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D.N.A. (Daily Newspaper Analysis)

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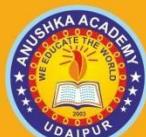
by :

Harshil Kumawat Sir

(Eminent Faculty of CA)



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Near Dalal Petrol Pump, Subhash Nagar, Udaipur (Rajasthan)
Contact: 7742443456 | 8233033033 | www.anushkaias.com

UNHRC (THE HINDU / THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

COVERED IN GS 3 : (INTERNATIONAL RELATION)



NEWS :

Russia's membership to the Human Rights Council (HRC) was suspended after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted, 93 to 24, with 58 abstentions, including India, to adopt a resolution suspending Moscow from the UN body.

This was part of the global response to the alleged war crimes in Bucha, a town outside Kyiv, where more than 300 bodies of civilians have been found after the withdrawal of the Russian forces.

With membership on the Council comes a responsibility to uphold high human rights standards. This is a criteria insisted on by States themselves when they adopted resolution 60/251 in March 2006 to create the Human Rights Council.

It is this responsibility that Russia is alleged to have wilfully violated in Ukraine. Russia's three-year term as member of the Council began on January 1, 2021.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION :

About UNGA :

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

Formation:

The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.

OHCHR is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

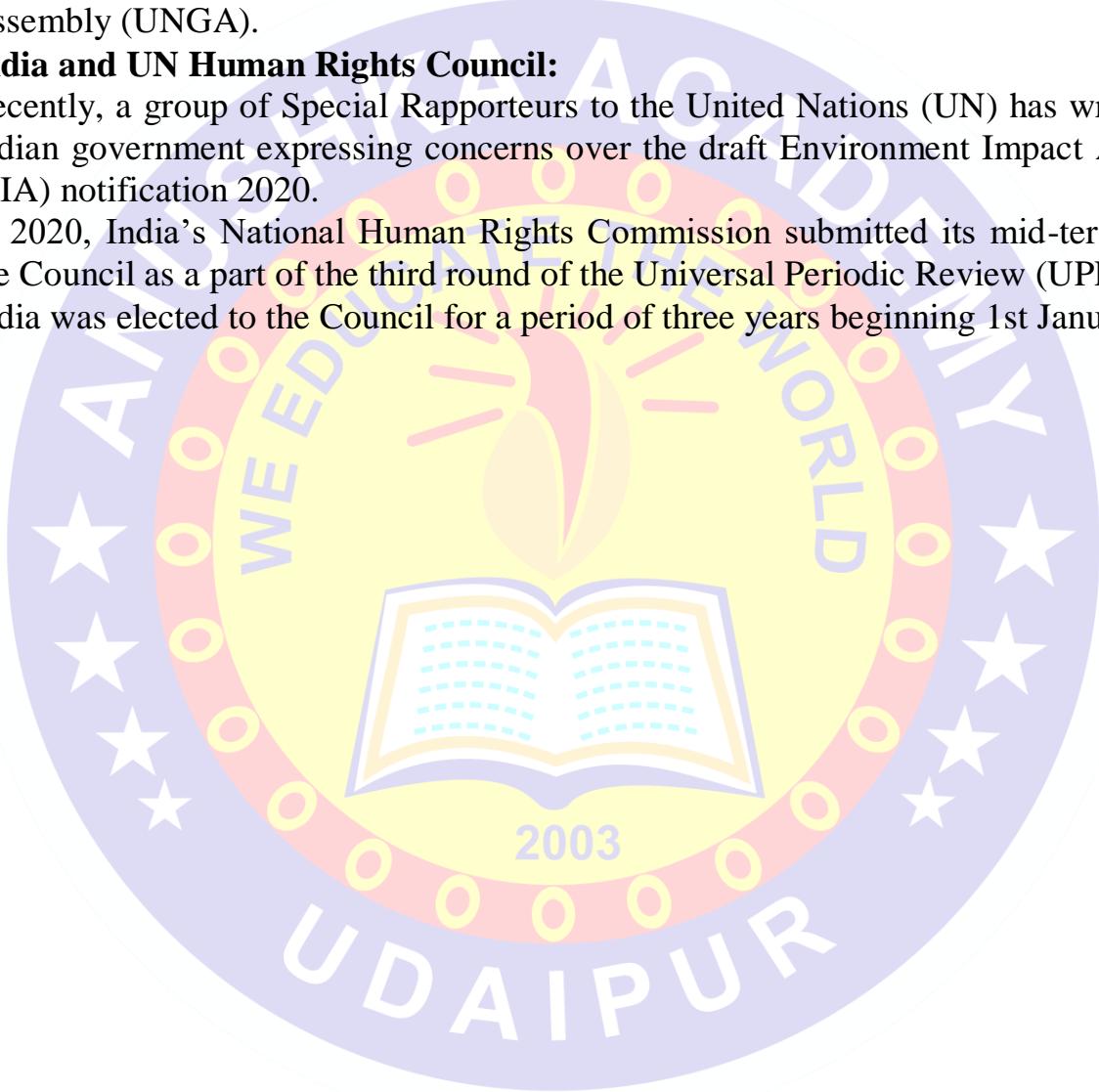
Members:

It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

India and UN Human Rights Council:

Recently, a group of Special Rapporteurs to the United Nations (UN) has written to the Indian government expressing concerns over the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020.

In 2020, India's National Human Rights Commission submitted its mid-term report to the Council as a part of the third round of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. India was elected to the Council for a period of three years beginning 1st January 2019.



MISSION VATSALYA SCHEME (THE HINDU)

COVERED IN GS : 2 (SOCIAL JUSTICE)



News :

The Union government plans to partner with the private sector and volunteer groups for its scheme for protection of vulnerable children such as those abandoned or missing.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development sent its draft guidelines for Mission Vatsalya Scheme to States and Union Territories and sought suggestions by April 18, 2022.

Mission Vatsalya is essentially renaming of a pre-existing scheme called Child Protection Services, and also includes child welfare services.

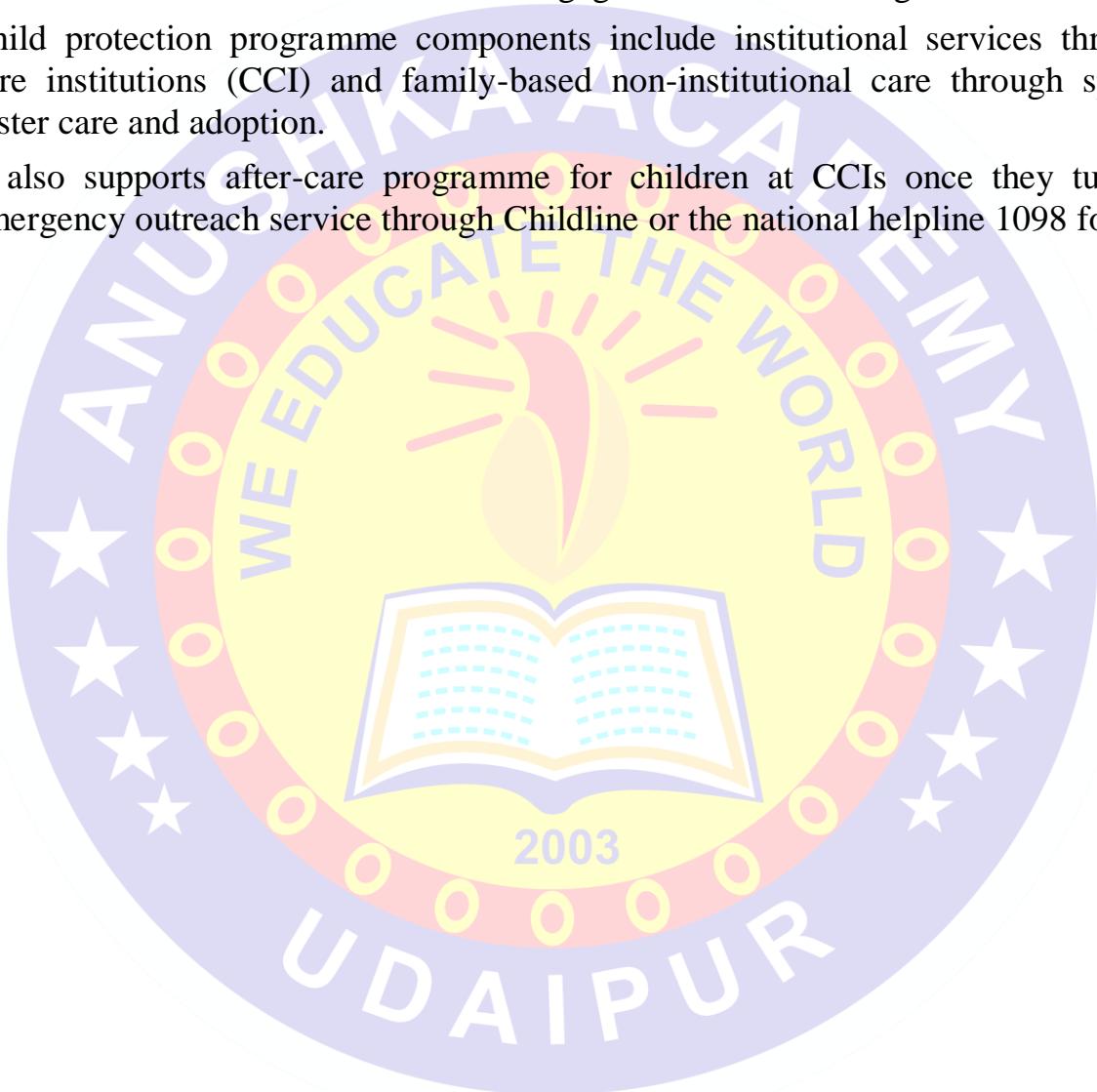
To encourage public participation and utilise the resources available for success of the mission, the civil society, people's groups and various volunteering organisations can be encouraged to participate under Mission Vatsalya in a systematic and planned manner.

These could include organisations under government initiatives such as Bharat Scout and Guide, NSS Volunteers, and Nehru Yuva Kendras. More NGOs and Self-Help Groups could be identified.

The Ministry has also proposed a Vatsalya portal that will allow volunteers to register so that State and District Authorities can engage them for executing various schemes.

Child protection programme components include institutional services through child care institutions (CCI) and family-based non-institutional care through sponsorship, foster care and adoption.

It also supports after-care programme for children at CCIs once they turn 18, and emergency outreach service through Childline or the national helpline 1098 for children.



NEW TAX ON EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND INCOME (THE HINDU)

COVERED IN GS : 3 (ECONOMICS)



NEWS:

In the Union Budget of 2021-22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced a new provision to tax income on provident fund contributions from employees beyond ₹2.5 lakh a year.

An Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) account is mandatory for formal sector workers earning up to ₹15,000 a month in firms with over 20 employees, as a means of ensuring retirement income.

The Finance Ministry had rationalised the tax move by arguing that the ₹2.5 lakh cap on contributions will cover about 93% of EPF members, and the tax-free, assured income was being milked by the super-rich and high net-worth individuals.

On August 31, 2021, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notified rules to calculate the taxable income on PF contributions exceeding the specified limits, starting from the financial year 2021-22.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) issued a circular in April 2022 to explain the operational details of the tax.

the EPFO will maintain a non-taxable account for contributions up to ₹2.5 lakh a year, and a taxable account for members who contribute over that threshold.

Tax will be levied at 20% on such income for EPF members whose retirement savings accounts have not been linked to their Permanent Account Number (PAN), while the rate will be 10% for those who have linked their tax and EPF accounts.



INDONESIA'S PALM OIL CRISIS (THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

COVERED IN GS : 3 (ECONOMICS)



NEWS :

Indonesia, the largest producer and exporter of Palm Oil is experiencing domestic shortages of it — so much so as to force its government to introduce price controls and curbs on shipments.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has estimated the archipelago's palm oil production for 2021-22 (October-September) at 45.5 million tonnes (mt). That's almost 60% of the total global output and way ahead of the next bigger producer: Malaysia (18.7 mt).

It is also the world's No. 1 exporter of the commodity, at 29 mt, followed by Malaysia (16.22 mt).

Yet, the country has seen domestic prices of branded cooking oil spiral, from around 14,000 Indonesian rupiah (IDR) to 22,000 IDR per litre between March 2021 and March 2022.

There are two possible reasons :

1. The first has to do supply disruptions — manmade and natural — in other cooking oils, especially sunflower and soyabean.
2. The second factor is linked to petroleum, more specifically the use of palm oil as a bio-fuel. The Indonesian government has, since 2020, made 30% blending of diesel with palm oil mandatory as part of a plan to slash fossil fuel imports.

Impact on India :

1. India is the world's biggest vegetable oils importer. Out of its annual imports of 14-15 mt, the lion's share is of palm oil (8-9 mt), followed by soyabean (3-3.5 mt) and sunflower (2.5).
2. Indonesia has been India's top supplier of palm oil, though it was overtaken by Malaysia in 2021-22.



INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA) (THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

COVERED IN GS : 3 (ECONOMICS)



News :

India has welcomed the decision by the International Energy Agency (IEA) to release 120 million barrels of crude oil from its strategic reserves, in addition to the release of 180 million barrels of crude oil from the strategic reserves of the US.

The move is aimed at calming crude oil prices that hit a 14 year-high of \$139 per barrel in March.

India had in November 2021 announced that it would release 5 million barrels from the strategic reserve as part of a coordinated effort with other crude oil importing countries to stabilise the price of crude oil.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organisation.

It was established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.

The IEA was initially dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors.

It is best known for the publication of its annual World Energy Outlook.

Membership: Only OECD member states can become members of the IEA. In 2022, Lithuania joined the IEA and became its 31st member.