

AP REGIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS JUNE 3rd WEEK

1. Visakhapatnam ITI Cluster: First PM-SETU Approval Syllabus - PAPER IV

TOPICS : Role of industrial sector in economic development ;
Public-private partnership ; CSR

MAINS Question :

"Examine how the industry-led model of the PM-SETU scheme can bridge India's skill gap and effectively harness its demographic dividend."

Rs 200-crore boost for Visakhapatnam ITI cluster

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VISAKHAPATNAM: Visakhapatnam MP Matukumilli Sribharat has welcomed the approval of Rs 200.21 crore investment for the Visakhapatnam ITI Cluster under the Prime Minister's Skill Education and Training Upgradation (PM-SETU) programme.

The MP thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary for extending the initiative to Visakhapatnam. He also expressed gratitude to ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) and all partner organisations involved in the programme.

Sribharat said the initiative marks a significant step in strengthening skill development infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh, adding that the State has become the first in the country to implement PM-SETU through an industry-led partnership model. He stated more than 25,000 youth will receive advanced skill training over the next five years, supported by upgraded infrastructure, modern equipment, and stronger industry linkages. The programme also targets 75 per cent placement outcomes,

The MP said efforts will continue to bring more central government initiatives and investments to Visakhapatnam for the benefit of youth.

Context:

Andhra Pradesh has become the first state in India to operationalize an industry partnership under the PM-SETU scheme, securing the National Steering Committee's approval for the Visakhapatnam ITI Cluster.

PM SETU :

The PM-SETU (Prime Minister Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs) scheme is a **₹60,000 crore initiative by the Government of India**. It aims to modernize 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and five National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) by shifting to an industry-led, demand-driven vocational training model.

Core Objectives

- **Modernizing Infrastructure:** Upgrading ITIs with advanced laboratories, smart classrooms, and digital content.
- **Industry-Led Governance:** Transitioning training control to industry partners (51% ownership) in a government-industry Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) model.
- **Future-Ready Courses:** Introducing 31 new-age courses in emerging sectors like mobility, electronics, and advanced manufacturing.

Scheme Structure

The initiative is divided into two primary components to expand outreach and training quality:

- **Component I (Hub-and-Spoke Model):** Upgrades 1,000 Government ITIs. It creates 200 centralized "Hub" ITIs equipped with high-tech facilities, each mentoring and sharing resources with about four nearby "Spoke" ITIs.
- **Component II (Capacity Augmentation):** Upgrades five National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) located in Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanpur, and Ludhiana to become global Centres of Excellence for training instructors.

Financial Model

The scheme's ₹60,000 crore outlay is distributed over a 5-year period:

- **Central Government:** ₹30,000 crore
- **State Governments:** ₹20,000 crore
- **Industry Partners:** ₹10,000 crore

Significance :

- **PM-SETU Definition:** Stands for Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs.
- **Scale and Investment:** A ₹60,000 crore central initiative to comprehensively modernize 1,000 government ITIs nationwide.
- **Nodal Authority:** Administered by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- **Bridging the Skill Gap:** Addresses the critical mismatch between traditional vocational training and the needs of high-growth sectors.

- **Demographic Dividend:** Essential for equipping India's massive working-age population with employable, future-ready capabilities.
- **PPP in Education:** Demonstrates a highly effective Public-Private Partnership approach to institutional governance and workforce development.

PM-SETU shifts India's skilling paradigm from a traditional government-push approach to an industry-pull model, ensuring the emerging workforce is directly tailored for the modern economy.



88. Operation Dandayana: AP Police Initiative for Women's Safety

SYLLABUS : PAPER IV : Inclusive Growth – WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

MAINS QUESTION :

“Analyze how reducing crimes against women acts as an economic catalyst for increasing Female Labor Force Participation and achieving truly inclusive growth.”

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VIJAYAWADA: In a major initiative aimed at curbing crimes against women and children and ensuring speedy justice to victims, the Andhra Pradesh police launched a statewide special drive titled 'Operation Dandayana' on Friday.

The programme was introduced under the supervision of Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta, and led by Women and Child Safety Wing IG B Rajakumari.

The DGP unveiled the official poster of the initiative at a programme held at the State Police Headquarters in Mangalagiri.

As part of the operation, the police will focus on ensuring swift punishment in cases related to rape, sexual harassment, POCSO offences and other crimes against women. Every women-related case registered across the State will be closely monitored to avoid delay in investigation and trial proceedings.

The DGP said it was decided to implement a "Speed Trial Monitoring System" to regularly review the progress of cases from the district to the State level. It was made mandatory to file chargesheets within 60 days in every case.

"Sensational and serious offences will be transferred to fast-track courts to ensure stringent punishment for the accused," the DGP explained.

A.P. police registered 19,952 cases of crime against women in 2024, says NCRB report

Updated - May 09, 2026 09:47am IST - VIJAYWADA

THE HINDU BUREAU

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The Andhra Pradesh police registered 19,952 cases of crime against women in 2024, as against 22,418 in 2023 and 25,503 in 2022, according to the Crime in India 2024 report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).



Police arrested 17,149 persons involved in crimes against women, and chargesheets were filed in 94.4 per cent of the cases. According to the report, 9,165 cases of harassment by husbands or relatives, 843 cases of sexual harassment, 441 cases of rape, 102 cases of attempted rape, and 977 cases of stalking were registered in 2024. Furthermore, seven cases of rape and murder, 30 cases of kidnapping for marriage, and 2,389 cases of assault on women were recorded.

Context:

The Andhra Pradesh Police has launched a comprehensive statewide drive called 'Operation Dandayana'. Operating under a strict zero-tolerance policy, the initiative aims to curb crimes against women and children while ensuring speedy, time-bound justice for victims.

Key Highlights of the Operation:

- **Time-Bound Investigation:** Mandates the filing of chargesheets within 60 days for all women-related and POCSO offenses.

- **Speed Trial Monitoring:** Introduces a dedicated system to review case progress regularly from the district up to the state level.
- **Fast-Track Justice:** Sensational and severe offenses will be directly transferred to fast-track courts to ensure stringent punishments.
- **Tech-Enabled Surveillance:** Employs geo-tagging and Facial Recognition Systems (FRS) to continuously track repeat and suspicious offenders.
- **Sexual Offender Sheets:** Habitual offenders will have specific history sheets opened to strictly monitor their movements.
- **Holistic Rehabilitation:** Integrates counseling services and collaborates with NGOs and legal experts to support the victims' emotional recovery.
- **Community Policing:** Expands the "Neighbourhood Watch" program across villages and towns to boost public participation.

Constitutional Backing

- **Constitutional Mandate:** Directly aligns with Article 15(3) (The State is permitted to pass beneficial legislation tailored specifically for women and children) and Article 21 (Right to a speedy trial and life with dignity).
- **Statutory Alignment:** Reinforces the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, which legally mandates concluding rape investigations within two months.

- **Internal Security & e-Governance:** Showcases the practical application of technology (FRS, Geo-tagging) in modernizing law enforcement and crime prevention. 'Operation Dandayana' exemplifies a multi-pronged governance approach—combining rapid legal procedures, technological surveillance, and community-driven rehabilitation to effectively tackle gender-based violence.

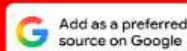


90. MEPMA & Araku Coffee MoU: A Push for Women's Entrepreneurship

MAINS QUESTION :

“Analyze how the MEPMA-Araku Coffee MoU serves as a model for transitioning women's Self-Help Groups from subsistence-level occupations to market-driven retail entrepreneurship.”

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VIJAYAWADA: In a significant step towards women's empowerment in AP, the Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) and Native Araku Coffee Private Limited have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The agreement was formalised under the leadership of Mission Director Smt. Vakati Karuna, The MoU aims to provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for urban women, members of SHGs, economically disadvantaged women, and aspiring women entrepreneurs.

Key provisions include establishing Araku Valley Coffee outlets across the state under a franchise model, setting up two coffee shops in each district within two years, and creating new avenues for jobs and business growth.

MEPMA will identify and train women entrepreneurs, extend financial support through government schemes, and implement a two-year strategic plan. Native Araku Coffee Pvt. Ltd. will provide strategic guidance to women entrepreneurs, organize exposure visits for MEPMA staff, create new opportunities for business expansion, and support monitoring and performance evaluation.

The financial framework includes Rs 5,90,000 for a 10x15 to 10x20 sized store, and Rs 10,00,000 for an e-vehicle-based mobile coffee shop. Women entrepreneurs will be eligible for loans and subsidies under PMFME and PMEGP schemes.

In the pilot phase, 100 women-led coffee outlets will be established. Quarterly review meetings, a steering committee under the Mission Director, and real-time support from Native Araku Coffee's dedicated team will ensure effective implementation. The MoU will remain in force for two years, with provisions for extension by mutual consent.



Context:

Andhra Pradesh's Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) has signed an MoU with Native Araku Coffee Pvt. Ltd. to launch 100 women-led coffee outlets, aiming to boost urban female entrepreneurship.

Key Highlights of the Initiative:

- **Target Beneficiaries:** Focuses on urban Self-Help Group (SHG) members and economically disadvantaged women.
- **Expansion Plan:** Operates on a franchise model, planning at least two shops per district within two years.
- **Financial Setup:** Capital required is ₹5.9 lakh for physical stores and ₹10 lakh for EV-based mobile shops.
- **Scheme Convergence:** Entrepreneurs will receive financial subsidies through central schemes like PMFME and PMEGP.
- **Collaborative Support:** MEPMA identifies and funds beneficiaries; Araku Coffee provides training and strategic business guidance.

Significance:

- **Araku Coffee Profile:** A premium Arabica variety organically cultivated by tribal communities in the Eastern Ghats (ASR District).
- **Geographical Indication:** Araku Valley Arabica Coffee holds a prestigious GI tag, signifying its unique regional quality.

- **MEPMA's Role:** The nodal agency in AP for urban poverty alleviation, transforming marginalized women into micro-entrepreneurs.
- **PMFME Scheme:** Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises aids unorganized food micro-enterprises.
- **PMEGP:** A credit-linked subsidy program by the MSME Ministry to generate employment through micro-enterprises.

This initiative successfully links rural tribal agricultural heritage (Araku Coffee) with urban women's empowerment, creating a resilient, localized micro-economy.

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91. Jaladhara-Jalaharathi Programme: Boosting Water Security

“Critically evaluate the role of the 'Jaladhara-Jalaharathi' programme in shifting Andhra Pradesh’s drought management strategy from reactive relief to proactive, asset-driven climate resilience.”

BAPATLA : The State government’s Jaladhara–Jalaharathi programme is reviving neglected farmlands in Palnadu and Bapatla districts through feeder canal restoration works aimed at conserving rainwater and improving irrigation.

Officials said the initiative seeks to ensure water reaches tail-end fields before the monsoon while recharging groundwater and bringing fallow lands back under cultivation.

Farmers have joined restoration efforts through voluntary labour, accelerating works across several villages.

In Tummala village of Repalle mandal, canal restoration is being carried out under the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Villagers are clearing debris, removing vegetation and desilting canals to restore water flow. About 25 farmers have voluntarily excavated a 1,500-metre stretch of canal.

Officials said the restored canal will help recharge aquifers and improve groundwater levels once monsoon rains arrive, benefiting nearby borewells. The project is expected to provide irrigation to adjoining fields and improve long-term water availability.

Around 30 farmers are expected to benefit directly, while nearly 25 acres of fallow land will return to cultivation.

Context:

The Andhra Pradesh government’s flagship "Jaladhara-Jalaharathi" programme is witnessing rapid execution in the NTR district. Driven by a 100-day special action plan, the initiative focuses on large-scale water conservation and groundwater recharge.



Key Highlights of the Initiative:

- **Targeted Action Plan:** Executed as a 100-day drive focusing on tank desilting, sluice repairs, and feeder channel restoration (Canals)
- **Scientific Approach:** Implements village-level water budgeting based on a thorough analysis of decade-long hydrological data.
- **Infrastructure Push:** Prioritizes the construction of recharge pits and percolation tanks to capture monsoon runoff effectively.
- **Massive Scale:** Aims to sustainably rejuvenate 439 traditional water bodies across the NTR district.
- **Community Driven:** Relies heavily on decentralized public participation and local irrigation associations for execution.

Significance:

- **Panchayati Raj Empowerment:** Aligns with the 11th Schedule (Article 243G), empowering local bodies in minor water management.
- **Sustainable Goals:** Directly advances India's commitment to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).
- **Drought Mitigation:** Buffers groundwater tables against erratic monsoons, building climate resilience for rainfed agriculture.
- **Ecological Balance:** Restoring rural tanks supports local biodiversity and serves as a critical lifeline for livestock.

The "Jaladhara" model demonstrates that combining traditional water harvesting wisdom with scientific data and decentralized community participation is the most viable path to climate-resilient agriculture in Andhra Pradesh.



96. Mangrove Encroachment in West Godavari: An Ecological Crisis

“Examine the role of mangrove ecosystems as natural bio-shields against coastal climate vulnerabilities in Andhra Pradesh, and suggest policy measures to protect them from commercial encroachment.”

Mangrove forest encroached in West Godavari

Environmentalists seek urgent CRZ review and joint departmental survey as officials acknowledge violations and shrinking mangrove cover in West Godavari's coastal belt



KV Sailendra 

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RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM: Concerns are mounting over large-scale encroachments in mangrove forest areas near Perupalem coast in West Godavari district, with environmental activists alleging that vast stretches of ecologically sensitive land have been converted into aqua ponds.

Though authorities claim to be taking steps for the protection of coastal ecosystems, activists say there has been little progress on ground.

Revenue, Forest and Irrigation department officials were expected to conduct a joint survey following complaints from the Coastal Environment Protection Committee, but no concrete action has been initiated so far.

Questions remain unanswered over the actual extent of forest land, the area under encroachment, permissions granted for aqua ponds, and the shrinking boundaries of creeks and mangrove zones over the past two decades.

Environmentalists are demanding a detailed scientific study on Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) limits and historical land records. According to Coastal Environment Protection Committee, the government had earlier leased nearly 33 acres near Perupalem beach for tourism development.

Taking advantage of the lease, an individual allegedly occupied the nearby creek and mangrove areas.

With the support of some earlier encroachers, nearly 70 acres were reportedly converted into aqua ponds.

Coastal Environment Protection Committee representative Tirumani Srinivasa Rao said complaints had been submitted to the government seeking immediate protection of mangrove forests.

He warned that the issue would be taken to the National Green Tribunal if local authorities fail to act.

Context:

Large stretches of ecologically sensitive mangrove forests along the Perupalem coast in West Godavari are facing severe threats due to rampant encroachment and their illegal conversion into aquaculture ponds.

Key Highlights of the Issue:

- **Drastic Decline:** Mangrove cover in the region has shrunk drastically from 2,000 acres in the 1950s to barely 510 acres today.
- **Illegal Conversions:** Nearly 70 acres of crucial creek and mangrove areas were recently converted into aqua ponds under the guise of tourism.

- **Regulatory Violations:** Aqua cultivation is operating illegally within the prohibited 300 to 500-metre radius of the forests.
- **Demanded Action:** Environmentalists are seeking an urgent joint departmental survey utilizing GPS mapping and historical land records.
- **Legal Recourse:** The Coastal Environment Protection Committee has threatened to approach the National Green Tribunal (NGT) over administrative inaction.

Static Relevance & Core Concepts:

- **CRZ-I Classification:** Mangroves are highly sensitive ecosystems strictly protected under Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ-I) norms.
- **Statutory Backing:** CRZ notifications are issued by the MoEFCC under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- **Ecological Bio-shields:** Mangroves act as natural shock absorbers, protecting coastal communities from cyclones and storm surges.
- **Blue Carbon Sinks:** Coastal ecosystems are highly effective at sequestering carbon, aiding in climate change mitigation.
- **NGT Act, 2010:** Empowers the specialized tribunal to effectively expedite cases related to environmental protection and conservation.

The rampant degradation of West Godavari's mangroves highlights the urgent need for stringent CRZ enforcement to balance economically lucrative aquaculture with critical coastal ecological security.