



Current Affairs of the Day

Social media impact: Shield India's young

Adolescents feel worse about their lives the more they use social media, a study published in Nature Communications earlier this week found.

Highlights:

1. The effect is particularly pronounced in girls between 11 and 13, and boys between 14 and 15 — at these ages, the more they go online on services such as Instagram and TikTok, the worse they feel about themselves the following year.
2. These are ages when social development and self-perceptions are shaped. There is already evidence that toxic social media exposure leads to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem in children.
3. In tandem with the rise in smartphone and internet penetration in recent years, there has been an increase in reports of teenagers struggling with mental health issues, and of authorities attempting to address these.
4. China passed an order allowing under-18s to play video games only three hours a week. In the US, the surgeon-general called for research on the relationship between technology and youth mental health.
5. Worryingly for a country like India, these conversations are rare in the Global South and scientific evidence of how these factors affect children is even scander.
6. These are problems that need the intervention of all sections of society: Academia, parents, teachers and, technology firms that sit on population-scale data. Understanding the true extent and the mechanics of the problem has to be the first step before we help our young.



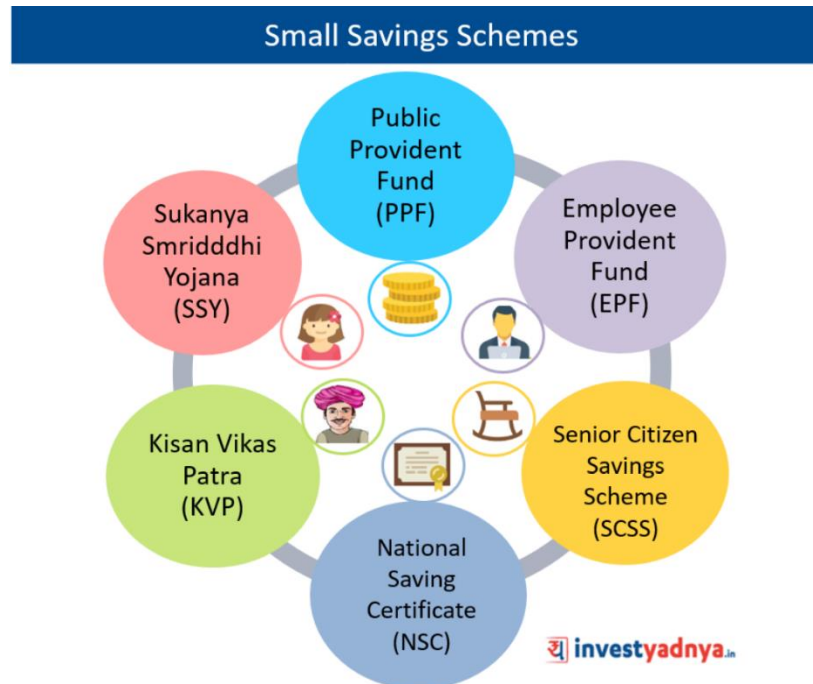
'Small savings rates unlikely to be raised for coming quarter'

1. The government is unlikely to raise small savings rates for the coming quarter when they are reviewed, a top official indicated, observing that the rates have also not been cut for two financial years now.

2. Small savings rates were last pared in a range of 0.5-1.4 percentage points on different instruments

in 2020, bringing the PPF rate to 7.1%, from 7.9% prevalent till March 31, 2020.

3. The interest rate on small savings instruments is reset every quarter, based on market yields on government securities (G-secs) with a lag, at a spread ranging from 0-100 basis points over and above yields of comparable maturities.



Small Savings:

1. Small Savings Schemes are a set of savings instruments managed by the central government with an aim to encourage citizens to save regularly irrespective of their age.

2. They are popular as they not only provide returns that are generally higher than bank fixed deposits but also come with a sovereign guarantee and tax benefits.

3. Since 2016, the Finance Ministry has been reviewing the interest rates on small savings schemes on a quarterly basis. All deposits received under



various small savings schemes are pooled in the National Small Savings Fund.

4. The money in the fund is used by the central government to finance its fiscal deficit.

National Small Savings Fund (NSSF)

- ❖ National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) was **established in 1999** within the Public Account of India for pooling the **money from different small saving schemes (SSSs)**.
- ❖ **Collections from all small savings** schemes are credited to the NSSF. Similarly, withdrawals under small savings schemes by the depositors are made out of this Fund.
- ❖ The **money in the account is used by the Centre and states to finance their fiscal deficit**. The balance in the Fund is invested in Central and State Government Securities.

The different savings schemes

The schemes can be grouped under three heads - Post office deposits, savings certificates and social security schemes.

1. Under Post Office Deposits we have the savings deposit, recurring deposit and time deposits with 1, 2, 3 and 5-year maturities and the monthly income account.
2. Under Savings Certificates, we have the National Savings Certificate and the Kisan Vikas Patra.
3. The third head of social security schemes, there is Public Provident Fund, Sukanya Samridhi Account and Senior Citizens Savings Scheme.

Heatwave spells on the rise: Study

1. The number of heatwave days in India in a decade has increased from 413 in the 1981-90 decade to 575 in 2001-10, and further to 600 in 2010-20, highlighting the impact of the climate crisis on maximum temperatures, a study by India Meteorological Department (IMD).



- An increase in the spatial coverage, frequency and persistency of heatwaves and severe heatwave days was observed during the recent three decades (1991 to 2020) compared to the previous three decades.
- IMD Pune's Climate Hazards and Vulnerability Atlas of India covers heatwave occurrence only in April, May, June and July. The Atlas indicates that even within the core heatwave zone, parts of west Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha are the worst affected between 1961 to 2020.
- This time the heatwave season has advanced into March mainly due to the formation of a high-pressure area over the south Sindh region.

MERCURIAL METER

Some of the new and cross-country benchmarks are listed below. Earlier, they used to vary from state to state

HEAT WAVES

Based on departure from normal



Heat wave: 4.5°C to 6.4°C above normal maximum

Severe heat wave: More than 6.4°C above normal maximum

Based on actual maximum temperature

Heat wave: Temperature equal or greater than 45°C

Severe heat wave: Equal or greater than 47°C

Warm night: (Will apply only when maximum temperature remains 40°C or more) Minimum temperature departure is 4.5°C to 6.4°C

Very warm night: Minimum temperature departure is above 6.4°C

COLD WAVES

Based on departure from normal



Cold wave: 4.5°C to 6.4°C below normal minimum

Severe cold wave: Anything more than 6.4°C below normal minimum

Based on actual minimum temperature

Cold wave: Minimum temperature is 4°C or lower

Severe cold wave: Minimum temperature is 2°C or lower

Cold day: (Applies when minimum temperature is 10°C or lower in plains and 0°C or lower in hilly regions) Maximum temperature departure is minus 4.5°C to minus 6.4°C

Very cold day: Maximum temperature departure is greater than minus 6.4°C

Reasons for Heatwave in march:

- An area of anti-cyclone has formed near the south Sindh region. The winds are bringing hot and dry winds from southwest Rajasthan, Balochistan, central Pakistan, etc, that are now blowing over Delhi, south Haryana, southwest Uttar Pradesh etc.
- This along with the lack of rain and western disturbances has led to a spike in temperatures.
- Normally, western disturbances bring some light rain and thundershowers in the upper reaches in March which helps break the heat spell. But that hasn't happened.
- This is an unusual year but the link with the climate crisis is that average temperatures are going up, which is accentuating the impact of heatwaves.



MAINS DAWP	<p>Q1. Discuss the social and economic significance of small saving schemes.</p> <p>Q2. India is in urgent need of a model heat action plan. Comment</p> <p>Q3. Discuss the dire need for Police reforms in India and the hurdles in realising them.</p>
MCQs	<p>Q1. Consider the following statement about Small savings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All deposits received under various small savings schemes are pooled in the National Small Savings Fund 2. The money in the fund is used by the central government to finance its fiscal deficit 3. The Finance Ministry reviews the interest rates on small savings schemes on a yearly basis <p>Which of the above statements is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1 and 2 only b. 2 only c. 1 and 3 only d. 1, 2 and 3