

24– 02 – 2022

News: PM CARES for Children

- Recently, the Centre has extended the PM Cares for Children Scheme till 28th February 2022, which was earlier valid till 31st December 2021.

PM CARES for Children

- The PM CARES for Children scheme was launched with an aim to support children **who have lost both parents or their lone surviving parent or their legal guardian or adoptive parent due to Covid-19** by supporting them with a **corpus of 10 lakh**.
- There are a total **577 Covid-19 orphans** identified across the country. Also, there has been a rise in cases of child trafficking.
- The status of children in need of care and protection included orphans (10,094), lost either parent (1, 36,910) and abandoned (488) taking the total to **1, 47,492**.
- In the gender-wise break-up, out of the 1, 47,492 children, there are **76,508 boys, 70,980 girls and four transgender**.
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- This corpus will be used to give a **monthly stipend from 18 years of their age, for the next five years and on reaching the age of 23 years, he or she will get the corpus amount as one lump-sum** for personal and professional use.
- The education expenses of younger children will be supported by way of admission to **Kendriya Vidyalayas** and private schools up to higher secondary level.
- These children will also be **supported during their higher education through either a scholarship equivalent to the tuition fees or educational loans where the interest on the loan will be paid by the PM – CARES fund.**
- All children will be **enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme** with a health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh.
- The **premium amount will be paid by PM-CARES till a child turns 18.**
- Recently, Union Women and Child Development Ministry has launched a web based portal to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under the 'PM CARES for Children' scheme.
- The web portal is **www.pmcaresforchildren.in.**
- **Earlier, the Ministry had asked the Chief Secretaries of all States and Administrators of all Union Territories, to direct the District Magistrates in their States to identify the children eligible** for receiving support under the 'PM CARES for Children' scheme.

- A **dedicated Help desk** has been set up for the purpose which is accessible by telephone at 011-23388074 or by email pmcares-children.wcd@nic.in.

PM-CARES Fund

- The government has set up the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES Fund) to **deal with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the Covid-19 pandemic**.
- The Fund is a **public charitable trust with the Prime Minister as its Chairman**. Other Members include Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
- The Fund **enables micro-donations** as a result of which a large number of people will be able to contribute with the **smallest of denominations**.
- It will **strengthen disaster management capacities** and encourage research on protecting citizens.
- Contribution to PM - CARES Fund **qualifies as CSR** (Corporate Social Responsibility) Expenditure.
- The Fund is **out of the ambit of Right to Information Act, 2005**.

News: Simlipal National Park

- Recently the Forest Administration and SHGs (Self Help Groups) have started an awareness Campaign to manage fires in Simlipal.

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Simlipal National Park

- Simlipal National Park is a national park and a tiger reserve in the Mayurbhanj district in the Indian state of Odisha covering 2,750 km². Geographically, it lies in the eastern end of the eastern ghat.
- It is part of the Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve, which includes three protected areas — Simlipal Tiger Reserve, Hadgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary.
- It was formally designated a tiger reserve in 1956 and brought under Project Tiger in the year 1973.
- It was declared a biosphere reserve by the Government of India in June, 1994.
- This protected area is part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009.
- Simlipal National Park derives its name from the abundance of red silk cotton trees growing in the area.
- It is the 7th largest national park in India.

- The park is home to **Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, and chausingha** along with some of the beautiful waterfalls like **Joranda and Barehipani Falls**.
- The high hills surround **Meghasani/Tunkiburu**, the highest peak in the park.
- At least **12 rivers cut across the plain area**. The prominent among them are **Budhabalanga, Palpala Bhandan, Kharkai River and Deo**.
- Simlipal comes under a **high cerebral malaria-prone zone**.
- Simlipal forests are home to a variety of tribes. Prominent among these are **Kolha, Santhala, Bhumija, Bhatudi, Gondas, Khadia, Mankadia and Sahara**.
- Also, the period from January-April coincides with the **Akhand Shikar ritual** of many forest dwelling communities during which, the **Adivasis usually clear the ground bushes and grasses by setting them on fire to enhance their visibility in the forest**. Among others, this is said to be **one of the causes of forest fires** in the Simlipal national park.
- Recently a newly constituted **Panda committee under the Tribal Affairs Ministry** is to look into the issue of forest rights of the Mankadia tribe in Simlipal Tiger Reserve. **Mankadia is one of the 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in Odisha**. They critically depend on making rope with **siali fibre that is richly available in Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR)**. They were denied habitat rights inside STR under Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006.

- The Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR) is the **only tiger habitat in the world with melanistic tigers, which have broad black stripes running across their bodies and thicker than those seen on normal tigers. Recently, scientists have unraveled the mystery behind these 'Black Tigers'.**