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**Science
Reporter**



विज्ञान एवं
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MINISTRY OF
SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

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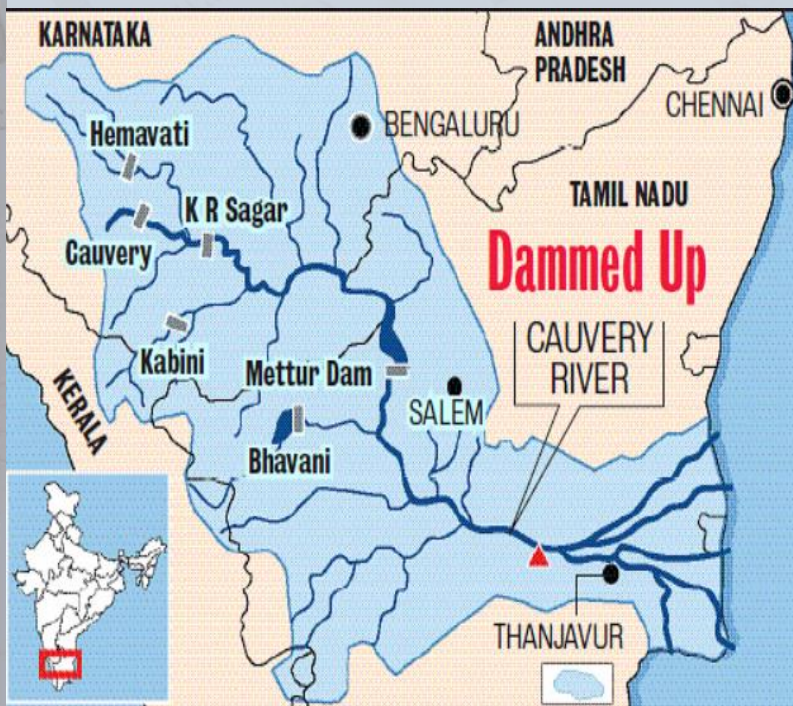
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IISC REPORT ON CAUVERY BASIN

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Concerns raised over decimation of green cover in Cauvery basin: NGT issues notice to southern states

Context: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has served notices to Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments, based on a report by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) that has highlighted the massive reduction of green cover in the Cauvery basin over the past five decades.



Cauvery Basin

- **About:** It is the largest river in the Karnataka state.
- **Known as:** Dakshina Ganga (the Ganges of the South) and considered one of the sacred rivers of India.
- **Origin:** Bramahagiri Hills near Madikeri in Coorg.
- **Tributaries:** Harangi, Hemavathi, Lakshmanatirtha, Kabini, Shimsha, Arkavati, Suvarnavathi or Honnuholé, Bhavani, Lokapavani, Noyyal.

Key Points

- According to the IISc report, the Cauvery basin has witnessed a staggering loss of 12,850 square kilometres (sq km) of green cover between 1965 and 2016.
- The **NGT expressed deep concern over the extensive agricultural and horticultural activities** covering 73.5 per cent of the Cauvery basin, with only 18 per cent remaining as forested areas and dense forests limited to just 13 per cent of the region.
- The **report highlighted that natural green areas have significantly diminished**, declining from 28,154 sq km to 15,345 sq km over the past 50 years.
- In Karnataka alone, 57 per cent of the green cover, equivalent to 9,664 sq km, has been lost. Tamil Nadu has seen a loss of 29 per cent (2,905 sq km) and Kerala has lost 27 per cent (279 sq km) of its green cover during the same period.
- The forest area in **Bandipur National Park has decreased by 15.19 per cent in 50 years**, primarily due to development activities and forest fires.
- **Nagarhole National Park has experienced an 11 per cent decline** in forest cover due to human intervention and increased horticulture activities.

14th Ministerial-level meeting of the India-United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF) held in New Delhi

Context: In New Delhi, India, the 14th Ministerial-level meeting of the India-United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF) was recently convened.

India-United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF)

- **About:** The Trade Policy Forum (TPF) serves as a continual platform fostering engagement between India and the US, with a primary focus on enhancing bilateral trade and investment relations.
- **Key Role of TPF:** It functions as a premier forum, the Trade Policy Forum plays a crucial role in addressing and resolving trade and investment issues that arise between India and the United States.
- **Focus:** TPF is organized into five distinct focus groups, namely Agriculture, Investment, Innovation and Creativity (emphasizing intellectual property rights), Services, and Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers.
- **Escalation in Bilateral Trade:** The bilateral trade volume between the two nations experienced significant growth, reaching USD 119.5 billion in the fiscal year 2021-22, compared to USD 80.5 billion in the previous year (2020-21).
- **FDI Statistics:** India attracted a notable USD 55.61 billion in foreign direct investment from the United States during the period spanning April 2000 to June 2022.
- **Multilateral Collaborations:** Beyond the Trade Policy Forum, India and the US collaborate in various multilateral forums, including the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), I2U2 (India-Israel/ UAE-USA), and IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework).

PMAY-G 2.0 may see 85% hike

THE CURRENT VERSION of PMAY-G will run only till the end of the current fiscal.

On November 29, 2023, the Union Cabinet approved Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN), under which ₹2.39 lakh/unit is given for the provision of pucca houses to improve socio-economic conditions of the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs).

"Keeping in mind the escalation in cost, a similar cash support will likely be given in the new version of PMAY-G. Construction of new housing units over an extended period will also boost the rural economy," an official told FE. The cash support could be similar to what is being offered under PM JANMAN, the official added.

An announcement could be expected in interim Budget 2024-25 to be presented in Parliament on February 1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that uplifting the poor, youth, women and farmers are his priority areas to make the country a developed nation.

With the PMAY-Urban scheme also ending in March this year, the Centre will likely launch a revamped urban affordable housing keeping in mind the escalation in costs. Accordingly, it may unveil a new ₹60,000 crore interest subsidy scheme for the urban poor and middle class for five years. It will offer interest subvention of 3-6% per annum on home loan amounts up to ₹50,00,000. The extant scheme offered interest subvention for home loans up to ₹18 lakh.



To achieve the target of 'Housing for All' in rural areas, the Centre rolled out PMAY-G on April 1, 2016, to assist in constructing 29.5 million pucca houses with basic amenities. Out of the overall target, 29.46 million houses have been sanctioned to states, out of which, 25.4 million houses have been completed as of January 14, 2024.

The government may save around ₹18,000 crore in PMAY-G in the current financial year as some states are not eligible to get funds, either for failing the eligibility conditions or not implementing the scheme.

The government has budgeted ₹54,487 crore for PMAY-G in FY24, the highest annual allocation after the launch of the scheme in 2016.

The expected savings in PMAY-G would cover the additional allocation of ₹16,143 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the first supplementary demand for grants, which was approved by the Lok Sabha in December.

Context: Recently, the government has hinted at unveiling a revamped version of the flagship Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) for the next five years.

- The focus of the new scheme is to construct durable houses in rural areas.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin

- **Launched:** In 2016 to address the housing gaps existing in the rural areas.
 - IAY (Indira Awaas Yojna) was overhauled and transformed into Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G), starting from April 1, 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by 2022.
 - It was initiated with the objective of achieving "Housing for All" by 2022.
- **Beneficiaries:** SCs/STs, former bonded laborers, non-SC/ST populations, widows or the next-of-kin of defense personnel who died in action, ex-servicemen and retired paramilitary members, disabled individuals, and minorities.
- **Cost Sharing:** Divided between the Central and State Governments, with a ratio of 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 in North Eastern and hilly states.

Rising sea, shrinking sands erode vibrancy of Ganga Sagar Mela

Shiv Sahay Singh
SAGAR

Rising sea level and erosion of the beach in front of the Kapil Muni temple on Sagar Island are turning out to be a damper on the Ganga Sagar Mela as the West Bengal government is desperately seeking a "national fair" status for the annual religious congregation.

As thousands of pilgrims descend on the island in the southernmost tip of West Bengal for the dip on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, about one kilometre of the beach in front of the temple is covered with mud. The administration has put up warning signs and diverted pilgrims to other beaches on the island, away from

the temple, for the holy dip.

With the auspicious holy dip for Makar Sankranti starting at 13 minutes past midnight on Monday, several Ministers of the West Bengal government had been expressing helplessness in maintaining the island. "We cannot fight nature," Irrigation Minister Partha Bhowmick said on Sunday. Minister Arup Biswas, too, conveyed a similar message the previous day.

On Saturday, Sumit Gupta, District Magistrate of South 24 Parganas, evaded a question on erosion and said only experts could take a call.

Tetrapods installed
Mr. Bhowmick, however, said that pilgrims would



Gradual decline: The beach in front of the Kapil Muni temple on the Ganga Sagar Island is eroding, leaving pilgrims with little space for a dip. DEBASISH BHADURI

not face any problems.

The State government has put up tetrapods – a form of wave-dissipating concrete block – to arrest

erosion along the Ganga Sagar beach. The Irrigation Minister said that the impact of tetrapods in arresting sea erosion would be

known only after the monsoon.

Speaking about the tidal surges and fast-changing landscape of the Sunder-

bans, Mr. Bhowmick said a *char* land (land formed because of sediment deposition in the river) had formed near the Sagar Island, which the local people had not even thought of.

The West Bengal government has spent about ₹25 crore on dredging the island. This is about 10% of the estimated budget of the Ganga Sagar Mela which is pegged at ₹250 crore.

Growing concern

Erosion of a large stretch of the island has come as an embarrassment when the Ministers and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wanted the Ganga Sagar Mela to be accorded a national fair status.

On January 11, Ms. Banerjee wrote to Prime Mi-

nister Narendra Modi in this regard.

"...considering the uniqueness, significance, magnitude and spiritual depth associated with the Ganga Sagar Mela, I would earnestly appeal to you to kindly consider to declare the Mela a National Fair," she had written.

With the sea level rising, the water is close to reaching the Kapil Muni temple. Local people and experts point out that earlier temples of Kapil Muni had gone under the sea.

Tuhin Ghosh, a Professor at the School of Oceanographic Studies at Jadavpur University, recalled that the remnants of the earlier temples had been visible till about 30 years ago.

"There were sand dunes

and vegetation, followed by a flat beach. Gradually, the vegetation and undulations were cleared and made flat for extension of the mela ground. Since these barriers were done away with, the attacks of waves have increased. This is mostly created by human interventions," Professor Ghosh explained.

Experts also point out that most of the constructions on Sagar Island has been done in violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone.

"Due to the lack of sediment influx from the Ganga-Meghna-Brahmaputra river system, there is accretion of landmass towards the Meghna delta and we are losing land in the Sundarbans," Professor Ghosh added.

Context: As groups of pilgrims start arriving at Sagar Island for a holy dip at the confluence of the river Ganga and the Bay of Bengal, the West Bengal government is leaving no stone unturned to describe the gathering as the biggest religious event in the country.

Ganga Sagar Mela

- **About:** The Gangasagar Mela is an annual event that takes place during Makar Sankranti.
- **Rituals at the Confluence:** On the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti, thousands of pilgrims, seers, and tourists partake in a holy dip at the confluence of the Ganga and the Bay of Bengal to commemorate the event.
- **Devotion at Kapil Muni Temple:** Pilgrims also engage in offering prayers at the revered Kapil Muni Temple as part of the Gangasagar Mela traditions.
- **Spiritual Significance:** On the day of Makar Sankranti, specifically on January 14, as the sun transitions to Capricorn from Sagittarius, the bath in the confluence is believed to be a sacred act leading to salvation.
- **Nationwide Gathering:** Gangasagar ranks as the second-largest congregation of pilgrims, devotees, and enthusiasts in the country, following the renowned Kumbh Mela in Haridwar.

Marginal increase: There are 1,811 saltwater crocodiles in Odisha's Bhitarkanika, annual census reveals



Saltwater Crocodile

- **Scientific Name:** *Crocodylus porosus*.
- **Distribution:** Found in brackish waters of wetlands and marine intertidal environments from Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Australia's northern coast.
- **Features:** Males average 5m in length and 500kg in weight, while females are smaller. Nocturnal hunters known for their aggressive nature, leading to frequent attacks on people and livestock.
- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern.

Context: The population of saltwater or estuarine crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*) in and around Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park has marginally increased in 2024.

Bhitarkanika National Park

- **Location:** Kendrapara district, Odisha, India.
- Second-largest mangrove ecosystem in India after Sunderbans.
- **Designated as:** National park on September 16, 1998, and recognized as a Ramsar site in August 2002, making it the second Ramsar site in the state, following Chilika Lake.
- **Coverage:** Spreads across 145 sq km, comprising a network of creeks and canals fed by rivers Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, and Patasala, forming a distinctive ecosystem.
- **Flora:** Mangrove species, casuarinas, and grasses such as the indigo bush.
- **Fauna:** Saltwater crocodiles, Gahirmatha Beach, Olive Ridley Sea Turtles, monkeys, jackals, langurs, otters, sambar deer, jungle cats, foxes, mongooses, wolves, fishing cats, and hyenas.

Uttarakhand to implement UCC

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said Uttarakhand is likely to become the first state in the country to implement a Uniform Civil Code. A Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for Uttarakhand was one of the major poll promises made by the BJP in the run-up to the state assembly elections held in 2022.

Addressing a gathering at the "Uttarayani Kauthik" programme organised by people who hail from Uttarakhand, Rajnath Singh said, "I think if some state is going to become first in implementing uniform civil code, it will be Uttarakhand."

He, however, did not elaborate on this. After being voted to power for a second consecutive term, Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami gave his nod to setting up a committee headed by retired Supreme Court Judge Ranjana Prakash Desai to draft the UCC at the very first cabinet meeting headed by him. **PTI**

Context: The Defence Minister of India recently stated that Uttarakhand is likely to become the first state in the country to implement a Uniform Civil Code.

Uniform Civil Code

- **About:** A UCC refers to a common set of personal laws to be followed by the citizens, irrespective of religion, in matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption.
- **Origin:** The UCC's roots trace to colonial India, as the British government's 1835 report highlighted the importance of consistent laws for crimes, evidence, and contracts, excluding the personal laws of Hindus and Muslims.
- **Source:** Under **Article 44**, the State is bound by a constitutional mandate to endeavour to universalize and secularize personal laws, throughout the Indian territory.
- **Objective:** To address the discrimination against vulnerable groups and replace the system of fragmented personal laws, that are segregated at present on the basis of religious beliefs like the **Hindu code bill, Shariat law, and others, into one Uniform Code.**
- **Goa:** After its liberation in 1961, Goa, with a population of just six lakh at that time, retained the Portuguese Civil Code, making it the only state to have a uniform civil code for all religions.

Judicial Pronouncements Associated with UCC

- **In Shah Bano case (1985):** SC emphasised the importance of UCC for having a common basis for jurisdiction.
- **Sarla Mudgal Case (1995):** SC reiterated the need for a Uniform Civil Code to help national integration by removing ideological contradictions.
- **Shayara Bano v. Union of India (Triple Talaq Case):** SC held triple talaq as unconstitutional and un-Islamic, raising the question of the Uniform Civil Code to stop such personal law practices.

Youth Co:Lab aims to invest in and empower youth to accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goals: Director Atal Innovation Mission Chintan Vaishnav

Context: Recently launched in New Delhi, the 6th Edition of the Youth Co:Lab fellowship prioritizes supporting youth-led startups in areas such as agriculture fintech, innovative solutions for indigenous peoples, and assistive technology.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- **Establishment**: 2016
- **Purpose**: It serves as the country's premier effort to cultivate a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Objective**: To create and promote an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, spanning from schools and universities to research institutions, MSMEs, and industries nationwide.
- **Efficient Monitoring and Management**: All activities under the initiative are systematically monitored and managed in real-time through advanced Management Information Systems (MIS) and dynamic dashboards.
- **Implementing Agency**: NITI Aayog is the designated agency responsible for the implementation of the initiative.
- **Components of AIM**: Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL), Atal Incubation Centres, Atal New India Challenge, Mentor of Change Program, Atal Community Innovation Center and Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE)

More than 30 crore Ayushman Cards issued to beneficiaries under Ayushman Bharat Yojana

Context: More than 30 crore Ayushman Cards have been issued to beneficiaries under the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- **About:** It is also known as Jan Arogya Abhiyaan, the National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM), or Modicare.
 - This initiative has been created to align with SDG principles, which is “leave no one behind”.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- **Implementing Agency:** National Health Authority (NHA).
- **Aim:** To make significant changes in healthcare by addressing all aspects of health (like prevention, promotion, and outpatient care) across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.
- **Launched by:** National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- **Funding:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme (expenditure incurred in premium payment will be shared between Central and State governments).
- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM):** It was introduced in 2021 to issue Unique Digital Health IDs (UHID) to every Indian citizen.
 - This initiative **facilitates electronic access to health records for hospitals**, insurance companies, and citizens as needed.

Global surgery: why access to essential surgery is important

This focuses on equitable access to emergency and essential surgery. It encompasses a range of challenges including inaccessibility, disease burden, and economic burden

Siddhesh Zadey
Alman Perween Afzar
Maithili K

Global surgery is the neglected stepchild in global health. The neglect is more shocking in South Asia which has the largest population globally lacking access to essential surgery.

What is global surgery? Global surgery focuses on equitable access to emergency and essential surgery. While it predominantly focuses on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), it also prioritises access disparities and under-served populations in high-income countries (HICs). These "surgeries" include essential and emergency surgeries such as surgery, obstetrics, trauma, and anaesthesia (SOTA). Despite small differences, there is largely a consensus across multiple international groups on about thirty procedures that fall under the umbrella of emergency and essential surgery.

How far back does global surgery go? The year 2005 can be considered the "Annus Mirabilis" or the miracle year for global surgery. It proved to be an inflection point in recognising the importance of surgical care on a global scale. One key development that played a significant role in this transformation was the Disease Control Priorities Network (DCPN) report on essential surgery sponsored by the World Bank which highlighted that emergency and essential surgical care is cost effective; scaling up surgical systems is cost beneficial; and that there is a large disease burden that is surgically avertable.

The second development was The Lancet Commission on Global Surgery (LCoGS) which brought together experts and stakeholders to examine the status of surgical care access around the world; identify the indicators for monitoring surgical care preparedness; systemic capacity and impact; and to develop implementable strategies such as the national surgical, obstetrics, and anaesthesia plan (NSOAP). This paved the way for arguably the most important high-level policy and political commitment to surgery, which is the passage of the World Health Organization Declaration on Safe Surgery (WHO Resolution 68.15) which recognised the impossibility of universal health coverage in the absence of required commitment to emergency and essential surgical systems. While 2015 set the stage for global surgery, it is critical to note that the history of the field as a whole goes back several decades. The exchange of knowledge and bilateral sharing of trainees under surgical missions in humanitarian settings across various parts of the world in the last century can be considered global. Given the focus on reducing disparities, people have also rightly argued that surgeons committed to delivering care in rural and remote parts of the world found global surgery several decades before 2005.

How big of a problem is it?



inaccessibility, disease burden, and economic burden.

The LCoGS noted that five billion people or over 70% of the global population lack timely access to safe and affordable surgical care when needed. Most severely, 99% and 96% of the people in low- and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) respectively, face access gaps compared to 24% in high-income countries (HICs), which translates to over 98% of the South Asian population lacking access to safe and affordable SOTA care.

Lack of access is tied to disease burden. In 2010, around 17 million deaths were attributed to surgically treatable conditions, surpassing the combined mortality burden of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria – emphasising

most common cause of death just below ischemic heart disease and stroke. This is partly due to the lack of timely care, unsafe surgeries, and limited capacity of surgical systems. Further, the DCPN comprehensively assessed the disease burden in LMICs that can be averted by scaling up surgical services at district hospitals. It found LMICs to have over 77 million surgically avertable Disability-Adjusted Life-Years (DALY) that formed 3.5% of the total disease burden in these countries. Among regions, South Asia had a higher DALY rate than the LMIC average. South Asia contributed to 30.46%, 32.49%, 26.67%, and 33.33% of the surgically avertable burden of neonatal and maternal diseases, congenital anomalies, digestive conditions, and injuries respectively.

The disease burden also leads to an economic burden. The cumulative projected loss to GDP due to the absence

of surgery is estimated at \$4.5 trillion for 175 countries. South Asia contributes to about 7% of the global lost welfare.

What is being done?

Regardless of the disease and economic burden, surgery gets neglected in policies and health planning at the international level. The LCoGS noted that surgery contributed to <1% of all indicators mentioned in the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, and other reports. Neglect is also present in national policymaking. An analysis of National Health Strategic Plans from 43 African countries noted that 89% did not mention surgery or surgical conditions at all while 62% mentioned surgery only five times or less. Similarly, an analysis of 70+ years of policymaking in India also noted limited and decreasing attention to surgery. The most recent National Health Policy (2017) had only two mentions of the phrase – "surg". While The Lancet Commission on Global Cancer Surgery noted that surgery is central to national cancer control plans, India's new guidelines on non-communicable diseases (2023) that focuses on cancer heavily has sparse mention of surgery.

While national health account data on funding for surgery is limited, data from other sources such as the Developmental Assistance for Health (DAH) points to neglect in funding for surgery and related areas. DAH contributions to trauma care are \$8 per DALY compared to \$41 per DALY for HIV or \$25 for tuberculosis. While U.S. charitable organisations and foundations have spent several million on surgical care in LMICs, these are driven mainly toward specific diseases such as cleft palate, obstetric fistula, and ophthalmic issues, leaving strengthening surgical systems up to individual countries. For example, of the \$805 million spent by 470 U.S. foundations from 2003 to 2013, only \$21 million and \$1.7 million went to the training of local surgical providers, and infrastructure respectively.

Neglect is also observed in research. A cursory bibliometric analysis reveals that in 2022, there were only 36 "global surgery" titles (1.5%) in the PubMed database compared to 21,453 "global health" titles. Research is in turn tied to research funding. For instance, the biggest research funder for healthcare in the U.S. is the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In 2021, NIH funded 1,500 large research projects (801 grants) worth \$750 million of which only 40 projects worth \$22 million were related to surgery and only one was about global surgery. Neglect in policy, financing, and research and all interrelated with one driving another.

What next?

The above might present a daunting picture but challenges in global surgery are solvable. Work from LCoGS and DCPN depicted that emergency and essential surgical care is cost-effective and cost beneficial. At least 30 LMICs now have some substantial data on the surgical care indicators – the largest one being India. Several African countries have drafted and implemented NSOAPs following strong evidence and political commitment since 2015. In South Asia, Pakistan has formulated a National Surgical Care Vision, Nepal has initiated an NSOAP, and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has provided millions of surgeries at zero or negligible cost to the bottom 40% of Indians. Research and innovation, policy focus, and sustained financing are key to solving global surgery challenges.

Alman Perween Afzar and Maithili K

Context: Global surgery is the neglected stepchild in global health. The neglect is more shocking in South Asia which has the largest population globally lacking access to essential surgery.

Global Surgery

- **About:** It is primarily dedicated to ensuring fair access to emergency and essential surgical services.
- **Focus:** The primary emphasis lies in addressing access gaps in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- **Inclusive Approach:** The scope extends beyond LMICs to encompass prioritized attention to access disparities and underserved populations in high-income countries (HICs).
- **Surgical Services:** The term "surgeries" in this context encompasses crucial procedures like surgery, obstetrics, trauma, and anaesthesia (SOTA).
- **Consensus on Procedures:** Despite minor variations, there exists a general consensus among various international groups regarding approximately thirty procedures falling within the realm of emergency and essential surgery.

Global consensus on global surgery

- **1st:** One key development that played a significant role in this transformation was the **Disease Control Priorities Network (DCPN) report** on essential surgery sponsored by the World Bank.
- **2nd:** **The Lancet Commission on Global Surgery (LCoGS)** which brought together experts and stakeholders:
 - To examine the status of surgical care access around the world;
 - Ideate the indicators for monitoring surgical care preparedness;
 - Systemic capacity and impact; and
 - To develop implementable strategies such as the national surgical, obstetrics, and anaesthesia plan (NSOAP).

Govt seeks nominations for new national science award

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Government on Sunday called for nominations/ applications for newly instituted national science award — Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)— for individuals or teams in various fields of science, technology and tech-led innovation.

Unlike previous nearly 300 odd science awards (now scrapped) given by multiple institutions, the nominations for the RVP can be submitted on unified award portal of the home ministry in four categories by February 28 (National Science Day). Like Padma awards, these science awards too will not have a cash component. The awards will be announced on May 11 (National Technology Day).

The award giving ceremony for all categories will be held on August 23 (National Science Day), possibly by President of India in a move to give the RVP the stature of Padma awards or other national awards.

"The RVP shall be one of the highest recognition in the field of science, technology and innovation in India. Scientists/technologists/ innovators working in government, private sector organisations or individuals working

4 CATEGORIES OF AWARDS

Vigyan Ratna | Max three awards for lifetime achievements & contributions

Vigyan Shri | Max 25 awards for distinguished contributions

Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar | Max 25 awards to recognise & encourage young scientists



up to the age of 45 years** who made an exceptional contribution

Vigyan Team | Max three awards to be given to a team comprising three or more scientists/ researchers/ innovators who have made an exceptional contribution

(** As a one time exemption, age limit under Vigyan Yuva - Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar has been relaxed by one year for nomination received during the year 2024 i.e. upto 46 years with cut-off date as May 11, 2024)

outside any organisation, who have made distinguished contributions in terms of path-breaking research or innovation or discovery in any fields of science, technology or technology-led innovation shall be eligible for the awards," said the government's notification calling for nominations/ applications.

It said, "People of Indian origin staying abroad with exceptional contributions benefiting the Indian communities or society shall also be eligible for the awards."

A total of 56 awards will be given in four categories covering 13 domains such as physics, chemistry, biological sciences, mathematics and computer science, earth

science, medicine, engineering sciences, agricultural science, environmental science, technology and innovation, atomic energy, space science and technology and others (those not covered under the specified domains).

The notification said that the awardees shall be presented a "Sanad (certificate) signed by the President of India and a medallion". A commemorative brochure, containing the citation and photograph of the awardees shall also be released on the day of the ceremony, it added. Government last year scrapped nearly 300 awards, given by various science departments, to bring uniformity through a rationalisation exercise.

Context: The government recently called for nominations/applications for the newly instituted national science award, Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP), which recognizes individuals or teams in various fields of science, technology, and tech led innovation.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)

- **About:** Similar to the prestigious Padma awards, these awards will not include any cash component; instead, they will likely bestow only a certificate and medallion on the awardee.
- **Frequency of award:** Annually.
- **Categories covered:** Total 13.
 - **It will include:** Physics, chemistry, biological sciences, mathematics and computer science, earth science, medicine, engineering science, agricultural science, environmental science, technology and innovation, atomic energy, space science and technology, and a 13th category, simply called 'Others'.
- **Highest Award:** The RVP shall be one of the highest recognition in the field of science, technology, and innovation in India.
 - Scientists/technologists/ innovators working in government, private sector organisations or individuals working outside any organization.
- **Award announced:** On the National Technology Day.

4 CATEGORIES OF AWARDS

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