

UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 11-12-2024

Snakebites as a notifiable disease

The Union Health Ministry has urged states to make snakebites a notifiable disease, a disease that is legally required to be reported to the government by both private and public hospitals.

- **Notifiable diseases** - Infections that are likely to cause an outbreak, lead to deaths, and those that need to be investigated quickly to take appropriate public health measures.
- List of notifiable diseases differs from state to state, state governments are responsible for bringing out the notification.
- Most of them consider infections such as tuberculosis, HIV, cholera, malaria, dengue, and hepatitis among others to be notifiable.
- **Snakebites** - Snakebites can lead to acute medical emergencies that require immediate care.
- They can cause severe paralysis that can prevent breathing, can lead to a fatal haemorrhage, and damage different tissues.
- Snakebites need to be treated with antivenoms to prevent death and severe symptoms.
- **Snakebites in India** - India accounts for more than half of all snakebite deaths in the world with an average of 58,000 deaths from snakebites annually.
- According to NAPSE, the most burden of snakebite deaths states are
 - Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, undivided Andhra Pradesh (which includes Telangana), Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- It accounts for more than 70% of deaths during the period between 2001 and 2014.
- The chance of an Indian dying from snakebite is about 1 in 250.
- World Health Organisation states that around 90% of snakebites in India are caused by the '**big four**' among the crawlers - common krait, Indian cobra, Russell's viper and saw scaled viper.
- The commercially available **polyvalent antivenom** contains venom from all 4 species, and is effective against 80% of snakebites.
- National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAPSE) with the aim of halving snakebite deaths by 2030.

Reference

[The Indian Express | Snakebites](#)

Indian star tortoise

A recent study has identified two genetically distinct groups of Indian star tortoises, northwestern and southern, the findings could help strategies on where and how to release and conserve rescued tortoises.

- **Scientific Name** - *Geochelone elegans*.
- **Nomenclature** - Its name comes from the star-like patterns that feature on its high-domed

shell.

- The shell's upper part is called the carapace, and the bony plates that make up the shell are called scutes.
- **Appearance** - It has a star-shaped pattern on its shell, a rounded shell, and a tan head, limbs, and tail.
- **Size** - Adult female Indian star tortoises are usually larger than males, growing to be about 10-12 inches long, while males are usually 6-8 inches long.
- **Distribution** - It resides in northwest India (bordering Pakistan), South India, and Sri Lanka.
- **Habitat**- It inhabits dry areas and scrub forest.
- **Diet** - These tortoises are hardy herbivores, feed mostly on mixed grasses as well as weeds, flowers, leaves of succulent plants
- **Hatching** -Baby Indian star tortoises hatch without the star pattern on their shell and are almost completely brown in color. They develop the pattern as they grow.
- **Conservation status**
 - **IUCN** - Vulnerable
 - **CITES** - Appendix I
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972** - Schedule I.
- The increasing demand for Indian star tortoise as pets has entangled them in one of the largest global wildlife trafficking networks.
- It is illegal to own one in India but also unethical since they are vulnerable in the wild.



References

1. [The Hindu | Indian Star Tortoise](#)
2. [iNaturalist | Indian Star Tortoise](#)

Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme

The Ministry of Education has increased the funding for the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) scheme by 13.70%.

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** under which one hot cooked meal is served to students studying in Balvatika (preschool) and **Classes 1 to 8**.
- It is served in Government and Government-aided schools on all school-days.
- The Scheme aims at providing nutritional support and enhancing school participation of

students.

- It was earlier known as ***Mid-Day Meal Scheme*** in schools.
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Education.
- It aims to address 2 of the pressing problems for the majority of children in India, viz. hunger and education by improving the nutritional status.
- **Nutrition norm per child per day:**
 - **For Primary** - Calorie - 450; Protein - 12 gms
 - **For Upper Primary** - Calorie - 700; Protein - 20 gms
- **Objectives** - Improving the nutritional status of eligible children in Government and Government aided schools.
- Encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- Providing nutritional support to children of elementary stage in drought-affected and disaster affected areas during summer vacation.

Reference

[PIB | Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman \(PM POSHAN\) Scheme](#)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) finalised the guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education.

- RPL is a platform to provide ***recognition to the informal learning or learning through work*** to get equal acceptance as the formal levels of education.
- It is a ***skill certification component to enable Indian youth*** to take on industry relevant skill certification.
- Through RPL, such individuals can access higher education, earn formal qualifications, and improve their employability.
- **Established Under** - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- **Implementing Agency** - PIA can be any legal entity such as SSC, Industry Association, Training Partner, Government Body, NGO and Corporate, except Assessment Agency.
- **Objectives** - Align the competencies of the un-recognized workforce of the country to the standardized National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).
- Enhance the employability and/or entrepreneurial opportunities of an individual and
- Provide opportunities for reducing inequalities based on privileging certain forms of knowledge over others.
- PMKVY assess candidates and provides a certificate and ***monetary reward*** on successful completion of assessments.
- Average monetary reward would be around ***Rs.2, 200*** per candidate.
- **Important Eligibility Criteria**
 - Age between 18-45 years.
 - Has prior experience in the job role for which they want RPL certification and as specified by the SSCs for those job roles.
 - Fulfils other criteria related to work experience as defined by the SSCs.
- **RPL Process**



University Grants Commission

- It is a *statutory organization* under the Ministry of Education.
- Established in -1956.
- Aim - To coordinate, determine, and maintain standards of teaching, examination, and research in university education.
- It became an important pillar of higher education.
- It also *advises the Central and State Governments* regarding the measures for the development of Higher Education.

References

1. [The Hindu| Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)
2. [PMKVY| Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)
3. [PMKVY| Guidelines on Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)

National Panchayat Awards

Recently, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj announced that 7 gram panchayats from Tripura have been selected for the National Panchayat Awards 2024.

- It is given **annually on 24th April, to the best performing panchayats** under Incentivization of Panchayats scheme.

National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated on 24th April every year.

- It recognizes the panchayats good work for improving delivery of services and public goods.
- To assess the performance of Panchayats in attainment of SDGs, promote competitive spirit among them and catalyse the process of LSDGs.
- It aligning with 9 Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) themes aggregating 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **Launched in** - 2022.
- **Awarded by** - President of India.
- The award is given to Various Gram, Block and District Panchayats of the states respectively.



- **Criteria** - It is conferred with ***trophies, certificates and financial incentives.***
- All the Panchayats ranked based on their performance under 9 LSDG themes:
 - Poverty free and enhanced livelihoods Panchayat.
 - Healthy Panchayat.
 - Child Friendly Panchayat.
 - Water Sufficient Panchayat.
 - Clean and Green Panchayat.
 - Self-sufficient infrastructure in Panchayat.
 - Socially just and socially secured Panchayat.
 - Panchayat with Good Governance.
 - Women-Friendly Panchayat.
- All the Gram Panchayats ***mandatorily to fill the 9 award themes.***
- **7 Categories**
 - Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP).
 - Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDSPSVP).
 - Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar.
 - Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar.
 - Panchayat Kshamta Nirmaan Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar.
 - Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar.
 - Best Participant (State/District).
- **National Panchayat Awards 2024** - It is the prestigious award for the appraisal year 2022-2023.
- 1.94 lakh Gram Panchayats participated in the competition.
- It executes the digital transfer of award money to the winning Panchayats.

45 awardees selected under various categories in that 42% Panchayats are led by Women.

References

1. [The Indian Express| National Panchayat Awards](#)
2. [MPR| Panchayat Award](#)
3. [PIB| National Panchayat Awards 2024](#)



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