

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FEBRUARY, 2022



** Useful for **-

CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams, SSC and Banking Exams

15th FEBRUARY 2022

Green Hydrogen Policy

Context: India's new green hydrogen policy was recently unveiled, promising cheaper renewable energy and other facilities in industrial sectors.

Key Highlights:

- The policy aims to boost green hydrogen and ammonia, also making it easier for green power producers to 'bank' their surplus renewable energy with an electrical distribution business for up to 30 days.
- It also proposes the construction of bunkers near ports for the storage of green ammonia for export.
- A single portal will be created by the government for all green hydrogen production clearances, as well as facilities so that excessive energy production can be stored with discoms for up to 30 days and use it as needed.
- Under this policy, power distribution industries may also acquire renewable energy to supply green hydrogen manufacturers, but only at a reduced rate that includes only the wheeling costs, cost of procurement, and a small margin defined by the state commission.
- Any new renewable energy facilities built to produce power for green hydrogen generation before July 2025 will receive 25 years of free power transmission under the new policy.

About Green Hydrogen

Green hydrogen is created by electrolysis of water, which is a technique for separating water into hydrogen and oxygen and can be done with renewable energy.

Golden Visa Programme

Context: U.K. Home Secretary Priti Patel announced to scrap the Golden Visa programme for millionaire investors, in a bid to cut down on fraud.

Key Highlights

- This move is followed by a Home Office review into visas that were already granted under the program and implemented as government seeks to curb the influence of Russian money.
- As per Home Office data, there were around 1,400 investor visas issued between 2015 and 2020. Furthermore, a Parliamentary report from 2020 notes that, there had been exploitation of 'investor visa program'.

About Golden Visa programme

- The UK Golden Visa program offers wealthy foreigners a path to residency, in case they have invested more than 2 million pounds in the U.K.
- Immigrant Investor Programs allow individuals to obtain residence or citizenship in a country in return of making qualifying investments. This programme either offer citizenship by investment (golden passport or cash-for-passports) or residence by investment (golden visa). It also offers immediate residence followed by accelerated citizenship.

Hilal-e-Pakistan

 Context: Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and noted philanthropist have been awarded the Hilal-e-Pakistan.



Pakistan's second-highest civilian honor, for his efforts to help eradicate polio in the country.

 Through Gavi vaccine alliance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been a major donor towards global polio eradication.

About Gavi

• Gavi is a public-private global health collaboration that aims to improve vaccination access in lowincome countries.



- By monetary measure, Gavi distributed more than half of total donor aid for health and the majority of donor help for immunization.
- Gavi is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

About Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

- It is an American private foundation formed by Bill Gates and Melinda French Gates.
- It was founded in 2000 in Seattle, Washington, and as of 2020, it is the world's second-largest charity foundation, with \$49.8 billion in assets.
- The foundation's objectives are to improve healthcare and reduce extreme poverty around the world, as well as to promote educational opportunities and information technology access.

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US Resolution on Ukraine crisis

Context: The US Senate voted overwhelmingly to show its support for an independent Ukraine.

Key Highlights

- The US Senate also condemn Russian military aggression toward its neighbour, amid emergence of fresh fears of a possible invasion which in turn could spiral toward a European war.
- This resolution was passed after President Joe Biden noted that. US has every indication of a potential Russian attack on Ukraine.
- Resolution from the senators does not carry 'force of law' but puts legislative body of the US on record with "unwavering support of United States for a secure, democratic, and independent Ukraine". It also denounces the military build-up Russia on Ukraine's border. The vote was unanimous, without formal roll call or objection.

Russia-Ukraine Issue

Tensions between Ukraine and Russia, both former Soviet states, escalated in late 2013 over a landmark

- political and trade deal with the European Union. After the pro-Russian then-President, Viktor Yanukovych, suspended the talks, weeks of protests in Kiev erupted into violence.
- Then, in March 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, an autonomous peninsula in southern Ukraine with strong Russian loyalties, on the pretext that it was defending its interests and those of Russian-speaking citizens.
- Shortly afterwards, pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions declared their independence from Kiev, prompting months of heavy fighting. Despite Kiev and Moscow signing a peace deal in Minsk in 2015, brokered by France and Germany, there have been repeated ceasefire violations.

New India Literacy Programme

Context: The Government of India has approved the New India Literacy Programme scheme for the fiscal years 2022-2027 that will cover all areas of senior students' education and on the line with the National Education Policy 2020.

Key Highlights

- The programme is expected to cost Rs 1037.90 crore between 2022 and 2027, with the central government providing Rs 700 crore and the states providing Rs 337.90 crore, respectively.
- This scheme's objectives are to teach not only foundational numeracy and literacy, but also critical life skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, awareness and health care, commercial skills, education and child care, and family welfare.
- · Vocational skills development will also be focused upon so that obtaining local employment becomes easier and basic education including preparatory, middle, and secondary education.
- Education courses in sciences, arts, culture, technology, recreation, and sports as well as various other areas of interest to local learners, such as more advanced material on key life skills, are also to be included under this programme.

- - The target for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for FY 2022-27 is five crore learners using the Online Teaching, Learning, and Assessment System (OTLAS), which was developed in collaboration with NCERT, the National Informatics Centre, and NIOS.
 - The Ministry of Education will be the implementing ministry of this scheme.

G20 Secretariat

Context: The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of a G20 Secretariat for G20 Summit 2023 which will be held in India.

Key Facts

- The G20 Secretariat will be responsible for implementing overall policy decisions and arrangements needed to steer India's forthcoming Presidency of the forum for international economic cooperation.
- It is being established for handling the work related to substantive/ content/knowledge media, technical, security and logistical aspects of India's G20 Presidency.
- The G20 Secretariat will be guided by an apex committee, headed by Prime Minister. It will also comprise of Finance Minister, External Affairs Minister, Home Minister, and G20 Sherpa (Commerce & Industry Minister). It will provide overall guidance to India's G20 Presidency.
- · A coordination committee will also be set up, to oversee G20 preparations and report it to apex committee.
- India will hold G20 Presidency from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023. It will culminate with the G20 Summit in India in 2023.
- The Secretariat will be functional till February 2024.

About G20

 G20 is an intergovernmental forum, consisting of 19 countries and the European Union (EU).

- It works for addressing major issues related to global economy, like climate change mitigation, international financial stability, and sustainable development.
- It is composed of most of world's largest economies, including industrialized and developing nations. It accounts for 90% of gross world product (GWP), 75-80% of international trade, half of world's land area and two-thirds of the global population.
- G20 was founded in 1999. Since 2008, it has convened at least once a year. The summits involve head of government or state, foreign minister, finance minister, and other high-ranking officials from each member state.
- EU is represented by European Commission and European Central Bank.

NOTE: _

Currently, Italy, Indonesia and India are the G20 Troika Countries, i.e. the countries which have held recent G20 presidency, currently holding the presidency and to hold the same next year.

17th FEBRUARY 2022

Meri Policy Mere Hath Door-step Campaign

- Context: The Union government has announced a new doorstep crop insurance distribution policy known as 'Meri Policy Mere Hath'.
- The 'Meri Policy Mere Hath' door-step campaign has been launched to ensure that all farmers are well informed about their land records, policies, and the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)'s claim and grievance redressal process.

About PMFBY

• PMFBY was launched in 2016 with the aim of providing financial assistance to all the farmers who have suffered crop damage or loss from natural disasters.

- As of February 4, 2022, over 36 million farmer applications have been insured under this scheme with over Rs 1,07,059 crores in claims paid. Since 85 per cent of the farmers registered under this scheme are small and marginal farmers, the scheme has been able to provide financial support to the most vulnerable farmers.
- In the year 2020, PMFBY was modified to allow farmers to participate voluntarily. It has also been made easier for farmers to report crop damage within 72 hours after the occurrence of any event, either through the Crop Insurance App, the CSC Centre, or the nearest agriculture officer, with claim benefits sent automatically into eligible farmers' bank accounts.

Operation Nanhe Farishte

Context: Under Operation Nanhe Farishte, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) have rescued more than 1,000 kids from Railway stations across India, in the month of January, 2022.

Key Highlights

- The Railway Protection Force (RPF) saved 1,045 children who were found alone or were abandoned at the railway stations. Out of all, 701 were boys and 344 were girls.
- According to the RPF, many children are kidnapped from railway stations every year. They are later exploited and trafficked.

Other Initiatives by Railways

- Under Operation Matrishakti, ladies RPF personnel went beyond the call of duty, to help pregnant women who were in labour while riding the train. In January, assistance was provided seven pregnant women passengers and were instrumental in their children birth.
- Under Mission Jeewan Raksha, RPF personnel saved 42 persons including 20 males and 22 ladies on duty in January.

- Under Operation Yatri Surakhsha, RPF also supports state police in the fighting against passenger crime.
- Under Operation Mahila Suraksha, Indian Railways have been implementing several additional steps. This initiative guarantees enhanced security for female travellers.
- Under Meri Saheli squads, RPF deployed Meri Saheli squads at key railway stations, during the month of January 2022. They were deployed with the goal of providing security to woman passengers, specifically those travelling alone. The operation was covered in about 13,000 trains in India.

India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Context: India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have signed a trade agreement that will decrease import duties on the majority of Indian exports to the UAE.

Key Highlights:

- After China and the United States, the UAE is India's third-largest trading partner in the world. As of 2020-21, bilateral trade between the two countries reached USD 43.3 billion, with thousands of items traded.
- The agreement covers topics like free trade, government procurement, digital economy, and other critical areas. The agreement will benefit over 90% of all traded items.
- Exports of gems and jewellery, leather, textiles, sports goods, footwear, furniture, plastics, pharma, agro goods, medical devices, and engineering goods are expected to benefit from the agreement. Most of these sectors are labour-intensive, and it is estimated that if the bilateral trade grows to \$100 billion, at least 10 lakh employment for youth will be created.
- Tariff concessions on gold have been given to UAE by India while UAE has removed tariffs on the export of jewellery from India.

 This agreement will also benefit the exports in a high quantity of minerals, metals, petroleum products, petrochemicals and dates.

18th FEBRUARY 2022

Project Arohan

Context: Assam government is set to launch a four-year mentorship programme called Project Arohan.

Key Highlights:

- The aims of this programme are to provide guidance to students and boost their skills.
- For this project, Assam Government to collaborate with Tata STRIVE, to sought their cooperation on this project. Tata STRIVE is a skill development programme of Tata Trusts.

About Tata STRIVE

- Tata STRIVE is an initiative which is skilling youth from underprivileged backgrounds by means of innovations in technology, methodology and pedagogy. Since 2014, 6.5 Lakh Individuals have experienced the advantage of Tata STRIVE.
- It addresses the pressing need of skilling youth in India for entrepreneurship, employment, and community enterprise.

World Bank's REWARD Project

- Context: The World Bank, the Government of India, the State Governments of Karnataka, and Odisha, have signed a USD 115 million deal for the Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development (REWARD) Programme to help national and state governments adopt improved watershed management practices to help farmers become more resilient to climate change, improve incomes, and promote higher productivity.
- The objectives of the Project are to improve water and land conservations as well as preventing soil

- run-off, harvesting rainwater, regenerating natural vegetation, and replenishing the groundwater table.
- · The project also aims to improve the capacities of the state and the central institutions so that they can develop and deliver better watershed management and development programs.

Key Highlights:

- World Bank's lending arm- the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) will provide financial support of USD 115 million to this project. The loan has a 15 years maturity period with 4.5 years grace period.
- Karnataka will receive USD 60 million; Odisha will receive USD 49 million while the remaining USD 6 million will be utilized by the Indian government's Department of Land Resources.

About REWARD Project

- Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development (REWARD) is a project which is being implemented in three-four Indian states. It is planned as a six-year project and is one of the largest water management programs around the world.
- This project Is a joint initiative of the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development in association with the World Bank.

UNEP's Frontiers Report

Context: The Frontiers Report has been recently released by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Key Highlights

• The latest report is named "Noise, Blazes and Mismatches: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern." This report which has been released before the UN Environment Assembly focuses on rising public health problems that are disrupting natural life cycles and causing environmental impacts around the world.

- Noise pollution, deadly wildfires, and various environmental threats which are looming could cause environmental damage and thus it is of utmost priority to address these concerns.
- Urban noise pollution, phenological shifts, and wildfires are the three major subjects of this report that illustrate the urgent need to address the triple global problems of pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss.
- The report terms noise pollution as a "raucous killer", and claims that prolonged, unwelcomed, and high-level sounds from railways, road traffic, or recreational activities harm people's health and well-being. Chronic annoyance and sleep disruption caused by traffic can lead to serious heart disease and metabolic issues in teenagers and children, and it also affects the marginalized and elderly people living near major roadways.
- This report of the UNEP suggested city planners consider making noise reduction a priority by investing in urban infrastructure that produces positive soundscapes, such as green walls, tree belts, and additional green spaces in cities, all of which will provide various health advantages.
- Conservation aims such as maintaining suitable habitats and ecological connectivity, strengthening the stability of biological variety, and coordinating international efforts along migratory pathways are underlined in the report.
- It has been found that between the years 2002-2016 an average of 423 million hectares of land surface burnt, which implies that dangerous wildfires will become more intense, common, and long-lasting, even in those areas which were previously unaffected.

19th FEBRUARY 2022

Pickleball

Context: Pickleball, a curious sport, has become one the fastest growing sports in the United States. Pickleball is a combination of elements taken from tennis, badminton and ping-pong.

Key Facts

 The game which was started In 1965 by Joel Pritchard (then congressman Washington) and Bill Bell (a businessman)



had then purpose to provide a game that whole family could play together.

- The Pickleball game reached India in 2006. A pickleball enthusiast Sunil Valavalkar brought back some paddles and balls from Canada and started giving demonstrations in Mumbai.
- As per All India Pickleball Association, this sport has reached to 16 states in India and has around 3,000 registered players.
- As per US Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SIFA), number of pickleball participants has increased by 21.3 per cent between 2019 and 2020. In 2020, there were 1193000 college graduate pickleball participants. As of 2022, there are 4.8 million participants across the US, amounting to a growth of 39.3 per cent.

Rules

• The US Pickleball Association governs and promotes this sport and maintains its rules.

Pickleball is played

- on a badminton-size court. Net is set to a height of 34 inches at the centre. It is played with perforated plastic ball and wooden or composite paddles that are twice the size of pingpong paddles.
- First nationals pickleball tournament was held in Buckeye, Arizona in 2009.

Kisan Drone

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off 100 kisan drones in different cities and towns of India, in order to help farmers in spraying pesticides in their farms.

Key Highlights

- Union Government has announced major stimulus for farming and agriculture sector in Budget 2022-23. As a part, Centre will promote Kisan Drones, publicprivate partnerships to deliver digital and hightech services and chemical-free natural farming, to farmers across India during financial year 2022-23.
- The Kisan drones will be promoted for digitization of land records, crop assessment, and spraying nutrients and insecticides.

About Drone Shakti Scheme

- Drone Shakti Scheme was announced in Union Budget 2022. The budget pushed for promoting drones by means of start-ups and skilling at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
- Under the scheme, start-ups will be promoted in a bid to facilitate Drone-As-A-Service (DrAAS). Under it, courses for skilling will also be started in some selected ITIs across the States.
- Sectors where drones can be employed are photography, telecom. agriculture, mining, insurance, oil & gas, transport, construction, disaster management, defence & law enforcement, geospatial mapping, forest and wildlife etc.

MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters

Context: As per defence authorities, first batch of three MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters is likely to arrive India by July 2022. Indian Navy had ordered the MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters from the United States.

Key Highlights

 According to Indian helicopters Navy, would be outfitted with several India-specific



- equipment and armaments. It is going to be Indian Navy's first significant induction of helicopters for deployment on ships in decades.
- These helicopters will operate from frontline ships and aircraft carriers. Thus, providing them the crucial traits of flexibility, assault capacity and enhanced surveillance.
- MH-60R helicopters will replace Sea King 42/42A helicopters, which were decommissioned in 1990s.
- India signed a deal of worth USD 2.2 billion to purchase Lockheed Martin's MH-60R helicopters, during the visit of then-US President Donald Trump's to India in February 2020. All deliveries should be completed by 2025.

20th FEBRUARY 2022

World Day of Social Justice

Context: On 20th February, the World Day of Social Justice was observed. The aim of this day is to work towards promoting social justice, which includes efforts to tackle issues like exclusion, poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, social protection, and human rights.

Key Facts

- The United Nations General Assembly declared 20 February as the World Day of Social Justice, which was accepted on 26 November 2007, and observed annually since 2009.
- The United Nations General Assembly recognizes that social justice and social development are crucial for achieving as well as sustaining international security and peace. Thus, without social justice, there won't be security, peace, or support towards fundamental freedom and human rights.
- Theme of World Day of Social Justice, 2022: 'Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment'.
- The theme of this year has been selected keeping in mind that almost 60% of the world's employed population make their living in the informal economy,

related benefits.

and it has been noticed that these individuals are the **Interesting Facts:** ones lacking social protection as well as employment-

Statehood Day of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram

Context: On February 20, 2022, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram observed their statehood day.

Key Facts

- North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) was given a new name and a new identity as Arunachal Pradesh, 50 years ago.
- Arunachal Pradesh became a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987. Thus, Year 2022 marked the 36th State Foundation Day of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Mizoram was the 23rd state of India. It was made a state on February 20, 1987, with 53rd Amendment Act of Indian Constitution, 1986.

About Arunachal Pradesh

- · Arunachal Pradesh is called as "Land of Dawn-Lit Mountains". It shares border with states of Assam and Nagaland to the south. It has international borders with Bhutan, Myanmar and China.
- Itanagar is the state capital.
- It is the largest among Seven Sister States of Northeast India by area.

About Mizoram

- It is one among the seven sister states of northeastern India. Aizawl is its seat of government as well as capital city.
- Name of this state is derived from 'Mizo and Ram' which means land in the Mizo language. Thus, Mizoram means "land of the Mizos".
- It is the southernmost landlocked state among northeast region of India.
- The state share borders with three states namely Tripura, Manipur and Assam. It also shares a 722-kilometre border with Bangladesh and Myanmar.

- Seven Sister States is a popular term for contiguous states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, before the inclusion of Sikkim into North Eastern Region of India.
- The term 'Land of the Seven Sisters' was coined by a journalist Jyoti Prasad Saikia.

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

Context: Ministry of Education recently approved the continuation of 'Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)' till 2026.

Key Highlights:

- · RUSA is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). It was launched to fund state government universities and colleges for achieving the aims of equity, excellence and access.
- The new phase of RUSA has set target to reach out the unserved and underserved areas, difficult geographies, remote areas, rural areas, tier-2 cities, aspirational districts, areas with low GER, in order to benefit the most disadvantaged areas and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups.
- The proposal seeks to entail an expenditure of Rs 12.929.16 crore. Out of this, central share is Rs 8120.97 crores while state share is Rs 4808.19 crores. It will support around 1,600 projects under new phase of RUSA.
- · New phase of the scheme will also implement some of the recommendations and aims of New Education Policy, that suggests some key changes to current higher education system in order to revamp & re-energize it and deliver quality higher education to all.
- Under the new phase, States will also be supported to create new model degree colleges. Accredited

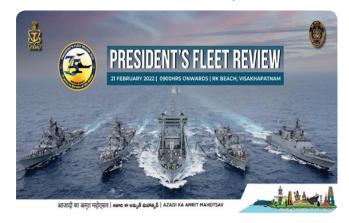
and non-accredited universities will also get grants to undertake various activities like teachinglearning in Indian languages.

About Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

- RUSA is a holistic scheme of development for higher education.
- It was started in 2013 by the Ministry of Education (then Ministry of Human Resource Development). It is a centrally sponsored scheme, launched with the aim of providing strategic funding to higher educational institutions across the country.
- Under this scheme, funds are provided by central ministry through state governments and Union Territories (UT).

21st FEBRUARY 2022

Fleet Review of Indian Navy



Context: On February 21, President Ram Nath Kovind conducted a Fleet Review of Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam.

Key Highlights

- The Fleet Review is done with the aim of assuring the country of preparedness, high morale and discipline of Indian Navy.
- This year marked the twelfth Fleet Review. It is being conducted on the occasion of 75th anniversary of

- India's Independence.
- Every President of India reviews the Indian Naval Fleet, once during their office term, because he/ she is the Supreme Commander of Indian armed forces.
- In the year 2022, the yacht comprised of more than 60 ships and submarines, and 55 aircraft. It will be distinguished by Ashoka Emblem on her side. It will fly the President's Standard on the Mast.
- This year, ships from all naval commands and Andaman & Nicobar Command were docked on one of the naval ports for the Review in Visakhapatnam.
- As part of this exercise, Presidential Yacht sailed past the columns of ships anchored in lanes, and they were accorded the ceremonial salute. The President was also given a 21-gun salute during the review.

About Presidential Fleet Review

- Being the Supreme Commander of Indian armed forces, the President of India takes stock of capabilities of Navy in the Fleet Review.
- The President embarks on a yacht, called the Presidential Yacht and review the Indian Naval Fleet.

Hydrogen-powered Train

Context: Japan has launched its first hydrogen-powered train. This unveiling is seen as a step towards the country's objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

Key Facts:

- Hybari- the two-car train costs over USD 35 million or 4 billion yen and can go up to 140 kilometers or 87 miles at a top speed of 100 kilometers per hour on a single hydrogen refuelling.
- The train has been developed by East Japan Railway in association with Hitachi and Toyota Motor Corporation.
- In order to achieve net-zero energy, Japan has made hydrogen a major clean-energy source. Toyota is looking at increasing the production of its second-

generation hydrogen-fuelled Mirai cars by ten times with more commercial vehicles and fuel-cell buses plying on the road.

• The government of Japan has plans to increase hydrogen usage to 20 million tonnes by 2050. Energy industries such as Kawasaki and Iwatani Heavy Industries are attempting to develop hydrogen supply chains in order to lower the cost of fuel.

NOTE:

Germany launched the world's first hydrogenfuelled train in 2018 which was built by Alstom SA..

Purple Revolution

Context: Central government has been planning to start 'Purple Revolution' in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Highlights

 Purple revolution will be planned by encouraging lavender cultivation under CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine's



Aroma Mission through the Ministry of Science and Technology.

 Cultivation of Lavender can be started in Ramban for increasing income sources for youth of the district.

• In Doda and Reasi, more than 500 youth had taken the benefit from purple revolution and augmented their income.

About Purple Revolution

- Under the Aroma Mission, farmers were given free lavender saplings for the first time in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir. Those who had cultivated lavender before were charged Rs. 5-6 per sapling.
- This revolution was started for supporting agroeconomy based on domestic aromatic crop by moving from imported aromatic oils to homegrown varieties.

About Aroma Mission

- CSIR has launched the Aroma Mission with the objective of bringing transformative change in aroma sector through desired interventions in areas of agriculture, processing and product development for the growth of aroma industry and rural employment.
- The mission promotes cultivation of aromatic crops for essential oils which are in great demand by aroma industry. It will help Indian farmers and aroma industry in becoming global leaders in production and export of essential oils.
- It aims to provide benefits to the farmers in achieving higher profits, protecting their crops and utilizing waste lands.