

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 19-09-2024

### New Pension Scheme (NPS) Vatsalya Scheme

The Union Finance Minister launched the New Pension Scheme (NPS) Vatsalya Scheme recently.

- It is a significant initiative **enables parents or guardians** including NRIs, or OCIs, to open a pension account for minors by creating long-term financial security.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NRI</b> - Non-Resident Indian, and it refers to people who are either citizens of India or of Indian origin, but who live outside of India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OCI</b> - Overseas Citizen of India and is an immigration status that allows foreign nationals of Indian origin to live and work in India indefinitely.</li> </ul>
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- Through this route, parents / guardians can build a retirement corpus for their children from their childhood **upto the age of 18**.
- **Managed by** - The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
- **Eligibility** - Any minor citizen (up to 18 years old) can participate.
- The NPS Vatsalya account can be opened both offline and online.
- **PRAN Cards** - Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) cards to newly registered minors to avail this scheme.
- **Contribution** - As little as Rs 1,000 annually, making it accessible to families from various economic backgrounds.
- For NRI and OCI subscribers, contributions can be made from their NRE (Non-Resident External) and NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary) accounts.
- **Withdrawal** - After a lock-in period of 3 years, withdrawals of up to 25% are allowed for specific purposes like education, illness, or disability. This can be done a **maximum of 3 times**.
- **Exit** - Once the minor turns 18, the NPS Vatsalya account automatically transitions to an NPS Tier-I account under the 'All Citizen' category.
  - If the total savings (corpus) is more than Rs 2.5 lakh, 80% must be used to purchase an annuity, and 20% can be withdrawn as a lump sum.
  - If the corpus is Rs 2.5 lakh or less, the entire amount can be withdrawn as a lump sum.
- **Death of the minor**- In case of the minor's death, the entire corpus will be returned to the guardian.

### References

1. [Times of India | NPS Vatsalya](#)
2. [India Today | NPS Vatsalya](#)
3. [Economic Times | NPS Vatsalya](#)

## World Patient Safety Day, 2024

*On the eve of World Patient Safety Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) urged all stakeholders to commit to reducing diagnostic errors and improving patient safety.*

- World Patient Safety Day, observed **annually** on September 17.
- **Established by** - World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019 following the adoption of resolution WHA72.6 by the World Health Assembly.
  - The resolution was a response to the high global rate of avoidable medical errors and patient harm, highlighting the urgent need for action to minimize harm in healthcare.
- **Aim** - To raise awareness about the critical importance of patient safety in healthcare systems worldwide.
- **Theme, 2024** - It focuses on enhancing diagnosis for patient safety, under the slogan "Get it right, make it safe!".
- **Objectives of World Patient Safety Day 2024**
  - Increase public awareness and commitment to patient safety
  - Improve understanding of patient safety
  - Promote global solidarity and action
  - Address specific patient safety issues

*Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030 indicated that only 47% of countries are addressing diagnostic safety.*

- A diagnosis determines a patient's health condition and is crucial for providing the necessary care and treatment.
- A diagnostic error occurs when there is a failure to provide an accurate and timely explanation of a patient's health issue.
- This can involve delays, incorrect or missed diagnoses, or failing to effectively communicate the diagnosis to the patient.
- The movement for patient safety gained momentum after recognising that unsafe healthcare practices contribute significantly to avoidable harm and costs to health systems globally.
- **Importance**
  - **Raise awareness** - It educates healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the general public on the importance of safety in medical care.
  - **Prevent harm** - The day advocates for the prevention of errors, the reduction of avoidable harm, and the improvement of healthcare outcomes.
  - **Patient-centred care** - It promotes a culture where patients are empowered and actively involved in their care decisions, fostering transparency and communication between healthcare providers and patients.

## References

1. [The Hindu | World Patient Safety Day](#)

## Melting Glaciers in Central Asian Countries

*Tian Shan mountain range, home to thousands of glaciers that are melting at an alarming rate in Central Asia pose a significant risk for towns and cities in Kyrgyzstan.*

- **Tian Shan mountain range** - It extends into China, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. 8 to 10 years ago, the glacier was visibly snow-covered.
- The Tien Shan is regarded as the ***“Water tower of Central Asia,”*** being a solid reservoir of freshwater resources and also a natural and early warning indicator of climate change.

*According to a report by the Eurasian Development Bank between 14% and 30% of glaciers in the Tian-Shan and Pamir, 2 main mountain ranges in Central Asia have melted over the last 60 years.*

- Until the end of the 1960s, the glaciers of the entire Central Asian region, and not only the region but the world as a whole, remained in a more or less stable state.
- In the early 1970s, there was a sharp acceleration in the rate of degradation.
- Conventionally, from 1973 to 1978, the winter glacier mass balance decreased by more than three times.

***Adygene glacier*** has retreated by around 16 centimetres (six inches) every year.

- **Cause** - Climate change are notably pronounced in Central Asia, which has been increasingly plagued by extreme weather events.
- **Recent Findings** - The retreat of countless glaciers poses a significant threat to the landlocked region that is already facing water scarcity.
- Melted glacial waters comprise up to 50% of the glacial runoff, that is, the annual runoff during the vegetative season.
- Kyrgyzstan is share water with the downstream neighbouring countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, where most of the region's population resides.
- Glaciers acts as a water reserves which are pivotal for the area's food security, and these are the vital freshwater sources which are vanishing rapidly.
- The glaciers cannot regenerate due to rising temperatures.
- The receding glaciers have introduced a new Risk for Kyrgyz towns and cities, as meltwater forms new lakes that can overflow and create dangerous torrents, as this water carries rocks.
- This may flows down the valley, and can impact towns & cities like capital, Bishkek.
- Increasing demand for substantial natural resources in the area, particularly gold extraction, may accelerates ice melting through chemical processes.

- Forecasts show Central Asia's glaciers will halve by 2050 and disappear completely by 2100.
- **Measures**- Natives of this region have installed a sensor about 50 centimeters above the water level that will transmit radio alerts in case of flooding.
- **UN Response** - United Nations, responded to the initiative of the government of Tajikistan, declared next year the Year of Glacier Conservation.

## References

1. [The Hindu | Melting glaciers of Central Asia worry scientists](#)
2. [The Business Standard | Melting glaciers worry Central Asia](#)

## Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) Scheme

*The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has recently sanctioned Rs.5,000 crore as credit guarantee fund for the MSME sector through the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme.*

- It is a credit guarantee scheme to make available **collateral-free Credit** to the Micro and Small Enterprises.
- **Launched in** - 2000.
- **Established by** - Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
- Under the revamped CGTMSE scheme, both new and existing micro and small enterprises, including manufacturing and service enterprises are eligible for a credit facility of up to Rs. 5 crores.
- **Funding** - Contributed by the Government of India and SIDBI in the ratio of 4:1.
- **Interest Rates** - As per RBI's Guidelines is eligible for coverage under CGTMSE.
- **Eligible Activities**
  - Manufacturing and Services including Retail trade is allowed.
  - Educational and Training institutions, Self Help Groups (SHGs), and agriculture-related activities are not eligible
- **Loan Amount**
  - For Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) - Credit facility up to Rs. 500 lakh can be covered on an outstanding basis.
  - For Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Select Financial Institutions credit facilities up to Rs. 50 lakh is allowed.
- **Guarantee Coverage** - From 75% - 85% (50% Coverage for retail activity)
- **Collateral / Third Party Guarantee** - Not required.
- **Annual Guarantee Fee for amount up to Rs. 1 crore**- Fee revised from 2% and reduced to as low as 0.37%.
- **Benefits of CGTMSE Scheme**
  - Ceiling for Guarantee coverage raised from Rs. 200 lakh to Rs. 500 lakh
  - Guarantee fee reduced to diminish the overall cost of borrowings to MSEs
  - Micro Finance Institutions as Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) are now eligible

- Concessions related to fees and increased coverage to SC/STs
- Reduced Guarantee fee by 10% and coverage extent increased to 85% to Women, ZED Certified Units and Units in Aspirational Districts
- Annual Guarantee Fee structure revised and fee reduced to as low as 0.37%.

## References

1. [The Hindu | Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for MSME scheme.](#)
2. [CGTMSE | About](#)

## Elephant culling in Zimbabwe

*Zimbabwe to Cull 200 Elephants to Alleviate Food Shortages Amid Drought.*

- **Elephant rich countries** - Estimated about 200,000 elephants inhabit a conservation zone that spans across 5 southern African nations - Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Angola, and Namibia.
- This area is home to one of the largest elephant populations globally.
- Zimbabwe, home to over 84,000 ***African savanna elephant (Loxodonta africana)***, also known as the African bush elephant, second highest worldwide.
- Home to one of the largest elephant herds, Zimbabwe holds approximately \$600 million in ivory stockpiles that remain unsellable.
- **Culling** - The cull, the first of its kind in the nation since 1988, is set to occur in the districts of Hwange, Mbire, Tsholotsho, and Chiredzi of Zimbabwe.
- The culling comes after Namibia's decision to slaughter 83 Elephants and 700 wild animals, to overcome food shortages.
- **Reason for Culling**- Overpopulation of Elephants highlights that it leads to resource depletion and escalating human-wildlife conflicts.
- The nation has been advocating to the U.N.'s Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to allow the resumption of ivory and live elephant trading.
- CITES controls on ***international trade in live elephants.***
- African elephants in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are included in ***CITES Appendix II.***
- This means that CITES Parties have agreed that
  - Although the species is “not necessarily now threatened with extinction” in these States,
  - It may become so unless international trade in specimens from these States is strictly regulated in order to “avoid utilization incompatible with their survival”.
- **Center for Natural Resource Governance** - In Zimbabwe, denounced the culling that elephants have an inherent right to exist, and future generations should experience them in the wild.
- **MIKE Program** - Under CITES aims to
  - Help range States improve their ability to monitor elephant populations,
  - Detect changes in levels of illegal killing, and
  - Use this information to provide more effective law enforcement and

- Strengthen any regulatory measures required to support such enforcement.

## Reference

[The Hindu | Culling of Elephants](#)

