

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

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1 – ULLAS Scheme:

GS II

Education related issues

- **ULLAS - A Step Towards Literate India:**

- ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, or the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), is a centrally sponsored initiative that aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This programme aims to empower adults aged 15 and above from all backgrounds who missed out on formal education, helping them integrate into society and contribute to national development. ULLAS focuses on providing functional literacy, including reading, writing, and numeracy skills, and equips learners with essential life skills to promote lifelong learning. Implemented through volunteerism, ULLAS encourages social responsibility and a sense of duty ('Kartavya Bodh'), motivating learners to access educational content in regional languages via the DIKSHA Portal and the ULLAS mobile app. Certificates awarded to learners and volunteer teachers enhance confidence and motivation, driving continuous progress.

- **About ULLAS-Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram:**

- **Introduction:**

- ULLAS stands for Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society and is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented from 2022 to 2027.
- The programme aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommendations.

- **Objective:**

- To empower adults aged 15 years and above from all backgrounds who missed formal schooling.
- To integrate them into society, enabling them to contribute significantly to the country's growth.

- **Components of the Scheme:**

- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
- Critical Life Skills
- Basic Education
- Vocational Skills
- Continuing Education

- **Implementation:**

- The ULLAS app facilitates the registration of learners and volunteers through self-registration or by surveyors.
- It serves as a digital gateway for learners to engage with diverse learning resources available on the DIKSHA portal of NCERT.

- **What is the DIKSHA Portal?**

- **Overview:**

- DIKSHA is a national platform for school education, an initiative by the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT), under the Ministry of Education.
- It offers e-content for schools through an online portal and a mobile application.

- **Principles:**

- Developed on core principles of open architecture, open access, open licensing, choice, and autonomy.
- Built on open-source technology, it is designed for India and incorporates internet-scale technologies, allowing a variety of use cases and solutions for teaching and learning.

- **Features:**

- DIKSHA's core building blocks include many components of the National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR), enabling successful use-cases such as energized textbooks, online courses, content authoring, content sourcing, interactive quizzes, question banks, chatbots, analytics, and dashboards.
- To support teaching and learning for Children With Special Needs (CWSN), a significant number of audiobooks, Indian Sign Language (ISL) videos, and a dictionary are available on DIKSHA for CWSN.

- **Source** → *The Hindu*

2 - NITI Aayog Launches 'Sampoornata Abhiyan':

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Overview of Sampoornata Abhiyan:**

- NITI Aayog has initiated a nationwide campaign called Sampoornata Abhiyan.
- The campaign spans over three months, aiming for completion by September this year.
- It focuses on achieving saturation in 12 critical social sector indicators.

- **Objectives:**

- The primary objective is to achieve saturation in 12 key social sector indicators.
- Target areas include 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks.

- **Program Details:**

- **Background:**

- Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP): Launched in 2018 with a focus on transforming 112 districts through various developmental initiatives.
- Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP): Launched in 2023 to extend the developmental framework to 500 blocks across the country.
- Both programs aim to uplift the socio-economic status by addressing specific developmental indicators in identified regions.

- **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP):**

- Targets: 112 Aspirational Districts across the country.
- Focus areas: Health, nutrition, agriculture, social development, and education.

- **Key Indicators:**

- Distribution of Soil Health Cards.
- Provision of functional electricity in schools.
- Immunization of children aged 9-11 months.
- Early registration of pregnant women for Antenatal Care (ANC).

- Ensuring ICDS Supplementary Nutrition for pregnant women.
- Timely provision of textbooks in schools.
- **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP):**
 - Targets: 500 Aspirational Blocks within 329 districts.
 - Focus areas: Health, nutrition, agriculture, infrastructure, and social development.
 - Key Indicators:
 - Screening for diabetes and hypertension.
 - Early registration of pregnant women for Antenatal Care (ANC).
 - Ensuring ICDS Supplementary Nutrition for pregnant women.
 - Generation of Soil Health Cards.
 - Support to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through Revolving Funds.
- **Implementation Strategy:**
 - The campaign encourages collaboration among district and block officials, elected representatives, and local communities.
 - Activities include Gram Sabhas, street plays, health camps, exhibitions, and competitions to raise awareness.
 - Aim is to achieve comprehensive development across identified sectors in all target blocks and districts.
- *Source* → *The Hindu*

3 – Biodiversity in India:

GS III

Environmental Conservation

- **Current Biodiversity Status:**
 - Declining Species: The Indian black turtle, Indian garden lizards, barn owls, Indian flying foxes, henna, and palash plants have faced population declines primarily due to poaching and habitat loss.
 - Increasing Species: Conversely, populations of rock pigeons, rufous treepies, and other species have shown an increase.

- **Natural Assets of Thazhakara:**

- The village boasts:
 - 38 sacred groves
 - 10 paddy polders
 - 35 ponds

- **Challenges in Biodiversity Conservation:**

- **Habitat Loss and Fragmentation:** Activities such as deforestation, agriculture, urbanization, and infrastructure development threaten natural habitats, impacting species survival.
- **Climate Change:** Changing climatic conditions alter ecosystems, affecting species distribution and behavior.
- **Invasive Species:** Introduction of non-native species disrupts local ecosystems and can lead to species displacement.
- **Overexploitation:** Unsustainable practices like overfishing and timber harvesting contribute to species decline.
- **Pollution:** Contamination of air, water, and soil poses significant threats to wildlife and habitats.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Insufficient understanding among the public about the importance of biodiversity hampers conservation efforts.
- **Poverty and Inequality:** Socioeconomic factors drive overexploitation of natural resources, exacerbating biodiversity loss.

- **Related Initiatives for Biodiversity Conservation:**

- **Green Growth Priority in Budget 2023:** Emphasizes reducing carbon intensity and promoting green job opportunities.
- **National Mission for a Green India:** Aims to increase forest cover on degraded lands and protect existing forests.
- **Green Credit Programme:** Incentivizes environmentally sustainable practices by various entities.
- **MISHTI Initiative:** Focuses on mangrove and coastal ecosystem conservation for climate change mitigation.
- **PM-PRANAM:** Promotes sustainable agriculture practices to reduce synthetic inputs.
- **Amrit Dharohar Scheme:** Encourages optimal use of wetlands for biodiversity and income generation.

- **Strategies for Future Conservation Efforts:**

- **Science-based Monitoring Programme:** Implementing robust monitoring systems to track biodiversity conservation efforts effectively.
- **Sustainability of Ecosystems:** Promoting modern sustainability concepts that value ecological, cultural, and sociological aspects of biological wealth.

- **Water Conservation:** Emphasizing sustainable water management to support wetland ecosystems.
- **Ecological Restoration:** Prioritizing ecological restoration over mere plantation drives to enhance landscape connectivity.
- **Selective Mangrove Initiatives:** Strategically selecting sites for mangrove conservation to preserve biodiversity and coastal integrity.
- **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities and integrating traditional knowledge into conservation plans.
- **Research and Education:** Advocating for significant funding towards biodiversity research and public education initiatives.

- **Conclusion:**

- Efforts like the People's Biodiversity Register in Thazhakkara demonstrate the importance of local initiatives in biodiversity conservation. As India strives to meet global biodiversity goals, integrating scientific knowledge with community involvement and sustainable practices will be key to preserving the nation's biological wealth.
- This comprehensive approach not only safeguards natural ecosystems but also ensures a sustainable future for generations to come.

- *Source → The Hindu*

4 - Defence Production Hits Record High in 2023-24:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Background of Defence Production in India:**
- **Early Recognition of Need (1950s-1970s):**
- India's focus on indigenisation intensified post the Indo-China war of 1962 and subsequent conflicts.
- **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), 1983:**
- Led by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, aimed at developing strategic missile systems; concluded successfully in 2008.

- **Self-Reliance Index and Abdul Kalam's Initiative (1992):**
 - Initiated with a Self-Reliance Index of 0.3, aimed to reach 0.7 by 2005 through strategic planning.
- **Responsibility Transfer (2000s):**
 - Shifted from Department of Defence Production (DDP) to Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) and Services; devised 15-year Perspective Plans for Indigenisation.
- **Need for Defence Production:**
 - India's defence production efforts are driven by several critical imperatives:
- **India's Share in Global Arms Market:**
 - Accounts for only 0.2% of global arms exports; aims to enhance global footprint.
- **India as the Largest Importer of Arms:**
 - Despite efforts, remains the largest importer globally, with 11% of global arms imports during 2018-22.
- **Development of Military Industrial Complex:**
 - Focus on increasing national military spending; crucial for self-reliance and reducing foreign dependency.
- **Technology Transfer and Independence:**
 - Facilitates critical defence capabilities through technology collaborations and exports.
- **Exports:**
 - Initiatives like Brahmos Cruise Missiles to the Philippines exemplify expanding export capabilities.
- **Research and Development:**
 - Promotes significant R&D investments, fostering a robust defence industrial ecosystem.

- **Government's Initiative towards Defence Indigenisation:**
- Recent policy measures highlight the government's commitment to indigenous defence manufacturing:
- **Defence Procurement Policy, 2016:**
- Introduced categories like "Buy (Indian-IDDM)" to streamline acquisitions.
- **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), 2018:**
- Engages industries, MSMEs, and startups in defence innovation and R&D.
- **SPRINT Challenges:**
- Introduced by NIIO and DIO to integrate new technologies into the Indian Navy.
- **Indigenous Manufacturing:**
- Simplification of industrial licensing, liberalising FDI policies, and increasing domestic procurement share.
- **Defence Industrial Corridors:**
- Established in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to boost regional defence hubs.
- **Positive Indigenisation Lists:**
- Prioritises domestic procurement under the Buy Indian (IDDM) category.
- **E-Biz Portal:**
- Digitisation of industrial license processes for efficiency.
- **Custom Duty and FDI Policy:**
- Uniform customs duties and enhanced FDI limits aim to level the playing field.
- **Vendor Development Guidelines:**
- Guidelines to bolster private sector participation in defence manufacturing.
- **Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020:**

- Streamlines defence procurement, supports Make in India initiatives.
- **Recent Rise in Exports of Indian Defence Products:**
- **Current Status of Exports and Trend:**
- Exports surged to ₹16,000 crore in FY 2022-23, a significant rise supported by policy reforms.
- **Export Deals with Countries:**
- Exporting to over 85 countries, including strategic deals with the Philippines for BrahMos missiles.
- **Reasons for Recent Increase in Exports:**
- Private sector involvement, policy reforms, and simplified export procedures contributed to export growth.
- **Challenges Faced by Defence Production and Exports:**
- **Lesser Defence Budget and Modernisation:**
- Budget concerns impacting modernisation efforts and preparedness.
- **Insufficient Infrastructure and Capacity:**
- Despite progress, inadequate infrastructure remains a challenge.
- **Limited Private Sector Participation:**
- Dominance of DPSUs in defence production; efforts ongoing to increase private sector involvement.
- **Inadequate Investments in R&D:**
- Long-term success hinges on sustained R&D investments.
- **Establishment of Economies of Scale:**
- Crucial for enhancing productivity and reducing costs in defence production.

- **Measures to be Taken in Future:**

- Strategies to achieve India's defence production and export goals include:

- **Export High-Value Weapon Systems:**

- Focus on exporting advanced platforms like LCA-Tejas and BrahMos missiles.

- **Comprehensive Export Deals:**

- Offer integrated solutions including training and maintenance services.

- **Leverage Defence Lines of Credit (LoC):**

- Extend LoCs to Friendly Foreign Countries to facilitate defence exports.

- **Enhance Private Sector Contribution:**

- Incentivise and allocate significant projects to private companies.

- **Establish a Dedicated Export Promotion Body:**

- Coordinate efforts to promote defence exports effectively.

- **Defence Modernisation Fund:**

- Propose a non-lapsable fund to bridge budget shortfalls in modernisation efforts.

- *Source → The Hindu*