

08 APRIL 2019

Netanyahu pledges to annex West Bank settlements after vote

In News:

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank if he wins elections, a deeply controversial move that could prove to be the death knell for the two-state solution.

In Brief:

1. His comments could be seen as an appeal to right-wing voters who do not believe in the feasibility of a peace agreement with the Palestinians.
2. He said that he will apply the Israeli Sovereignty, but he doesn't distinguish between settlement blocks and isolated settlements.
3. He did not provide details on how quickly he planned to move ahead with it and whether it would involve all settlements.
4. If done on a large-scale, annexation could end already fading hopes for a two-state solution with the Palestinians.
5. Settlements built on land occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War are deemed illegal by the international community and their ongoing construction is seen as a major barrier to peace.
6. Israel will continue to brazenly violate international law for as long as the international community will continue to reward Israel with impunity, particularly with the Trump administration's support according to the government sources.



MAP: Work out the map.

About 85% of Ujjwala beneficiaries in four States still use earthen stoves

In News:

The hidden truth of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna (PMUY), being touted in the Ruling Party's election campaigning as one of the big successes of the incumbent government, is that most rural households with LPG (liquified petroleum gas) connections still use chulhas with firewood or dung cakes, to the detriment of rural health.

In Brief:

Note



Financial reasons

A new study from the Research Institute for Compassionate Economics (r.i.c.e) shows that 85% of Ujjwala beneficiaries in rural Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan still use solid fuels for cooking, due to financial reasons as well as gender inequalities.

The resultant indoor air pollution can lead to infant deaths and harm child development, as well as contribute to heart and lung disease among adults, especially the women, cooking on these chulhas.

The Ujjwala Yojna, launched in 2016, subsidises LPG connections for rural households by providing a free gas cylinder, regulator and pipe.

Central government data shows that more than six crore households have received a connection through the scheme.

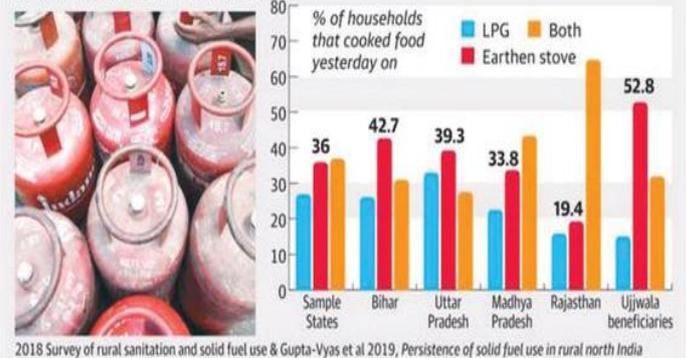
The r.i.c.e study shows that in the four States surveyed, there has indeed been a substantial increase in LPG ownership due to the scheme, with 76% of households now owning an LPG connection.

The trend is more acute among those who received an LPG connection from the government; almost 53% exclusively used the chulha, while 32% used both.

Ujjwala beneficiaries are poorer, on average, than households who got LPG on their own. Refilling the cylinder is a greater fraction of their monthly consumption, and they may be less likely to get a refill immediately after a cylinder becomes empty.

Awareness falling short

Only 27% of households in the sample States reported exclusively using liquefied petroleum gas to cook food a day before the survey



Pradhan Mantri UJJWALA Yojana

Ministry/Department : Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

Objective: To reduce health hazards of indoor pollution by providing free LPG connections to Women from BPL Households

Tagline : Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan

Features of the Scheme:

- 8 Crore (Earlier target was 5 Crore) LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to poor households will be provided
- The scheme provides free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs. 1600/- per connection to an adult woman member of all poor families. (Earlier only BPL family identified through Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data were eligible)
- With the expansion of the PMUY scheme, all the poor households can avail the benefit from PMUY and it will not be mandatory to be part of the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) list or the seven identified categories under the programme to be eligible for the scheme.
- Eligible households will be identified in consultation with state governments and Union territories.
- The scheme will be implemented by 2020. (Older target was to be achieved by 2019).
- Consumers will have the option to purchase gas stove and refills on EMI.

Note



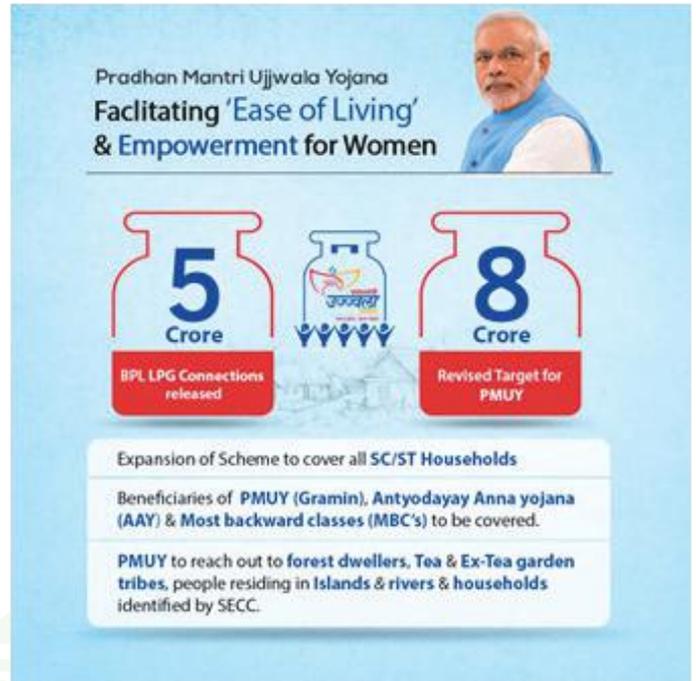
- It seeks to empower women and protect their health by shifting them from traditional cooking based on unclean cooking fuels or fossil fuels to clean cooking gas.

New Changes:

- Target increased from 5 Cr to 8 Cr
- Time period extended from 2019 to 2020
- Cabinet also approved proposal to expand scheme to cover all SC/ST households, beneficiaries of Antyoday Anna Yojana (AAY), PMAY (Gramin), forest dwellers, most backward classes (MBC), Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes, people residing in Islands and rivers etc. in addition to SECC identified households.
- This move will address practical difficulty faced in implementation of PMUY, namely, targeting genuinely poor households left out of Socio Economic Caste Survey (SECC) list

Background of the Scheme:

- Because burning wood/coal is leading to rising pulmonary, cataract and heart diseases
- According to health experts, the smoke released in the burning process contains hazardous gases like carbon monoxide, particulate matter, etc. Unclean cooking fuels are the main source of indoor air pollution that causes non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer
- Generally, poor women are victims of these toxic gases. They have no alternative and thus they are forced to use them



Waste management in India

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy estimates, the solid waste generated from cities/towns in India has a potential to generate power of approximately 500 MW, which can be enhanced to 1,075 MW by 2031.
- However in India, less than 60% of waste is collected from households and only 15% of the urban waste is processed.

Issues with Solid Waste Management:

Non Segregation of Waste:

- The segregation of waste into organic, recyclable and hazardous categories is not enforced at source.

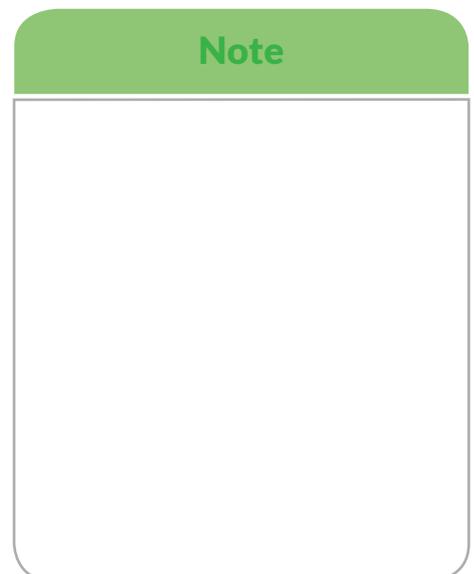
Low Calorific Waste:

- The low calorific value of the waste is due to the presence of a large organic fraction of 40-60% (This is primarily due to non-segregation of waste).

Lack of Monetary Benefits:

- The residents are not paid well enough for segregation and recycling.

High toxic waste:



- Incinerators develop toxic ash or slag, containing heavy metals and gas pollutants which are toxic (corrosive impact) and pollute underground water.

Lack of Finance for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)

- It affects institutional capacity necessary for integrated management of municipal solid waste, which requires investments for WtE projects.

Way Forward:

- We need a comprehensive waste management policy that stresses the need for decentralised garbage disposal practices.
- This will incentivise private players to participate which might be helpful in overcoming the issues with solid waste management.

Battle of Kohima

Why in news?

- Very recently, the Indian State of Nagaland observed the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Kohima.

About Battle of Kohima:

- The Battle of Kohima was held between April to June, 1944 and formed part of II World War.
- In this battle, at first, Japan wanted to capture the town of Kohima.
- But in the end the British army was successful in driving out the Japanese troops.
- The battle is often referred to as the “Stalingrad of the East”.



Note

A deadly drug resistant fungus threatens the world

In news:

An elderly patient who was hospitalized at a hospital in Brooklyn for abdominal surgery was infected with a fungus called **Candida Auris**, which has recently been found to be particularly lethal. He died 90 days later, while traces of the fungus were found in every corner of his room.

In brief:

C. auris is so tenacious, in part, because it is impervious to major antifungal medications, making it a new example of one of the world's most intractable



health threats.

It is so invasive that the hospital needed special cleaning equipment and had to rip out some of the ceiling and floor tiles to eradicate it.

The public health experts have warned that the overuse of antibiotics was reducing the effectiveness of drugs that have lengthened life spans by curing bacterial infections once commonly fatal. But lately, there has been an explosion of resistant fungi as well.

Antibiotics are also used widely to prevent disease in farm animals, and antifungals are also applied to prevent agricultural plants from rotting. Some scientists cite evidence that rampant use of fungicides on crops is contributing to the surge in drug-resistant fungi infecting humans.

Resistant germs are often called “superbugs,” but this is simplistic because they don’t typically kill everyone. Instead, they are most lethal to people with immature or compromised immune systems, including newborns and the elderly, smokers, diabetics and people with autoimmune disorders who take steroids that suppress the body’s defenses.



Note

