

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

AYUSHMAN AROGYA MANDIR



- It is an attempt to move from a selective approach to health care to deliver a comprehensive range of services spanning preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care.
- It has **two components** which are complementary to each other.
 - Under its first component, **1,50,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandir** will be created to deliver Comprehensive Primary Health Care, that is universal and free to users, with a focus on wellness and the delivery of an expanded range of services closer to the community.
 - The second component is the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** which provides health insurance coverage of Rs. 5 lakhs per year to over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families seeking secondary and tertiary care.
- Ayushman Arogya Mandirs offer a wide array of services, including preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative care.
- As of January 31, 2025, **1,76,141 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** have been operationalised throughout India.

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY:

- Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of the Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- It is the largest health assurance scheme in the world which aims at providing a health cover of **5 lakhs per family** per year for **secondary and tertiary care** hospitalization to over 12 crores poor and vulnerable families (approximately 55 crore beneficiaries) that form the bottom 40% of the Indian population.

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

TRUMP ANNOUNCES RECIPROCAL TARIFFS FROM APRIL 2

US President Donald Trump announced the implementation of reciprocal tariffs on trade partners starting April 2, regardless of their economic status.

In his Joint Address to Congress, he criticized both friendly and unfriendly nations, including India, China, and the European Union, for imposing higher tariffs on US products.

Uncertainty for India Amid US Tariff Plans

- US President Donald Trump reiterated his criticism of India's high tariffs, particularly in the auto sector, where duties exceed 100%.
- His remarks signal that ongoing trade negotiations may not secure concessions for India, especially on reciprocal tariffs set to take effect from April 2.
- **Bilateral Trade Agreement at Risk**
 - India and the US are working on a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), with Indian officials seeking relief from tariffs, including the 25% duty on steel and aluminum.
 - Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is in the US to discuss the issue with United States Trade Representative (USTR) who is overseeing Trump's tariff policies.
- **Concerns Over US Commitment to Trade Deals**
 - Trade experts warn that Trump's tariff decisions, such as the 25% duties on Canada and Mexico, indicate a disregard for WTO norms and existing trade agreements.
 - The imposition of these tariffs raises doubts about America's adherence to future trade deals, including one with India.

US Challenges WTO's Relevance and Policies

- The US 2025 Trade Policy Agenda, released on March 3, claims that the World Trade Organization (WTO) is losing its relevance and has deviated from its original purpose of promoting open, market-oriented trade.

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

- The document criticizes the WTO's Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) provisions, which allow developing countries like India to access benefits such as extended transition periods, higher tariff bindings, and subsidies.
- The policy highlights China's shift away from market-oriented reforms since its 2001 WTO accession.
- It accuses the WTO of failing to address China's state-led economic practices, which the US sees as incompatible with the organization's founding principles.

US-UKRAINE MINERAL DEAL



- The US-Ukraine Mineral Deal is a bilateral agreement aimed at providing the United States access to Ukraine's vast mineral reserves, particularly critical raw materials.
- The deal establishes a **joint Reconstruction Investment Fund**, managed equally by Kyiv and Washington, to support Ukraine's post-war rebuilding efforts.
- Ukraine will contribute **50% of future revenues from its state-owned mineral resources**, oil, and gas to the fund, which will then be reinvested in projects within Ukraine.
- The agreement aims to strengthen economic ties between the two nations and help the United States diversify its critical minerals supply chain, reducing dependence on China.
- However, the deal does not include explicit security guarantees for Ukraine, focusing primarily on economic cooperation and resource development.

Ukraine Mineral Reserves:

- Ukraine possesses significant reserves of rare-earth minerals essential for various high-tech industries, including aerospace, defence, and renewable energy.
- According to data from the Ukrainian geologic survey, **Ukraine possesses 5% of the world's mineral resources**, including 23 of the 50 materials deemed critical by the U.S. government.

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

INDUS RIVER

- The Indus River is one of the longest rivers in Asia. It rises from **Mansarovar in Tibet** at an elevation of about 5182 m and flows for about 2880 km up to its outfall into the **Arabian Sea**. The length of the river in India is 800.75 km.
- **Tributaries:** Its principal tributaries are the Sutlej, the Beas, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum.
- It flows through **China, India, and Pakistan**, serving as a vital water source for agriculture, hydropower, and human consumption.
 - The Indus flows through India only through the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- **Drainage:** The Indus basin extends over an area of 11,65,500 sq. km and lies in Tibet, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
 - The drainage area in India is 321289 sq. km. which is nearly 9.8% of the total geographical area of the country.
 - It is bounded on the north by the **Karakoram and Haramosh ranges**, on the east by the Himalayas, on the west by the Sulaiman and Kirthar ranges and on the south by the Arabian Sea.
- **Historical Significance:** The river has played a crucial role in the development of ancient civilizations, including the **Indus Valley Civilization**, one of the earliest urban cultures.

Indus River Civilisation:

- Indus Valley civilization is the earliest known urban culture of the northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent.
- It is one of the world's three earliest civilizations along with **Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt**. This civilization flourished from approximately 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE.
- Most of the sites discovered earlier, **Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro**, are present in the Indus valley which gives the name to it. Harappa was the first excavated site therefore, it is also called **Harappan culture**.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

WORLD OBESITY DAY



- The World Obesity Day is a unified day of action that calls for a cohesive, cross-sector response to the obesity crisis. It takes place on **4 March** and is convened by the **World Obesity Federation** in collaboration with its global members.
- **Theme:** The theme for World Obesity Day 2025 is "**Changing Systems, Healthier Lives**," emphasizing the need for systemic changes to address the global obesity epidemic.
- **Goal:** The day aims to increase awareness, encourage advocacy, improve policies, and share experiences related to obesity prevention and treatment.
- Since 2015, World Obesity Days have focused on recognizing the root causes of obesity, increasing knowledge of the disease, tackling weight stigma, and improving understanding, prevention, and treatment of obesity.

Obesity in India Trends:

- Recent analyses published in The Lancet predict that by 2050, India, China and the United States are projected to have the highest numbers of people who are overweight or live with obesity by 2050
- India is expected to have **over 440 million obese** and overweight people by 2050, ranking second globally after China.
 - The prevalence of obesity and overweight among boys in India increased from 0.46 crore in 1990, to 1.3 crore in 2021, and is projected to increase to 1.6 crore in 2050.
 - Among girls, it has increased from 0.45 crore in 1990, to 1.24 crore in 2021, and projected to increase to 1.44 core in 2050, according to the study.
- The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)** reveals that nearly 24% of women and 22.9% of men in India are now classified as overweight or obese

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

SEMI-CRYOGENIC ENGINE

ISRO recently successfully conducted the hot test on a semi-cryogenic engine (SE2000), coming closer to finalising the crucial cryogenic stage.

- A semi-cryogenic engine (SCE) is a liquid rocket engine that uses liquid oxygen (LOX) as an oxidizer and refined kerosene as fuel.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is developing a semi-cryogenic engine with a **thrust of 2000 kN** to power the booster stages of future heavy-lift launch vehicles. This engine utilizes a combination of liquid oxygen (LOX) and refined kerosene (RP-1) as propellants.
- The semi-cryogenic engine offers several advantages over traditional cryogenic engines:
 - **Higher Density Impulse:** The LOX-kerosene combination provides a higher density impulse compared to LOX-liquid hydrogen, resulting in improved performance.
 - **Cost-Effectiveness:** Kerosene is more cost-effective and easier to handle than liquid hydrogen, reducing overall mission costs.
 - **Operational Efficiency:** Kerosene can be stored at ambient temperatures, simplifying storage and handling requirements.
- The development of this engine is expected to enhance the payload capacity of ISRO's existing launch vehicles, such as the **LVM3**, and is also planned for use in future launch vehicles like the **Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)**.

Difference between Semi-Cryogenic Engine and Cryogenic Engine:

- Unlike a cryogenic engine, a semi-cryogenic engine uses refined kerosene instead of liquid hydrogen. The liquid oxygen is used as an oxidiser.
- The advantage of using a semi-cryogenic engine is that it requires **refined kerosene**, which is **lighter than liquid fuel** and can be stored at a normal temperature.

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ - OVERCOMING PROXY LEADERSHIP

- **True development** extends beyond economic growth to **empowerment, inclusivity, and dignity**.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions (**PRIs**) **reserve 33-50% seats for women** to ensure the inclusion of marginalised voices in local governance.
- While these quotas have undoubtedly brought more women into leadership roles, the system has revealed **a persistent challenge of proxy leadership**.

The Challenge of Proxy Leadership:

- Many elected women sarpanches are **overshadowed by male family members**.
- Reasons include **patriarchal norms**, lack of education, lack governance knowledge and institutional support, and systemic weaknesses.
- Male involvement is often justified as support but **weakens women's authority**.
- **Training programs often fail** due to a patronizing approach towards women leaders.

Strengthening women's leadership:

- **Capacity building and training:**
 - **The programme for Jharkhand** panchayat leaders showcased how structured learning can empower local representatives.
 - **The training included** aspects of governance, budgeting, planning, funding, risk and conflict management, communication and digital literacy - **including AI tools like ChatGPT**.
 - Such programmes must become the norm, not the exception.
 - **Quarterly training sessions** should be conducted for two years post-election.
- **Policy recommendations:**
 - A government committee has proposed **nine key recommendations** to strengthen women's leadership.
 - Former sarpanches should be involved in policy making.

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

- A **minimum qualification** of 12th grade should be mandated for elected representatives.
- **Improving remuneration and resources:**
 - **Low honorarium is a major deterrent**; Rajasthan sarpanch receives only Rs 4,500 per month.
 - Similarly, other panchayat representatives receive a sitting fee of just Rs 250 per month.
 - **A dignified salary is necessary** to encourage serious participation.
 - Women sarpanches **should receive smartphones for independent governance access**.
 - **Official transport and technical assistants** can help reduce reliance on male family members.
- **Whistleblowing and accountability mechanisms:**
 - **Proxy leadership must be reported**, but safeguards against misuse should be in place.
 - **Government officials should be added to WhatsApp groups** for real-time guidance.

GUM ARABIC



Gum Arabic, essential in products like Coca-Cola and M&M's, is being increasingly trafficked from rebel-held Sudanese regions, complicating supply chains for Western companies.

- It is a **dried, water-soluble exudate** that comes primarily from two species of acacia, Acacia senegal and seyal.
- **Distribution:**
 - The trees are **native to North Africa** and grow mainly in the **sub-Saharan or Sahel zone of Africa** and also in **Australia, India, and South America**.

Current Affairs - 06 March 2025

- senegal is found in some parts of India, mainly in the dry rocky hills of **south east Punjab**, in the **northern Aravalli hills**, and in other drier parts of **Rajasthan and Gujarat**.
- **Major producing countries:** Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, and **Sudan** (market share of about 70%).

Properties of Gum Arabic:

- It is a **neutral or slightly acidic salt** of a complex **polysaccharide** containing calcium, magnesium, and potassium ions.
 - It is **non-toxic, odourless**, and has a **bland taste**, and it does not affect the odour, colour or taste of the system in which it is used.
 - It is **yellowish** in colour.
 - It is **insoluble in oils** and in most **organic solvents**, but usually **dissolves completely in hot or cold water, forming a clear, mucilaginous solution**.
 - It yields L-arabinose, L-rhamnose, D-galactose, and D-glucuronic acid after hydrolysis.
 - Humans have in fact used gum arabic for thousands of years; one of its **earliest known uses was as an embalming agent in ancient Egypt**.
 - Gum Arabic has **numerous applications**, particularly in the **food industry** and in areas such as **ceramics, painting, photography, and printmaking**.
-