

NEWS ANALYSIS



THE HINDU
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Parties out of purview of RTI Act: EC



- Context-Political parties are out of the purview of the **Right to Information Act**, the Election Commission has said in an order, which is contrary to the directive of the **Central Information Commission (CIC)** to bring six national parties under the law.
- The order came on the appeal of an RTI applicant seeking to know the donations collected by the six national parties which were brought under the ambit of the law by the CIC in June 2013.
- As for the RTI Act, the CIC is the only appellate authority, which may declare a body public authority if it is convinced that it meets the criteria for being under the Act.

Women's health crucial to combat stunting: study



- Context- A first of-its-kind study across all 640 districts of the country, highlights the impact of women's health on stunting of children.
- According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) study, analysing data from the National Family Health Survey (NHFS)- IV, parameters related to women, including education and age at marriage, account for 50% of the difference between districts with high and low levels of stunting among children below the age of five.
- India accounts for approximately a third of the world's stunted children at 63 million.
- The populous northern States account for more than 80% of stunted children at 52.6 million.

Worrying figures

As of May 2018, the prevalence of stunting in India is high at 38.4% and varies considerably across districts, from 12.4% to 65.1%

- **239 of the 640** districts in the country have stunting levels above 40%

- **202** have prevalence of 30–40%

- Only 29 districts have levels between 10% and 20%

- High stunting districts are heavily clustered in the north and the centre of the country

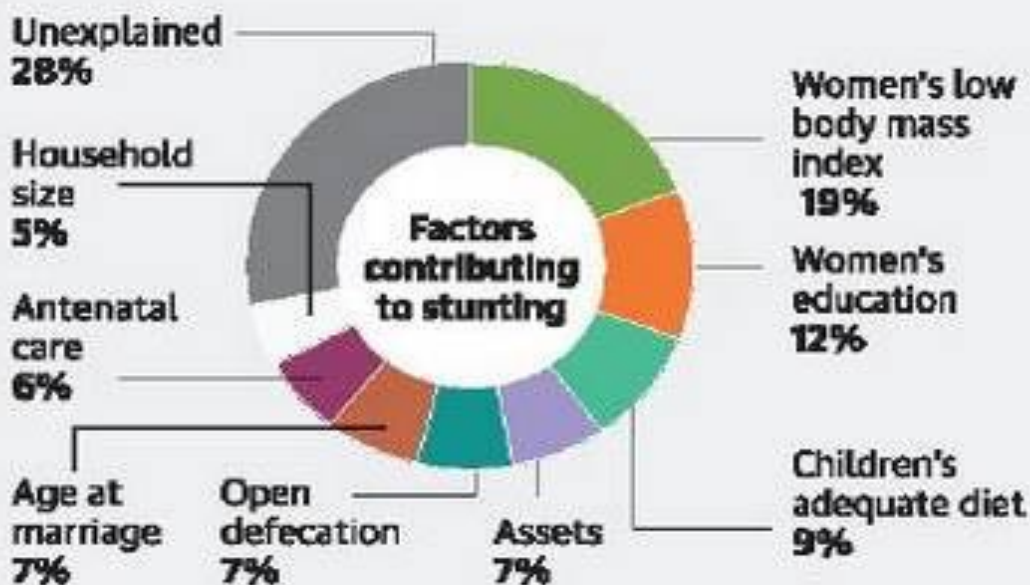
- Inter-district differences are strongly explained by a multitude of economic, health, hygiene and demographic factors

- All the southern States fare much better

Top five districts with lowest stunting rates



Top five districts with highest stunting rates



Source: IFPRI study

Ireland referendum to change abortion law

Freedom to choose

The Republic of Ireland has voted by a landslide to legalise abortion in its sixth referendum on the issue

Abortion laws

The country's eighth amendment, which its voters have rejected, hitherto gave equal rights to the foetus and the woman carrying it

1861: Abortion is banned in Ireland by the Offences Against the Person Act

1983: Eighth Amendment is introduced after a referendum

1992: A 14-year-old rape victim is prevented by the courts from travelling to England to terminate her pregnancy, in what came to be known in Ireland as the 'X Case'

- The ruling is later overturned by the Supreme Court, which says a credible threat to suicide can be a ground for abortion
- The government proposes three amendments. Two of them – enabling travel to other countries for abortion and freedom to learn about services in other nations – are passed

2010: The European Court of Human Rights, acting on a case brought by three women, says that Ireland has not provided clarity on the availability of abortion when the mother's life is at risk

The result

Yes: 14,29,981 (66.4%)

Total: 21,53,613

No: 7,23,632 (33.2%)



The split

72.1% of women and 65.9% of men voted 'Yes'

87.6% of people in the 18-24 age group and 84.6% of those in the 25-34 age group voted 'Yes'

Only 41.3% of those aged 65 and above voted 'Yes'



2012: The Savita Halappanavar case: Indian dentist Savita Halappanavar dies after being refused abortion during a miscarriage

- Her husband Praveen says she repeatedly asked for a termination but was refused because there was a foetal heartbeat



2013: Law introduced allowing abortion when woman's life is at risk but it also introduces a penalty of 14 year imprisonment on illegal abortion

2018: Two-thirds of voters say 'Yes' to a repeal of Eighth Amendment

A battle won: Yes voters celebrating in Dublin on Saturday as the result of the referendum is announced.

GETTY IMAGES



What happens next

a) The government plans to bring in a law providing for abortion up to the 12th week of pregnancy. Prime Minister Leo Varadkar has said he wants it to be introduced by the end of this year

b) Between the 12th and 24th week of pregnancy, abortion will be available in cases of foetal abnormality, a risk to woman's life or a risk of serious harm to the mother's health

c) After the 24th week, abortion will be possible in case of fatal foetal abnormality

d) Medical practitioners can object on the grounds of conscientiousness but will be obliged to transfer the case to another doctor

Blockchain being used in banking, contracts



- Context-A number of companies and banks are adopting blockchain technology to reduce documentation and increase operational efficiency.
- Blockchain technology allows all stages of transactions to be securely shared between network members, as opposed to each bank working independently, which is more expensive and increases the chance of error.
- Blockchain technology can be used to digitise and authenticate currently complex records like land holdings.
- The best use case is Sweden, which is putting all its land records on blockchain and it will quite quickly move towards doing land transfers and ownership verification using blockchain, which is a major issue in India currently.

How a blockchain works

1

A wants to send money to B



2

The transaction is represented online as a 'block'



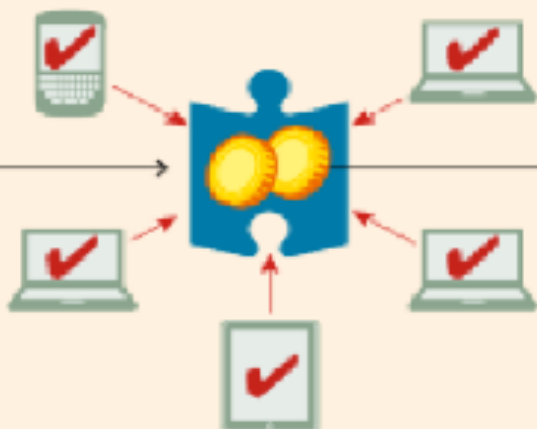
3

The block is broadcast to every party in the network



4

Those in the network approve the transaction is valid



5

The block then can be added to the chain, which provides an indelible and transparent record of transactions



6

The money moves from A to B



A year on, UDAN is yet to soar



- Context-A year since the Centre unveiled the regional air connectivity scheme (RCS) with the aim to connect tier-2 and tier-3 cities and make flying affordable for the masses, a mere 15% or 70 of the total 453 routes awarded to various airline and helicopter operators have taken off.
- Infrastructure constraints have checked the pace of implementation of the scheme. Forty unserved and 15 underserved airports are not ready yet for operations.
- Some airports owned by State governments and private players have been hesitant in participating as there is little for them to gain with RCS flights exempt from paying landing and parking charges and States required to provide land, security and fire services free of cost

Bumpy take-off

Of the 56 unserved airports the Centre planned to add to the aviation map in a year, only 16 are ready, and 10 of the 25 underserved airports have been developed

Routes operational under UDAN

ROUTES

Alliance Air

19

SpiceJet

13

Air Deccan

10

Air Odisha

8

Zoom Air

2

TruJet

18

Total routes
awarded
325

Routes
operational
70

Status of airports

Target

Ready

Underserved

56

16

Unserved

25

10

Status of helicopter services

Routes awarded

Routes ready

75

0

• Pawan Hans says it has identified close to 50 sites for helipads and development work may take 3-6 months to finish

• Airlines have to set aside half the total seats in an aircraft at a discounted rate of ₹2,500 per hour of flight and helicopters need to offer a maximum of 13 seats for ₹2,500 per 30 minutes of flight. Operators get exclusive rights to fly on a route for three years, to protect them from competition



Decoding Europe's new data protection law



- Context-The European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation came into force.
- These stringent regulations that aim to protect all EU citizens from data breaches, provide for hefty penalties of up to €20 million or 4% of a company's global revenue for non-compliance.
- The regulation, which was approved by the EU Parliament in April 2016 after about four years of preparation and debate, came into effect on May 25, 2018.
- However, many firms in India are still not ready for compliance with the new law which will cover all entities doing business in the EU.

Background What is GDPR anyway?



Data protection for all
individuals within the EU



Any information related
to a natural person



Any company doing business
in the European Union



Takes effect
from 25 May 2018



Penalty up to 4%
of worldwide turnover



It's an European law
regulation (EU) 2016/679

Mains Answer Writing Practice



Q.) Lack of service and resources, infrastructure and pricing of services are the key issues that the national health protection scheme (NHPS) faces. Comment.

Answer Structure:

Intro-Briefly write about NHPS

Body- Write about the issues which NHPS faces with special emphasis on lack of services and resources, infrastructure.

Conclusion-Come up with solutions which address the issues mentioned in body