

04 October 2019: PIB Summary & Analysis

Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)

Context:

The Vice President Mr. Venkaiah Naidu addressed the 18th meeting of the Governing Body of Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) at New Delhi.

About the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA):

- The Indian Council of World Affairs was established in 1943 by a group of Indian intellectuals as a think tank.
- By an Act of Parliament in 2001, the ICWA was declared an institution of national importance.
- The Vice President of India is the ex-officio President of ICWA.
- It is devoted exclusively for the study of international relations and foreign affairs.
- The founder-president of the Council was Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.
- Historic international conferences like 'Asian Relations Conference' in 1947 under the leadership of freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu and 'United Nations and the New World Order' in 1994 have been held by this think tank in which world-renowned dignitaries addressed huge gatherings of intellectuals.

India - Bangladesh Business Forum

Context:

The India – Bangladesh Business Forum took place in New Delhi.

Details:

- The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Ms. Sheikh Hasina was also present at the event.
- On this occasion, two Government to Business (G2B) MoUs were signed between Start up Bangladesh and Tech Mahindra, and Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority and Adani Ports and SEZs.

About India – Bangladesh Ties:

- Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia.
- Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade.
 - India's exports to Bangladesh for the financial year 2018-19 (April-March) stood at USD 9.21 billion and imports from Bangladesh for the same period stood at USD 1.22 billion.
- India and Bangladesh are members of various regional trade agreements including the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) which govern the tariff regimes for trade.
- Under SAFTA, India has granted duty-free, quota-free access to Bangladesh on all items except alcohol and tobacco.
- Four Border Haats, two each in Tripura (Srinagar and Kamalasagar) and Meghalaya (Kalaichar and Balat), have been established for the benefit of communities living along the border areas of both countries. Ten additional Border Haats on the India-Bangladesh border are under implementation.

- Cumulative Foreign Direct Investment from India to Bangladesh has more than doubled during the period 2014 to 2018.
 - Bangladesh is the biggest development partner of India today. India has extended 3 Lines of Credits (LOCs) to Bangladesh in the last 8 years amounting to USD 8 billion. India has also provided grant assistance to Bangladesh for various infrastructure projects.
-

Goa Maritime Conclave– 2019

Context:

The Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) - 2019 was inaugurated by the National Security Advisor, Shri Ajit Kumar Doval, at Goa.

Details:

- The conclave saw the participation of heads of the navies of ten nations from the Indian Ocean region – Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
 - The conclave was conducted by the Naval War College, Goa.
 - The theme for the conclave is **“Common Maritime Priorities in IOR and need for Regional Maritime Strategy”**.
 - On the side-lines of the conclave, various bilateral meetings were also held, between the Chiefs of Navies, to further build on the existing bonds of friendship and also discuss issues specific to both countries.
-

Amendments in Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Guidelines and Specifications

Context:

To boost Electric Vehicles in India, the Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) Shri RK Singh has approved amendments in Electric Vehicle Charging Guidelines and Specifications.

Details:

- The guidelines have been made more consumer-friendly.
- In order to address a range of issues of electric vehicle owners, a phase-wise installation of an appropriate network of charging infrastructure throughout the country has been envisaged in the Guidelines ensuring that
 - At least one charging station should be available in a grid of 3 km X 3 km in the cities, and
 - At least one charging station every 25 km on both sides of highways/roads.
- Assuming that most of the charging of EVs would take place at homes or at offices where the decision of using Fast or Slow chargers would rest on the consumers, it has been clarified in the guidelines that private charging at residences/offices shall be permitted and DISCOMs may facilitate the same.
- Setting up Public Charging Stations (PCS) shall be a de-licensed activity and any individual/entity is free to set up public charging stations subject to the conditions as specified in the Guidelines.

- Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has been nominated as the Central Nodal Agency.
- The domestic charging shall be akin to domestic consumption of electricity and shall be charged as such.
- However, in the case of PCS, it has been provided that tariffs for the supply of electricity to PCS shall be determined by the appropriate commission in accordance with the Tariff policy.

About the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):

- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- It assists in developing policies and strategies with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.
- It coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies, and other organizations to identify and utilize the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing the functions assigned to it under the Energy Conservation Act.

World Cotton Day

Context:

The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, is participating in the World Cotton Day event being observed from 7th October to 11th October 2019 in Geneva.

About World Cotton Day:

- It is being organised by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in collaboration with the Secretariats of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC).
- WTO is hosting the event at the request of the **Cotton – 4 countries** - Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali to celebrate their official application for the recognition of 7th October as World Cotton Day by the United Nations.
- World Cotton Day will celebrate the many advantages of cotton, from its qualities as a natural fibre, to the benefits people obtain from its production, transformation, trade and consumption.
- World Cotton Day will also serve to shed light on the challenges faced by cotton economies around the world because cotton is important to least developed, developing and developed economies worldwide.
 - Cotton occupies just 2.1 % of the world's arable land, yet it meets 27% of the world's textile need.
 - In addition to its fibre used in textiles and apparel, food products are also derived from cotton, like edible oil and animal feed from the seed.
 - Cotton is a drought-resistant crop ideal for arid climates.
- A sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi made out of cotton will be displayed to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, at the event.
- The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) will be displaying India's high-quality cotton textiles at the exhibition.
- Between 2011 and 2018, India implemented a Cotton Technical Assistance Programme (Cotton TAP-I) of about USD 2.85 million for seven African countries namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad and also Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria.
- The technical assistance focused on improving the competitiveness of the cotton and cotton-based textiles and apparel industry in these countries through a series of interventions that had significant

outcomes leading to a demand for a follow on project.

Youth Co:Lab

Context:

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and UNDP India jointly launched Youth Co:Lab to accelerate youth-led social entrepreneurship and innovation in India.

Details:

- Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The first phase of Youth Co:Lab will focus on six SDGs:
 - SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
 - SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)
 - SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)
 - SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)
 - SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production)
 - SDG 13 (Climate Action)