

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Topic: Constitutional bodies

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Arun Goel assumes charge
as Election Commissioner

- The Election Commission is a permanent and an independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.
- Article 324 of the Constitution provides that the power of superintendence, direction and control of elections to parliament, state legislatures, the office of president of India and the office of vice-president of India shall be vested in the election commission.

Composition Election commission of India:

- ▶ The constitution provides for the following provisions in relation to the composition of the election commission:
- ▶ The election commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and a such number of other election commissioners, if any, as the president may from time to time fix.
- ▶ The appointment of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners shall be made by the president.

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- When any other election commissioner is so appointed the chief election commissioner shall act as the chairman of the election commission.
- The president may also appoint after consultation with the election commission such regional commissioners as he may consider necessary to assist the election commission.
- The conditions of service and tenure of office of the election commissioners and the regional commissioners shall be such as the President may by rule

Topic: Policy

5

Union Health Ministry launches India's first suicide prevention policy

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Monday announced a National Suicide Prevention Strategy, the first of its kind in the country, with time-bound action plans and multi-sectoral collaborations to achieve reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030.

The strategy broadly seeks to establish effective surveillance mechanisms for suicide within the next three years, establish psychiatric outpatient departments that will provide suicide prevention services through the District Mental Health Programme in all districts within the next five years, and to integrate a mental well-being curriculum in all educational institutions within the next

eight years. It envisages developing guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicides, and restricting access to means of suicide. The stress is on developing community resilience and societal support for suicide prevention. While the strategy is in line with the WHO's South East-Asia Region Strategy for suicide prevention, it says it will remain true to India's cultural and social milieu.

Collaborative effort

In a note, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said: "Further efforts are now required to prevent suicides as a public health priority. Suicides impact all sections of the society and thus require concerted and collaborative efforts from individuals and the community at large."

In India, more than one

lakh lives are lost every year to suicide, and it is the top killer in the 15-29 years category. In the past three years, the suicide rate has increased from 10.2 to 11.3 per 1,00,000 population, the document records. The most common reasons for suicide include family problems and illnesses, which account for 34% and 18% of all suicide-related deaths.

Psychiatrist Lakshmi Vijayakumar, founder of Sneha Foundation, who is credited with writing the first draft of the strategy said, "The most important thing is that the government has acknowledged that suicide is a problem... We now have a plan, a rather well-conceived plan involving multi-sectoral collaborations, because the only way a strategy would work would be to involve various sectors," she said.

Topic: Schemes

6

Stalin reviews implementation of five major government schemes

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday chaired a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) to review the implementation of five major schemes in the State.

The Chief Minister reviewed the implementation of the MPs Local Area Development Scheme, the National Health Mission, the Integrated Child Development Scheme, the National Food Security Act and the Prime Minister's Model Village Scheme, an official press release said.

Mr. Stalin instructed officials to implement the schemes before the deadline and seek the neces-



Monitoring progress: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at the review meeting in Chennai on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sary funds.

Minister for Rural Development K.R. Periakaruppan; MPs S.S. Palanimanickam, A. Raja, M. Selvaraj, P.R. Natarajan, Su. Thirunavukkarasar, Thol. Thirumavalavan and K. Nawaz Kani; State legislators V.G. Raajendran, N. Ezhilan, T.K.G. Neelamegam, M.

Boominathan, J.M.H. Aasasan Maulaana and K.A. Sengottaiyan; Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu and senior officials were present at the meeting.

Mr. Thirumavalavan said procuring equipment designed by IIT Madras to avoid the death of workers while cleaning sewers, in-

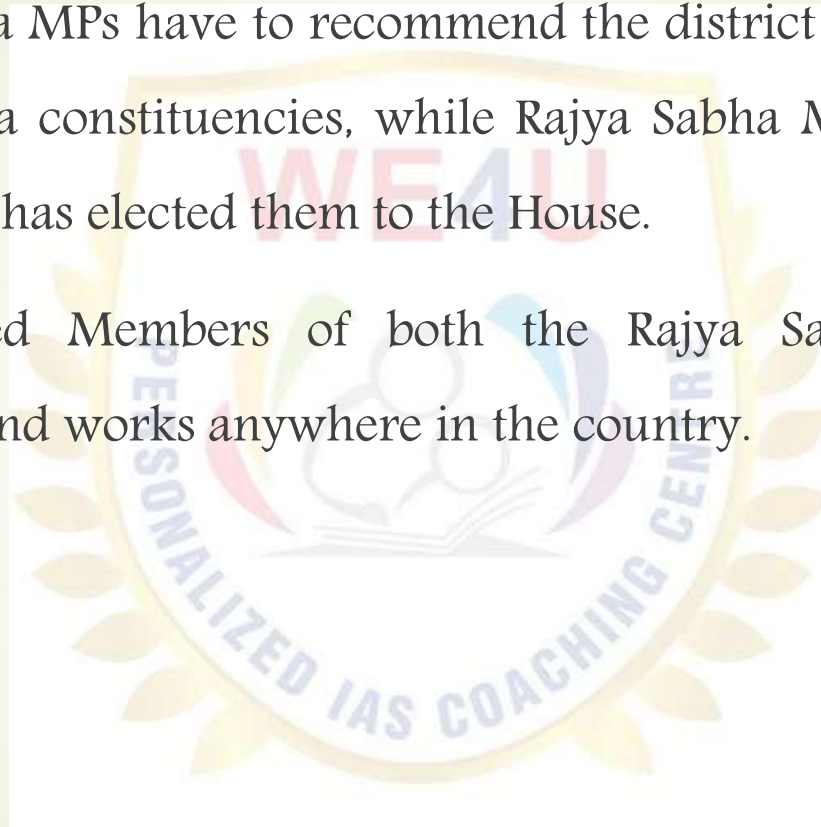
creasing the unit cost of houses constructed under the Prime Minister's Housing Scheme, renaming villages and streets with caste surnames, installing more electric crematoriums in local bodies, ensuring crematoriums for all sections of society and increasing the income slab for availing the Post Matric Scholarship were among the issues he had raised at the meeting.

Mr. Thirunavukkarasar said the Union government should allocate over 60% of funds for any scheme being implemented jointly with the Tamil Nadu government. The Tiruchi MP also suggested that eggs be provided to over 10 lakh children every day.

Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)

- It is a Central Sector Scheme which was announced in December 1993.
- To enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets in the areas of drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc. primarily in their Constituencies.
- Each year, MPs receive Rs. 5 crore in two instalments of Rs. 2.5 crore each. Funds under MPLADS are non-lapsable.

- ▶ Lok Sabha MPs have to recommend the district authorities projects in their Lok Sabha constituencies, while Rajya Sabha MPs have to spend it in the state that has elected them to the House.
- ▶ Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.



National Health Mission

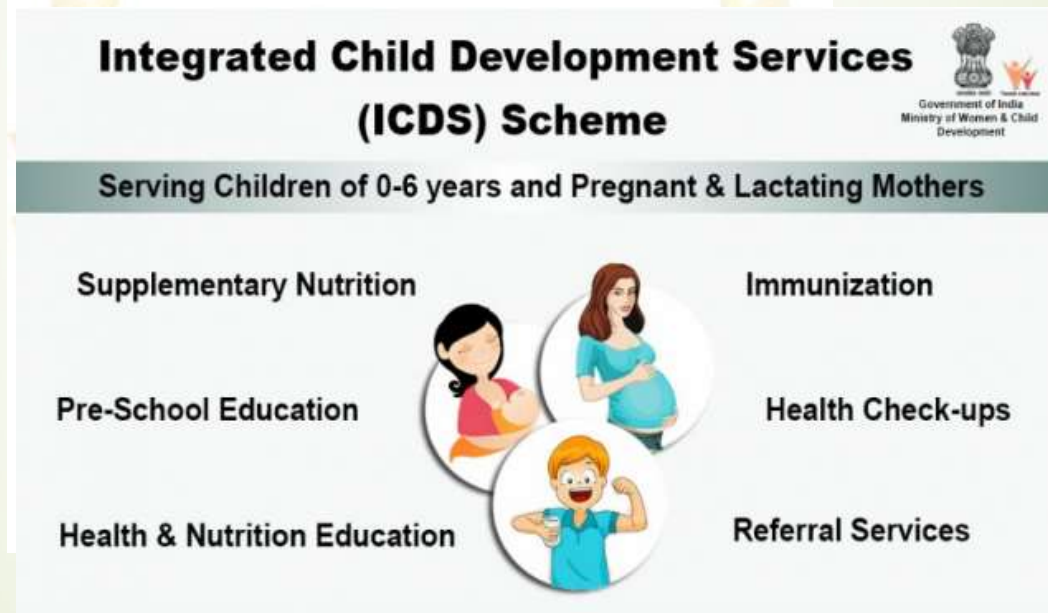
- ▶ NHM was launched by the government of India in 2013 subsuming the National Rural Health Mission (Launched in 2005) and the National Urban Health Mission (Launched in 2013).
- ▶ The main programmatic components include Health System Strengthening in rural and urban areas for – Reproductive–Maternal– Neonatal–Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A), and Communicable and Non–Communicable Diseases.
- ▶ The NHM envisages achievement of universal access to equitable, affordable & quality health care services that are accountable and responsive to people's

GOALS

- Reduce MMR to 1/1000 live births
- Reduce IMR to 25/1000 live births
- Reduce TFR to 2.1
- Prevention and reduction of anemia in women aged 15-49 years
- Prevent and reduce mortality and morbidity from communicable, non-communicable, injuries and emergency diseases
- Reduce household out-of-pocket expenditure on total health care expenditure
- Reduce annual incidence and mortality from Tuberculosis by half
- Reduce prevalence of Leprosy to <1/10000 population and incidence to zero in all districts
- Annual Malaria incidence to be <1/1000
- Less than 1percent microfilaria prevalence in all districts
- Kala-Azar Elimination by 2015, <1case per 10000 population in all blocks

Integrated Child Development Scheme

The Umbrella ICDS is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It was launched in 1975.



THANK YOU

