



NAMAN SHARMA
IAS ACADEMY

Daily

CURRENT AFFAIRS

 March 06th, 2026



 **Offline Centre Location:**
SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh



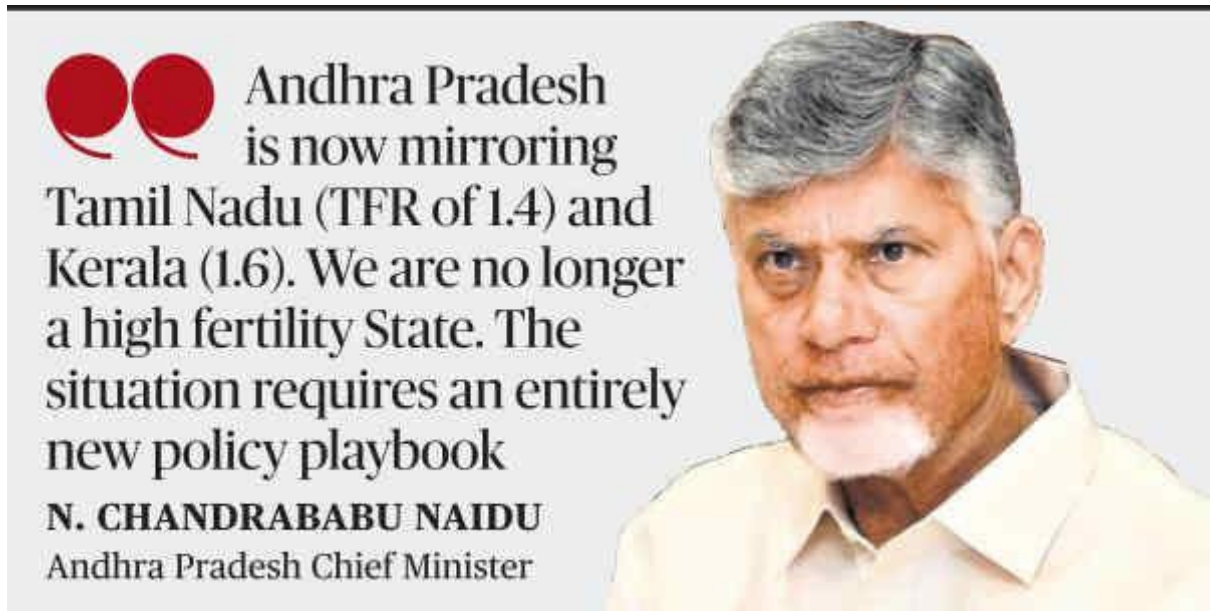
Index

- 1. A.P. introduces incentives for families to have 3 children**
- 2. Mascots Pragati, Vikas to serve as the friendly faces of Census 2027**
- 3. India condoles Khamenei death as Misri visits Embassy of Iran**
- 4. Indian HPV vaccine under test for single-dose roll-out**

1. A.P. introduces incentives for families to have 3 children

Why in the News?

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu introduced the Draft Population Management Policy in the Assembly. The policy is notable because it reverses the traditional narrative of population control; instead, it offers financial incentives for families to have a third child in order to boost the state's declining birth rate.



Background

Andhra Pradesh is facing a demographic shift. The state's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has dropped significantly to 1.5, which is well below the replacement level of 2.1 (the number needed for a population to replace itself without decline). Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu highlighted that the state is now mirroring low-fertility states like Tamil Nadu (1.4) and Kerala (1.6). If this trend continues, the state will face a severe aging crisis by 2047, with a shrinking workforce that could cripple the economy, similar to the current challenges faced by Japan, Italy, and South Korea.

Feature (The Policy)

To counter this decline, the government has introduced the Draft Population Management Policy, set to take effect on April 1, 2026. The primary goal is to raise the TFR from 1.5 back to the optimal level of 2.1.

The key incentive for families to have a third child is the "Poshana - Shiksha - Suraksha" (Nutrition - Education - Protection) package, which includes:

- Cash Incentive: A one-time payment of ₹25,000 at the time of delivery.
- Monthly Assistance: ₹1,000 per month for five years.
- Education: Free education for the child until they reach 18 years of age.

Additionally, the policy aims to double women's participation in the labor force to boost the state's economy by 15%.

Challenge

While the policy aims to boost birth rates, it faces significant hurdles:

- Changing Social Norms: Economic growth usually correlates with declining birth rates. Convincing families to have a third child in an era of urbanization, two-income households, and rising aspirations is difficult.

- **Economic Pressure:** Despite incentives, raising a child until age 18 involves substantial costs (housing, food, healthcare, extracurriculars) that may outweigh the ₹1,000 monthly aid.
- **Gender Dynamics:** The policy focuses on families, but the decision to have a third child heavily impacts the health and career of the mother. The success of the policy will depend on whether the incentives are enough to offset these personal costs.

Way Forward

- For the policy to be successful, it cannot rely on financial incentives alone. The draft policy is currently in the public domain for one month to facilitate deliberation. **The final shape of the policy should likely include:**
- **Robust Infrastructure:** Ensuring that the promise of "free education till age 18" is backed by high-quality government schools.
- **Women's Workforce Participation:** The policy must be paired with safe transportation, flexible working hours, and maternity/paternity benefits to ensure women are not forced to choose between career and child-rearing.
- **Healthcare Focus:** Ensuring that mothers and children have access to top-tier healthcare to reduce infant mortality rates and reassure parents.

Conclusion

Andhra Pradesh is attempting a significant policy pivot, moving from population control to population stabilization. By introducing these incentives, the state hopes to avoid the "aging society" trap seen in developed nations. The success of this policy will depend not just on the cash handouts, but on the state's ability to create a sustainable ecosystem where raising three children is economically feasible and socially viable.

2. Mascots Pragati, Vikas to serve as the friendly faces of Census 2027

Why in the News?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled the mascots Pragati and Vikas for the upcoming Census 2027. He also soft-launched four digital tools for the exercise, marking a significant shift from the traditional paper-based system to a fully digital format.

Background

The Census of India is a statutory process conducted every 10 years to collect demographic data. The last Census was conducted in 2011; the 2021 Census was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent logistical issues. The 2027 Census will be historic as it will be the first digital Census and the first to allow self-enumeration and enumeration of caste since the 1931 Census.

Feature

- The event introduced two key elements: friendly mascots and advanced technology.

The Mascots:

- **Pragati (Female):** Represents the female enumerator.
- **Vikas (Male):** Represents the male enumerator.
- **Purpose:** They are designed to serve as the "friendly faces" of the Census, helping to humanize the process and encourage public participation.

The Digital Tools (Developed by C-DAC):

- HLBC (Houselisting Block Creator): A web-map app that uses satellite imagery to create standardized geographic blocks.
- HLO App: An offline mobile app for enumerators to collect and upload houselisting data securely.
- Self-Enumeration (SE) Portal: Allows citizens to fill in their household data online before the enumerator arrives, generating a unique SE ID for verification.
- CMMS Portal: A centralized system to manage, monitor, and execute all Census activities across the country.

Challenge

While digitization is a leap forward, it comes with hurdles:

- Digital Divide: A significant portion of India's population, particularly in rural areas, may lack access to smartphones or the internet, making self-enumeration difficult.
- Data Security: With the collection of caste data and personal information on digital portals, ensuring the security and privacy of data against breaches is critical.
- Training: Millions of enumerators must be trained to use the new offline mobile applications effectively.
- Caste Enumeration: Collecting caste data is politically and socially sensitive, requiring careful execution to avoid controversies.

Way Forward

To ensure the success of Census 2027, the government will need to:

- Mass Awareness Campaign: Use the mascots Pragati and Vikas in campaigns to educate citizens, especially in remote areas, about the new self-enumeration process.
- Robust IT Infrastructure: Ensure that the CMMS portal and mobile apps are rigorously tested for high traffic and security vulnerabilities before the full-scale launch.
- Phased Rollout: Conduct extensive pilot studies in select districts to iron out technical glitches before the nationwide launch in two phases (Houselisting and Population Enumeration).

Conclusion

The unveiling of Pragati, Vikas, and the four digital tools marks the beginning of a tech-driven era for India's demographic data collection. By moving to a digital, self-enumeration model, the government aims to make the Census more accurate, efficient, and citizen-friendly. However, bridging the digital divide and ensuring data security will be the key determinants of whether this ambitious exercise succeeds in capturing a true picture of India in 2027.

3. India condoles Khamenei death as Misri visits Embassy of Iran

Why in the News?

India officially condoled the death of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in the opening salvo of the U.S.-Israel war on Iran on February 28. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri visited the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi to sign the condolence book, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart, Seyed Abbas Araghchi.

Background

The situation in West Asia has escalated dramatically following the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei by U.S.-Israel strikes. Iran has declared it is facing an "existential war" and has responded by targeting military and intelligence assets. A key strategic move by Iran has been to disrupt access to the Strait of Hormuz, a vital passageway for global energy supplies. This conflict places India in a delicate position, as it has massive stakes in the region: over one crore (10 million) Indian expatriate workers live in West Asian states, and India relies heavily on energy imports that pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

Feature

India's diplomatic response has been multi-pronged and cautious:

- **Condolence Visit:** Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri visited the Iranian Embassy to sign the condolence book on behalf of the Government of India, offering formal condolences for the demise of the Supreme Leader.
- **Ministerial Contact:** EAM S. Jaishankar spoke with Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi. Sources indicate that India urged for an "early cessation of hostilities" and emphasized that the safety of Indian citizens in the region and on oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz is of "utmost interest."
- **Energy Security:** To absorb the economic shockwave of the conflict, India has reportedly reached out to multiple alternative energy suppliers to ensure the domestic economy is not disrupted.

Challenge

India is walking a diplomatic tightrope, facing pressure from multiple sides:

- **Iranian Pressure:** Iran has expressed disappointment over India's "unwillingness" to condemn the assassination. An Iranian official warned that the "breach of law" in killing a head of state would "haunt everyone," implicitly calling on India to take a stronger moral stance.
- **Domestic Casualties:** The situation is complicated by the fact that Iranian strikes have led to the deaths of at least three Indian sailors on oil tankers, creating domestic anger and putting pressure on the government to protect its citizens.
- **Strategic Balancing:** India must balance its deep strategic and economic ties with the U.S. and Israel against its historical friendship with Iran and its need for Iranian cooperation on the Chabahar Port and energy access.

Way Forward

To navigate this crisis, India is likely to pursue a "multi-alignment" strategy:

- **Protecting Nationals:** The immediate priority is ensuring the safety and, if necessary, evacuation of Indian citizens in Israel, Iran, and the Gulf states.
- **Economic Contingency:** India will continue diversifying its energy imports to mitigate the impact of a prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Diplomacy:** India will continue to use its established diplomatic channels with all parties (Iran, Israel, USA, and Gulf Arabs) to advocate for de-escalation and the protection of civilian maritime traffic, without formally picking a side in the "existential war."

Conclusion

India's condolence message and high-level calls signal its concern over the escalating conflict in West Asia. While maintaining its historical ties with Iran, New Delhi is primarily focused on the safety of its large diaspora and the stability of global energy markets. The coming weeks will test

India's ability to protect its national interests in a region now gripped by a full-scale war between Iran and the U.S.-Israel coalition.

4. Indian HPV vaccine under test for single-dose roll-out

Why in the News?

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is currently conducting a study to test whether a single dose of the indigenously made Cervavac vaccine generates a stable immune response compared to a single dose of the existing Gardasil vaccine. The outcome of this study, expected in 2027, will determine if Cervavac can be officially recommended for India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).

Background

India has launched a campaign to vaccinate 1.15 crore 14-year-old girls against HPV, which causes cervical cancer. Currently, the campaign is using Gardasil-4, a vaccine developed by Merck that has been available in India since 2008.

However, India also has its own indigenous quadrivalent HPV vaccine called Cervavac, developed by the Serum Institute of India and launched in September 2022. In 2023, the Health Ministry committed to preparing Cervavac for inclusion in the UIP, with plans to float a global tender for 16.02 crore doses for a 2026 rollout.

Feature

The delay in including Cervavac in the national program is due to two key factors:

- **WHO Guideline Change:** In March 2022, the WHO relaxed its guidelines, allowing national programs to use either a two-dose or a single-dose schedule for HPV vaccines, moving away from the strict two-dose regimen. This was done to improve coverage and meet the 2030 target of 90% vaccination.
- **The ICMR Study:** Following this change, the ICMR launched a head-to-head study comparing the immune response generated by a single dose of Cervavac versus a single dose of Gardasil. The results are expected only in 2027.

Challenge

The shift in strategy presents several hurdles:

- **Delay in Indigenous Rollout:** By waiting for the single-dose study results, the inclusion of the cheaper, Indian-made Cervavac into the UIP has been effectively pushed back. The government is currently using Gardasil for the ongoing campaign instead of promoting the local product immediately.
- **Scientific Validation:** The key question is whether a single shot of Cervavac provides long-lasting protection equivalent to Gardasil. If the study shows it is inferior, it would require a return to a two-dose schedule, which is logistically harder and costlier to implement.
- **Vaccine Hesitancy:** Convincing parents and adolescents to accept a new, indigenously developed vaccine (Cervavac) over a well-established global brand (Gardasil) requires robust public trust and awareness campaigns.

Way Forward

The path to incorporating Cervavac into the national program depends on:

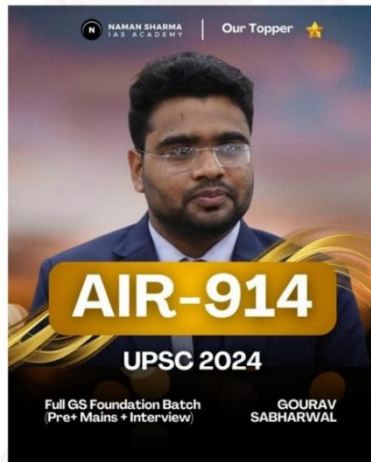
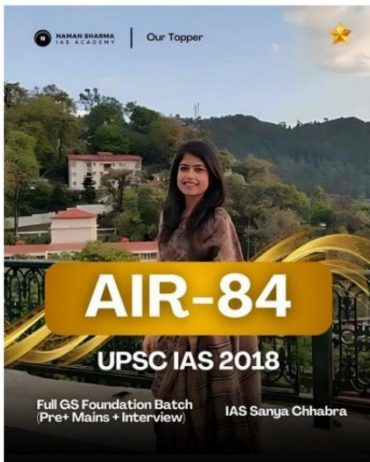
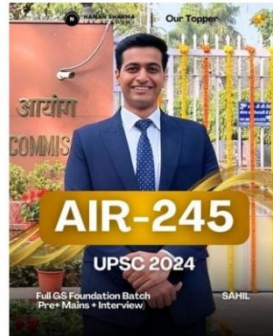
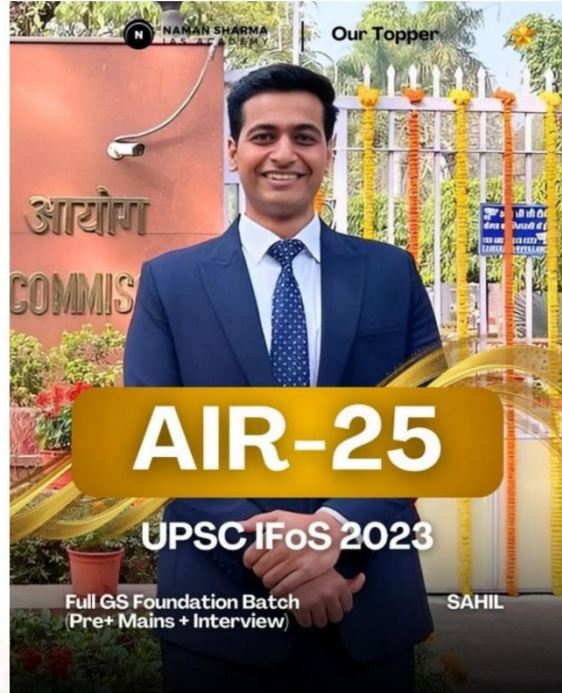
- Completion of the ICMR Study: The final policy decision hinges on the 2027 study results. If Cervavac is proven non-inferior in a single dose, it can be recommended for UIP.
- Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: A single-dose regimen of an Indian vaccine would be significantly cheaper and easier to administer than a two-dose foreign vaccine, making it ideal for India's large-scale immunization goals.
- Tender Process: Once the study is complete, the government will likely revive the plan to float a massive tender for Cervavac to supply the UIP.

Conclusion

India stands at a crossroads in its fight against cervical cancer. While the immediate need to protect adolescent girls is being met with the Gardasil campaign, the long-term goal is to have a sustainable, affordable, indigenously produced solution. The ICMR's study on a single dose of Cervavac is crucial; if successful, it could make India self-reliant in HPV vaccination and significantly accelerate the goal of achieving 90% coverage by 2030.



Our Recent Toppers



WhatsApp Now +91-843-768-6541



Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh

Admissions Now Open!



**Saarthi for
UPSC 2027/28**

- ✓ 1/2/3 Years Course with Lifetime access
- ✓ Inclusive of Crash Course + Test Series
- ✓ Full Prelims + Mains
- ✓ Offline + Online + Hybrid Mode

Enroll Now

+91-8437686541
www.namaniasacademy.com

Enroll
in just **₹2000**

- Mode: Offline/Hybrid/Online
- Medium: Hinglish (Notes in English)
- Timings:

Morning: 9 AM - 1 PM

Evening: 4 PM - 8 PM

Enrollment Process:

- Visit Our Website: **Naman IAS Academy**
- Call us at **+91-843-768-6541**
for Free Seminar

Free UPSC seminar

Saturday, 4PM



Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh