries Sector

1. **Marine Fisheries Census 2025:**

    o   **Digital Implementation:** The **fifth Marine Fisheries Census** will be **entirely digital**, using **mobile apps** and **virtual servers** to collect and process real-time data, increasing efficiency by **80%**.

    o   **Scope and Coverage:** The census will span **India's entire coastline**, from **Lakhpat in Gujarat** to **North 24 Parganas in West Bengal**, and from **Bitra Island in Lakshadweep** to **Campbell Bay in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands**.

    o   **Data Collection:** The census will gather comprehensive data on **household sizes**, **socio-economic status**, and the engagement of **fisherfolk** in the industry, providing a clear picture of the sector's dynamics.

2. **National Plan of Action on Sharks:**

    o   **Sustainable Shark Management:** This plan, modeled on the **FAO's International Plan of Action for Sharks**, focuses on **shark conservation and management** to ensure sustainable fishing practices.

    o   **Key Components:** The plan includes:

        ▪   **Improved data collection** on shark populations.

        ▪   **Increased resource allocation** to support conservation efforts.

        ▪   **Enhanced inter-state coordination** to ensure uniformity in conservation measures.

        ▪   **Building capacity** in **species identification** and **habitat mapping**.

- o **Traditional Knowledge Utilisation:** The plan integrates **traditional knowledge** from fishermen to aid in conservation efforts, recognizing the value of indigenous practices in managing marine ecosystems.

3. **Regional Plan of Action on IUU Fishing:**

   - o **Collaborative Effort:** India, along with **Sri Lanka**, **Bangladesh**, and the **Maldives**, has endorsed a **Regional Plan of Action** to combat **Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing** in the **Bay of Bengal**.

   - o **Objective:** This plan aims to prevent **IUU fishing** through **coordinated regional efforts**, strengthening governance and enforcement across the region to ensure sustainable fishing practices.

4. **GloLitter Partnership Project:**

   - o **Marine Plastic Litter:** The **International Maritime Organization (IMO)-FAO GloLitter Partnership Project** addresses the critical issue of **marine plastic litter**.

   - o **Implementation:** As part of the project, **Standard Operating Procedures** (SOPs) have been introduced for **retrofitted LPG kits**, promoting **energy-efficient** and **low-cost marine fishing fuels** to reduce environmental impact and minimize plastic waste in the oceans.

5. **Coastal Aquaculture Authority's New Single Window System:**

   - o **Online Registration:** The newly introduced **Single Window System** enables **online registration** of **coastal aquaculture farms**, streamlining administrative procedures and making it easier for entrepreneurs to set up and operate.

   - o **Voluntary Carbon Market:** An **MoU** has been signed to implement a framework for the **Voluntary Carbon Market**, focusing on **carbon-sequestering practices** within the fisheries sector, supporting India's goals for **carbon neutrality** and environmental sustainability.

8. VISION Portal: Empowering Underprivileged Youth for Innovation and Skill Development

Context:
The **Union Minister** launched the **Viksit Bharat Initiative for Student Innovation and Outreach Network (VISION)** Portal to empower underprivileged children and bridge the gap between remote areas and India's mainstream entrepreneurial ecosystem.

About the VISION Portal

1. **Aim and Objectives:**

   o The **VISION Portal** aims to empower **underprivileged children** by providing them with access to **education**, **skill development**, and **innovation resources**.

   o The portal seeks to **bridge the gap** between remote areas and India's mainstream **entrepreneurial ecosystem**, making resources more accessible to youth who might otherwise lack such opportunities.

2. **Democratising Startup Skills:**

   o The portal provides **underprivileged youth** with **opportunities** to gain insights into the **startup ecosystem**.

   o It enables them to learn about the processes of starting and running a business, thus fostering **entrepreneurial spirit** and skill sets that are critical in the modern economy.

3. **Skill Development Focus:**

   o The initiative places a strong emphasis on **education, entrepreneurship, and mentorship** to facilitate **holistic development** of youth.

   o Key focus areas include sectors like **Information Technology (IT)**, **agriculture**, and **biotechnology,** allowing students to specialize and gain in-demand skills across various industries.

4. **Access to Resources:**

- o The portal is designed to create avenues for students in remote areas to access **mentorship**, **training**, and **technological tools**.

- o This effort aligns with India's broader aspirations for **Vision India 2047**, aiming to build a future where technology and innovation are inclusive and accessible to all segments of society.