

Rajasthan Current Affairs March - April 2020

New Water Reserves discovered in Jaisalmer & Barmer

- A report prepared by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (PNG) highlights the discovery of 482 billion cubic metres (BCM) reserve (aquifer) in Jaisalmer and Barmer region that will be able to provide drinking water to the entire western Rajasthan districts for the next 100 years.
- Both the ministries along with the oil companies will work over the years to provide water in the water-scarce western Rajasthan region.

Findings of the Report:

- Discovered aquifers are part of Thumbli, Fatehgarh and Jagadiya water reserves with estimated availability of water of approximately:
 - o Thumbli - 110 BCM
 - o Fategarh - 82 BCM
 - o Jagadiya - 290 BCM
- The water contains Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)/litre in the range of 1,000-10,000 while the maximum permissible limit of TDS for drinking water is 600 TDS per litre as per the standard rules.
- Depth of water availability:
 - o Thumbli: 100-1100 Meters
 - o Fategarh: 150-1500 Meters
 - o Jagadiya: 0-800 Meters
- Thumbli aquifer is found to be the most suitable reserve for large-scale desalination project.
- However, the salinity of the water in the reservoir is one of the major challenges to this project.

Bhadla Solar Park

- Bhadla Solar Park has now become world's largest Solar Park. The solar park is located in Jodhpur district.
- The project is a joint effort between the state-owned energy company NTPC, which provides electricity across the country, and the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a subsidiary of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- The park has been developed through following 4 stages:
 - Bhadla Phase I: 65 MW
 - Bhadla Phase II: 680 MW
 - Bhadla Phase III: 1000 MW
 - Bhadla Phase IV: 500 MW

Total Capacity: 2245 MW

- Before Bhadla, Solar Park Pavagada, Karnataka with a capacity of 2,050 MW was the largest solar park.

Char Dham of Mewar

- Rajsamand MP Diya Kumari urged the Centre to consider developing a spiritual tourism circuit covering Ekling Ji, Shrinath Ji, Dwarakadhish ji and Charbhuj Ji as Char Dham of Mewar.

Banasthali Vidyapith

- Banasthali Vidyapith has become Rajasthan's first varsity to be accorded A++ grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

Rajasthan moves to SC against CAA:

- The State government in Rajasthan has moved to the Supreme Court on 16th March 2020 challenging the validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

- It says that the Act is violative of the principle of secularism, which is part of the "basic structure" of the Constitution, and fundamental rights of equality and life.
- It became the second state after Kerala to move the top court invoking **Article 131** of the Constitution under which a state is empowered to directly move the Supreme Court in case of a dispute with the Centre.

No Vehicle Day:

- The first day of every month will be celebrated as 'No Vehicle Day' in all government colleges of the state. This advisory was issued by the college commissionerate in March 2020 and colleges have been asked to follow this.

Rajasthan Flying School

- A governing council meeting of the Rajasthan State Flying School was held where it was decided to reopen the school at Sanganer in city.
- It was also decided that the school would be reopened under public-private partnership (PPP) mode.
- There are 19 air strips were available in the state. These strips would be strengthened, and the government would explore all opportunities in the aviation sector.

8% Rise in Road Accidents in 2019

- According to the data provided by Rajasthan transport department, there was an increase of 8% in the number of road accidents from 2018 to 2019.
- A total of 23,480 accidents were reported in 2019 from which maximum number of accidents were reported in Jaipur rural, followed by Udaipur and Alwar.
- The total casualties in the accidents were 10,563 in 2019 as compared to 10,320 in 2018 indicating a hike by 2 per cent.
- Among the districts, the lowest number of accidents was reported in Jaisalmer with 161 road accidents in 2019, showing a dip from 169 in 2018.

Panchayat Awards 2020: Rajasthan

- On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day 2020, Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj awarded the best performing Panchayats/States/UTs across the country under the Incentivization of Panchayats in recognition of their good work for improving delivery of services and public goods.

Brief About National Panchayati Raj Day

- The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 came into force with effect from 24th April 1993 and gave constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs). It is considered as a defining moment in the history of decentralization of power to the grassroots, with the institutionalization of Panchayati Raj.
- In 2010, Government of India in consultation with the States, decided to celebrate 24th April as National Panchayati Raj Day. Consequently, the first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated in 2010. Since then, the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) is celebrated on April 24 every year in India.
- Every year on this National Panchayati Raj Day Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj organises National Conference and awards best performing Gram Panchayats.

National Panchayati Raj Day 2020

- This year, it was proposed to organize a national event at Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh and Hon'ble Prime Minister had accorded his kind consent to inaugurate the national event and address all the Gram Sabhas and Panchayati Raj Institutions across the country.
- But, owing to unprecedented situation that emerged due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country, it was been decided to commemorate the National Panchayati Raj Day digitally on 24th April, 2020.

Panchayat Awards 2020

Awards are given under various categories namely:

- Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP)

- Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP)
 - Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA)
 - Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award
 - e-Panchayat Puraskar (given to States/UTs only)
- This year, due to lockdown, awards under only above three categories viz. Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP), Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award have been finalized and will be shared with the concerned States / UT.

Panchayat Awards 2020: Rajasthan

- The following Gram Panchayats from Rajasthan won the award under the different categories of Awards.
- Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award : Nandri gram panchayat in Mandor block panchayat in Jodhpur district.
- Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA) : Sunara gram panchayat in Newai block panchayat in Tonk district.
- Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP): Jakhora gram panchayat in Ladpura block panchayat in Kota district.

Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana (RGJSY)

Background:

- Rajasthan, with a geographical area of 343 lakh hectare, is the largest State of the country, having 10.40 per cent of the total area of the country.
- Out of this area, about 101 lakh hectare is waste land and only 168 lakh hectare area is cultivable.
- Despite being the largest state in terms of area, only 1.16 per cent of total water resources is available in the state.

- The annual rainfall in the state also varies from 100 mm in the arid west to 900 mm in the South-East.
- Usually, every three out of five years, most districts of the state are affected by drought because of uncertain and varied distributions of rainfall.
- Moreover, owing to high intensity of rainfall and improper water conservation system, a large percentage of this rainfall goes waste resulting in continuous depletion of water table and further, conversion of cultivable land into waste-land.
- To resolve these serious issues, the State Government has decided to launch Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana (RGJSY) to ensure maximum rainwater harvesting, water conservation and judicious use of available water sources in the State.

Major Objectives of Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana (RGJSY)

- To generate awareness about water conservation.
- To ensure effective implementation of rejuvenation of traditional water resources, construction of new water sources, water conservation and water harvesting related activities in rural areas from available financial resources (Centre, State, Corporate, Trusts and People's participation) through effective convergence.
- To make efforts to ensure availability of drinking water within village/ nearby village vicinity and resolve the issue of shortage of drinking water.
- To improve the status of ground water availability and to check the rate of depletion of water table.
- To increase cultivable area and irrigated area through water conservation and rain water harvesting activities.
- To increase green cover through intensive afforestation

Major Activities in Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana:

- Watershed (catchment) area treatment: Trenches, Farm Ponds, Mini Percolation Tanks (MPT), *Khadins*, *Johars*, *Tankas*, Small Anicuts, Earthen check dams, water harvesting structures, Field Bund, Water storage structures etc.

- Repair of minor irrigation work, renovation and reinforcement work.
- Reinforcement of drinking water sources.
- Construction of artificial recharge structures.
- Pasture development & plantation.
- Promotion of advanced methods of cropping & horticulture (Drip, Solar pump etc.).
- The first phase of Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana commenced on 20 August 2019 in around 4,000 villages of all 295 blocks of all the 33 districts of the State. The completion period of phase-I is two years.

Raj leads in learning outcomes: MHRD survey

- Rajasthan scored the highest points in the category of 'learning outcomes and quality' of education in government schools among the states and the union territories. The learning outcomes are defined by the students' academic performance in reading comprehension and mathematics. The category is one of the five categories to form the **Performance Grading Index (PCI) report 2017-18** released by the MHRD on February 27.
- The desert state ranked among the top five states in the PCI. Heading the pack among the states and union territories are Chandigarh, Gujarat and Kerala. These states are listed in grade I category as their aggregate score is between 801-850 while Rajasthan stood in the grade II along with Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and D&N Haveli for having aggregate score between 751 and 800.
- The state performed poorly in two categories — infrastructure & facilities and access. The poor performance in the access category means that the state has poor retention, transition rate and high dropout rate.

Chief Minister Raj Neer Scheme

On 13th March 2020, Chief Minister of Rajasthan announced "Chief Minister Raj Neer Scheme" in the Vidhan Sabha.

- Water charges will be waived if the monthly water consumption of domestic consumers is less than 15 thousand litres in the urban area of the state.
- For this non-working water meters will be replaced with smart water meters.
- In the first phase, 10 lakh water meters will be replaced in the next 3 years in 29 cities with more than one lakh population.
- For this, a provision of Rs 25 crore is being made in the financial year 2020-21.
- Similarly, 55 TPCD free drinking water will be supplied to domestic consumers in rural areas and up to 70 TPCD water consumption will be waived in desert areas.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana

- Government of Rajasthan launched the Indira Gandhi Maternity Nutrition Scheme in the **TSP districts of Dungarpur, Banswara, Pratapgarh and Udaipur.**
- Under this scheme, on the birth of the second child, an amount of Rs 6,000 will be directly transferred to the mother's bank account.

THAR Scheme

- The State Government is planning to bring **Transforming and Harvesting Agriculture and allied sector in Rajasthan** scheme (THAR) for new investment in agriculture sector.
- The scheme will aim at
 - reducing the cost of farming
 - increasing the income of farmers
 - encouraging agricultural processing
 - promoting information technology in agriculture and
 - bringing the agriculture and related products of the state to the markets of the country and the world

PCPIR to come up in Rajasthan

- In March 2020, Chief Minister announced that a new Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR) will be created in Panchpada of Barmer, which will create large number of jobs and employment opportunities for the youth of the state in various sectors.
- The special investment area in the petroleum sector in Rajasthan will be similar to such areas created in Paradip (Orissa), Dahej (Gujarat) and Tuticorin (Tamil Nadu)

Rajasthan Epidemic Diseases Ordinance 2020 Promulgated

- On 1st May 2020, the Governor of Rajasthan in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 213 of the Constitution of India, promulgated the Rajasthan Epidemic Diseases Ordinance 2020.
- The Rajasthan State Legislative Assembly is not in session and the Governor is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action.

Rajasthan Epidemic Diseases Ordinance 2020 - Summary

- Defines epidemic disease" as any disease declared as epidemic disease by notification published in the Official Gazette, by the Government
- Empowers State Government to notify any disease as epidemic disease by notification in the Official Gazette
- In case of threat of an outbreak of any epidemic disease in the state, the Rajasthan Government may specify such temporary regulations or orders to be observed by the public or by any person so as to prevent the outbreak of such disease or the spread thereof and require or empower District Collectors to exercise such powers and duties as may be specified in the said regulations or orders.
- Additionally, the Government may take measures and specify regulations:
 - (a) to prohibit any usage or act which the Government considers sufficient to spread or transmit epidemic diseases from person to person in any gathering, celebration, worship or other such activities within the State;

- (b) to inspect the persons arriving in the State by air, rail, road or any other means or in quarantine or in isolation, as the case may be, in hospital, temporary accommodation, home or otherwise of persons suspected of being infected with any such disease by the officer authorized in the regulation or orders;
- (c) to seal State Borders for such period as may be deemed necessary;
- (d) to impose restrictions on the operation of public and private transport;
- (e) to prescribe social distancing norms or any other instructions for the public to observe that are considered necessary for public health and safety on account of the epidemic;
- (f) to restrict or prohibit congregation of persons in public places and religious institutions or places of worship;
- (g) to regulate or restrict the functioning of offices, Government and private, and educational institutions in the State;
- (h) to impose prohibition or restrictions on the functioning of shops and commercial and other offices, establishments, factories, workshops and godowns;
- (i) to restrict duration of services in essential or emergency services such as banks, media, health care, food supply, electricity, water, fuel, etc. and

e-Gram Swaraj portal

- On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day 2020, PM Modi launched e-Gram Swaraj Portal and Svamitva Yojana for development of villages.
- The e-Gram Swaraj portal is intended to help prepare and execute Gram Panchayat Development Plans. The portal will ensure real time monitoring and accountability.
- The portal aims to be major step towards digitization down to the Gram Panchayat level.

e-Gram Swaraj Portal /App

- The e-Gram Swaraj Portal/App is a step to make Gram Panchayats digital. The egramswaraj.gov.in portal is one single interface on which the details of development works will be listed panchayat wise.
- The platform will provide records of work from planning to the implementation in every village panchayat under Gram Panchayati Development Plan (GPDP).
- e-Gram Swaraj is one of the applications developed as part of Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) under e- panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) of Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MOPR).

Main Features of e-Gram Swaraj Portal:

- Single platform for all planning and accounting needs of the Panchayats
- Panchayat Profile: Maintains Panchayat profile with Election Details, Elected Members, Committee, etc.
- Planning: Facilitates the planning of activities and action plan creation.
- Accounting: Facilitates the work-based accounting and monitoring of funds
- Asset Directory: Stores all the immovable and movable assets
- Progress Reporting: Records the physical and financial progress of approved activities
- Simple and User-Friendly
- Work-flow enabled
- Assets available on Gram Manchitra GIS
- Supports multi-tenancy; multiple tenants in the same instance
- Strong Authentication Mechanism
- Based on Open Source technologies
- Web-based and available 24X7
- Technical architecture supports inter-operability with other PES products

Benefits of e-Gram Swaraj Portal /App

- The portal will bring transparency and speed up the work of projects.
- The biggest advantage of this will be that every person in the village will know about the developmental project and the money spent on it.
- The portal will give boost to e-governance in the Panchayati raj institutions across the nation and work towards digitization of work at the Gram Panchayat level. This in turn would improve the accountability.

Survey of Villages And Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas - Svamitva Yojana

- Svamitva Scheme will be a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Department, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India.
- The Scheme would provide the 'record of rights' to village household owners possessing houses in inhabited rural areas in villages which, in turn, would enable them to use their property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits from Banks.
- This would also enable updation of property and asset register to strengthen tax collection and demand assessment process of Gram Panchayats.
- Consequently, apart from demarcation of individual rural property, other Gram Panchayat and community assets like village roads, ponds, canals, open spaces, school, Anganwadi, Health sub-centres, etc. would also be surveyed and GIS maps would be created.
- Thus, the legal record of property holders and issuance of 'Property Cards' to household owners based thereon would facilitate monetization of rural residential assets for the purchase of credit and other financial services.

Objectives of the Svamitva Scheme

The scheme seeks to achieve the following objectives: -

- To bring financial stability to the citizens in rural India by enabling them to use their property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits.

- Creation of accurate land records for rural planning.
- Determination of property tax, which would accrue to the Gram Panchayats directly in States where it is devolved or else, add to the State exchequer.
- Creation of survey infrastructure and CIS maps that can be leveraged by any department for their use.
- To support in preparation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) by making use of GIS maps.
- To reduce property related disputes and legal cases.

Coverage of the Svamitva Scheme:

- There are about 6.62 lakh villages in the country which will be eventually covered in this scheme. The entire work is likely to be spread over a period of four years (2020-2024).
- Presently, the pilot phase is being approved for the year 2020-21. The scheme is launched in **pilot mode in 6 states (Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand)** covering approx. 1 lakh villages.

Benefits of the Svamitva Yojana:

- The scheme will ensure streamlined planning, revenue collection and provide clarity over property rights in rural areas.
- This would facilitate monetization of rural residential assets for credit and other financial services.
- Disputes related to property would also be settled through the title deeds allotted through this scheme.
- The GIS maps and spatial database would also help in preparation of accurate work estimates for various works undertaken by Gram Panchayats and other Departments of State Government.

- In March 2020, Union Ministry of Women and Child Development launched 'Suposhit Maa Abhiyan', a scheme for pregnant women and adolescent girls, on pilot basis in Kota and Bundi.
- The scheme which will provide nutritional support to pregnant women for 11 months taking on infant and female mortality rates.
- The programme will run for the next nine months.
- Over 1,000 pregnant women and adolescent girls were chosen after screening over 5,000 such females in Kota.
- They have been chosen to receive a 17-kg kit which contains food items.
- Medical cards will also be given to monitor their health.

Chief Minister's Economic Transformation Advisory Council

- In March 2020, the state government has issued an order and constituted the Chief Minister's Economic Transformation Advisory Council.
- The aim of the council is to tackle challenges coming in the way of progress and development of the state.
- The council will advise the state on the following — management of state finances, increasing production, identifying areas for employment generation, ensuring the smooth implementation of schemes and policies related to health, cleanliness and education
- The tenure of the council is up to March 2022 and can be extended if required.

Aarogya Setu App by GOI for COVID-19 Patient Tracking

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEITY) has launched this mobile app on 2nd April.
- The App is aimed at augmenting the initiatives of the Government of India, particularly the Department of Health, in proactively reaching out to and informing the users of the app regarding risks, best practices and relevant advisories pertaining to the containment of COVID-19.

Kisan Rath App

- On 17th April 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture launched "Kisan Rath App" to facilitate farmers and traders in identifying right mode of transportation for movement of farm produce ranging from food grain (cereal, coarse cereal, pulses etc), fruits & vegetables, oil seeds, spices, fiber crops, flowers, bamboo, log & minor forest produce, coconuts etc.
- The app has been developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- This App facilitates the farmers and traders across the country for transportation of agri-produce by connecting them with the transporters.
- The app interfaces with leading transport aggregators and individual transporters for providing a wide range of transport vehicles at required date and place, in a quick and easy way.

Janaushadhi Sugam Mobile App

- In 2019, the Janaushadhi Sugam Mobile App was launched as part of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra (PMBJK).
- During Covid-19 pandemic the App has been in news as the mobile application is being used by masses to help locate their nearest Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Kendra (PMJAK) and availability of affordable generic medicine with its price.

RajCovidInfo Android App

- Official Rajasthan Government App to get Corona epidemic related information, guidelines, health advice, state related data, hospital / helpline details and information alerts.

E-bazaar COVID 19 Mobile App

- The e-Bazaar Covid 19 App has been developed with the objective of providing a single platform for sellers and buyers to sell, buy and doorstep delivery of daily essential groceries.