

19 September 2019: PIB Summary & Analysis

India-BLEU

Context:

The 16th session of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) between India and Belgium Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) was convened in New Delhi on 17th September 2019.

Details:

- The three countries (India – Belgium - Luxembourg) reiterated the importance of the JEC towards the development of bilateral economic and trade relations through facilitating dialogue and enhancing cooperation on a wide range of issues of **mutual interest**, such as, transportation and logistics, renewable energy, aerospace and satellites, audio and visual industry, agro and food processing industry, life sciences, ICT, traditional medicine, Ayurveda and yoga, and tourism.
- JEC sessions are convened based on an agreement signed in 1990 in New Delhi.
- It is a biennial event (happens once in two years).
- It is held in the capital cities of the three countries alternatively.
- It is the main vehicle for discussing economic and commercial issues between India and BLEU.
- The JEC was set up in 1997.

Facts about the trade between India and Belgium – Luxembourg:

- The bilateral trade between India and Belgium grew 41% in 2018 – 19 compared to 2017 – 18.
- The bilateral trade between India and Luxembourg grew 150% for the same time period.
- India is Belgium's second-largest export destination and fourth-largest trade partner outside the European Union with a significant contribution from the Indian diaspora.
- **Leading exports from Belgium to India:**
 - Gem and jewellery (rough diamonds)
 - Chemical and chemical products
 - Machinery and mechanical products
- **Major exports from India to Belgium:**
 - Gem and jewellery (finished products)
 - Base metals and articles
 - Chemicals and chemical products
- There are around 160 Belgian companies in India.
- Many Indian software companies have established base in Belgium to cater to the Belgian and European markets.

SITMEX-19

Context:

The sea phase of the maiden SITMEX-19 (Singapore India Thailand Maritime Exercise) has begun in the Andaman Sea. The harbour phase ended at Port Blair.

About SITMEX:

- The exercise is conducted between the navies of India, Singapore and Thailand.
- This is the first year of the maritime exercise.
- The exercise had been announced by Prime Minister Modi at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018.
- A fourth country Malaysia has expressed its interest in being a part of the exercise.

Points to Note:

Exercise SIMBEX – A bilateral naval exercise between India and Singapore.

Exercise MAITREE – A bilateral military exercise between India and Thailand. Read more about Exercise MAITREE at the following link:

<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/upsc-pib-summary-analysis-sep12-2019/>

New Chief of Air Staff

Context:

The government has decided to appoint Air Marshal RKS Bhadauria, PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC, presently, the Vice Chief of Air Staff as the next Chief of the Air Staff.

Details:

- Air Marshall Bhadauria replaces Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, when he retires on 30th September 2019.
 - The position of the Chief of Air Staff is always held by the highest-ranking air officer, Air Chief Marshall.
 - This position is the chief head and commander of the Indian Air Force.
 - It is also sometimes abbreviated as CAS.
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National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) Scheme

Context:

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has announced a new PPP (public-private partnership) scheme, National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) for using technology for better learning outcomes in higher education.

Details:

- The objective of the scheme is to use **Artificial Intelligence** to make learning more personalised and customised as per the requirements of the learner.
- This requires the development of technologies in Adaptive Learning to address the diversity of learners.
- There are a number of start-up companies developing this and MHRD seeks to recognise such efforts and bring them under a common platform so that learners can access it easily.
- The Ministry wishes to make such technologies accessible to a large number of students from

economically weaker sections.

- The Ministry would create and maintain a **National NEAT platform** that would provide one-stop access to these technological solutions.
 - Ed-Tech companies would be responsible for developing solutions and managing the registration of learners through the NEAT portal.
 - They would be free to charge fees as per their policy.
 - As their contribution towards the national cause, they would have to offer free coupons to the extent of 25% of the total registrations for their solution through the NEAT portal.
 - The Ministry would then distribute these free coupons to economically disadvantaged students.
 - The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) would be the implementing agency for the NEAT programme.
 - Expert committees would select the Ed-tech companies.
 - The Ministry proposes to launch and start operations by November 2019.
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National Geosciences Awards

Context:

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines conferred the National Geosciences Awards for the year 2018 for outstanding contributions in the field of geosciences, mining and allied areas to 22 scientists.

About the National Geosciences Awards:

- The awards scheme originated in 1966 when the GOI instituted the National Mineral Awards.
 - The National Mineral Awards scheme was enlarged into the National Geosciences Awards (NGA) scheme from the year 2009 onwards to foster further research in geosciences.
 - These awards are given in ten categories namely:
 - Mineral exploration
 - Groundwater exploration
 - Mining technology
 - Mineral beneficiation
 - Sustainable mineral development
 - Basic and applied geosciences
 - Geo-environmental studies
 - Natural hazards investigation
 - Award for Excellence
 - Young Scientist Award
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The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana reaches One Crore beneficiaries

Context:

The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), a central government scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers has crossed one crore beneficiaries.

About the PMMVY:

We have covered this scheme in detail. You can read about the PMMVY at the following link:

<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/pradhan-mantri-matritva-vandana-vojana/>

