

## **Prelim Bits 12-06-2018**

### **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana**

\n\n

\n

- Government has provided cash incentives to nearly 23.6 lakh beneficiaries out of an estimated 51.6 lakh a year under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

\n

- The scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2017 and is implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development.

\n

- Under the scheme, pregnant women and lactating mothers are offered a cash incentive of Rs. 6,000 on the birth of their first child as partial compensation for wage loss.

\n

- It was done to reduce maternal mortality and malnutrition levels among children.

\n

- Many States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha and West Bengal have not yet implemented the scheme.

\n

- These states account for 25 percent of the beneficiaries.

\n

- Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha and West Bengal have their own maternity benefit schemes and have been reluctant to implement the PMMVY.

\n

\n\n

### **Initiatives of the Ministry of Coal**

\n\n

\n

- Some of the important initiatives of Ministry of Coal are discussed below.

\n

- UTTAM App has been launched for ensuring transparency and efficiency in coal quality monitoring process.

\n

- Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala Transparently in India

(SHAKTI), for auction and allotment of coal linkages, will lead to affordable power and transparency in allocation of coal.

\n

- Commercial Coal Mining, most ambitious coal sector reform ever, will help in creating direct and indirect employment through higher investment and better technology.

\n

- The reforms in the country's coal sector have contributed to enhancing energy capacity, efficiency, and security showcasing Government's philosophy of "Saaf Niyat, Sahi Vikas".

\n

\n\n

## **Iceberg B-15**

\n\n

\n

- Iceberg B-15 broke away from Antarctica's Ross Ice Shelf 18 years ago in 2000.

\n

- It measured about 296 km long and 37 km wide.

\n

- It is the largest iceberg ever recorded and could be nearing the end of its voyage.

\n

- The iceberg may not be tracked if it splinters into smaller pieces.

\n

- B-15 has since fractured into numerous smaller bergs, and most have melted away.

\n

- Melting and breakup would not be surprising, given the berg's long journey and northerly location.

\n

- Currents prevented the berg from continuing through the Drake Passage.

\n

\n\n

## **Rail Madad**

\n\n

\n

- Indian Railways has for the first time completely digitized the Complaint management system.

\n

- Rail MADAD (Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel) aims to expedite & streamline passenger grievance redressal.  
\n
- It registers a complaint with minimum inputs from passenger (option of photo also available), issues unique ID instantly and relays the complaint online to relevant field officials for immediate action.  
\n
- It also displays various helpline numbers (e.g., Security, Child helpline etc) and provides direct calling facility for immediate assistance in one easy step.  
\n
- All modes of filing complaints including offline and online modes are being integrated on a single platform.  
\n
- Therefore the resultant management reports present a holistic picture of weak/deficient areas and enable focused corrective action by officials concerned.  
\n

\n\n

## **K2 Mission**

\n\n

- A new mission plan named K2 "Second Light" was presented for consideration in 2013 by NASA.  
\n
- The K2 mission represents a new concept for spacecraft operations that enables continued scientific observations with the Kepler space telescope.  
\n
- K2 would involve using Kepler's remaining capability, photometric precision of about 300 parts per million, to collect data for finding and studying more exoplanets.  
\n
- In this proposed mission plan, Kepler would search a much larger area in the plane of Earth's orbit around the Sun.  
\n
- It entails a series of sequential observing Campaigns of fields distributed around the ecliptic plane and offers a photometric precision approaching that of the original Kepler mission.  
\n
- The K2 mission welcomes all proposals including, but not exclusive to, exoplanet, stellar, extragalactic, and solar system science.  
\n

\n\n

## **eDNA extraction**

\n\n

- \n
  - The technique of extracting environmental DNA (eDNA) was used to confirm the presence of specific varieties of rare turtles in the scared ponds of North east.
  - \n
    - Due to the ritual nature of Ponds, scientists were denied complete access to these ponds and so this technique was used.
    - \n
      - Indian softshell turtle (Vulnerable) and South Asian narrow-headed softshell turtle (Endangered) were the species whose presence was confirmed by this technique.
      - \n
        - eDNA testing is fast emerging as a tool for monitoring the biodiversity of an area without physically collecting specimens.
        - \n
          - Coupled to DNA metabarcoding, eDNA is a powerful means of biodiversity monitoring.
          - \n
            - Environmental DNA or eDNA is DNA that is collected from a variety of environmental samples such as soil, seawater, or even air rather than directly sampled from an individual organism.
            - \n
              - In other words, Environmental DNA (eDNA) is genetic material that persists in an environment and is derived from organisms living there.
              - \n
                - Researchers have recently been using eDNA to detect the presence of macro-organisms, particularly those living in aquatic/semiaquatic ecosystems.

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: PIB, The Hindu**

\n