30 December 2019: PIB Summary & Analysis

National Children's Science Congress

Context:

The Vice President (VP) addressed the National Children's Science Congress in Thiruvananthapuram.

About the National Children's Science Congress (NCSC):

- The National Children's Science Congress (aka Children's Science Congress) is a flagship programme of the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India.
- The theme of the 2019 Congress is **"Science, Technology and Innovation for a Clean, Green and Healthy Nation"**.
- It is a platform for children to carry out small research activities at the micro-level.
- The seeds of this programme were planted in Madhya Pradesh by an NGO called Gwalior Science Centre. It was later adopted by the NCSTC, DST for extending it to the national level.
- Since 2014, NCSTC, DST has been organising the Children's Science Congress with the guidance and support of the National Academic Committee, a core group of experienced academic team constituted by the NCSTC, DST, Government of India.
- The programme aims at spreading the concept of the **method of science** among children with their project activities adopting the process of learning through doing.
- The mandate of participation is that the children will carry out a project on a particular topic in relation to a focal theme and several sub-themes decided for a period of two consecutive years. The study is to be carried out in the neighbourhood of the children where they live or study. It is a group activity on a local specific problem using simple method of science.
- The Children's Science Congress was launched as a nationwide programme in 1993. The first Congress was in New Delhi with the theme "Know your Environment".
- **Objectives:**
  - The primary objective of the NCSC is to make a forum for the children of 10-17 years age group, **both from formal school system as well as from out of school**, to showcase their creativity and innovativeness and more particularly their ability to solve a societal problem experienced locally using the method of science under the supervision of a Guide Teacher.
- It emboldens the children to question many aspects of progress and development around and can also express their findings in their own choice of language.

87th Sivagiri Pilgrimage Meet

Context:

The VP inaugurated the 87th Sivagiri Pilgrimage Meet at the Sivagiri Mutt in Varkala, Kerala.

Details:

- The Sivagiri Pilgrimage (known as Sivagiri Theerthadanam in Malayalam) was started by social reformer Sree Narayana Guru's followers, Vallabhasseri Govindan Vaidyar and T K Kittan Writer. The concept was also approved by Sree Narayana Guru himself.
- The pilgrims observe 10-days purification and congregate at the Sivagiri Mutt at the beginning of the

New Year.

- Narayana Guru said the aim of the pilgrimage should be the creation of comprehensive knowledge among the people. Hence the goals of the pilgrimage were set as Education, Cleanliness, Devotion to God, Organisation, Agriculture, Trade, Handicrafts and Technical training.
- Narayana Guru also insisted that the pilgrims should wear yellow clothes.
- The first Sivagiri Pilgrimage started from the village of Elavumthitta and the group walked all the way to Sivagiri.
- Sivagiri is a pilgrimage centre in the Varkala municipality of Trivandrum where the tomb of Narayana Guru is situated. It is also the place where Narayana Guru is said to have become enlightened.
- The Sivagiri Mutt is located atop the Sivagiri Hill and was built in 1904.

About Sree Narayana Guru:

- Considered one of the greatest social and religious reformers of India, Narayana Guru worked for the elimination of caste in society.
- He played a crucial role in the uplifting of the depressed classes of South India.
- He also gave the universal message, "One caste, one religion, one God."

For more on Sree Narayana Guru, click here.

Year End Review: Department of Space

The important initiatives of the Department of Space in 2019 are mentioned below:

- ISRO accomplished 13 missions successfully.
- 50 foreign satellites from 7 countries were launched on a commercial basis during this period.
- Microsat-R and Kalamsat-V2 were launched in Jan 2019. **Kalamsat-V2 is the world's lightest satellite**.
- The successful launch of **GSLV-MK III M1**, **India's most powerful launch vehicle**, was accomplished in July 2019. This launch vehicle is capable of launching 4 tons of satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). The mission carried **Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter** spacecraft to its intended orbit. The instruments are continuously providing very useful science data.
- Cartosat-3, a third-generation agile advanced satellite having high-resolution imaging capability was successfully launched by PSLV-C47 from Sriharikota in November 2019.
- India's first inter-planetary mission **"Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)"** completed five years in Martian orbit in September 2019.
- Astrosat, the first Indian multi-wavelength space observatory, completed four years in orbit in Sep 2019. The data has been made open to the public. Astrosat has more than 900 registered users from 24 countries.
- Global Standards body 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP), which develops protocols for mobile telephony, has approved India's regional navigation system **NAVIC** (is an Indian developed Navigation Satellite System that is used to provide accurate real-time positioning and timing services over India and region extending to 1500 km around India).
- A new centre namely **Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC)** was created within ISRO/DOS with the responsibility to act as the lead centre for Human Space Flight Program, **Gaganyaan**.
  - The Gaganyaan project has the objective of demonstrating human space flight capability to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) with 3 crew members for 5-7 days in orbit and to safely recover them after the mission.
- **New Space India Limited (NSIL)**, Bengaluru, a wholly-owned Government of India Company

under the Department of Space, was incorporated. The business activities of NSIL are mainly driven towards enabling Indian industries to productionise space systems and to exploit the commercial opportunities emanating from the Indian space programme.

- 10 industries were selected for the transfer of the Li-ion cell technology from ISRO.
- Space Technology Cells (STCs) were established at IIT Guwahati and IIT Delhi to take up the space technology research and applications to newer heights.
- Space Technology Incubation Centres (S-TIC) were established at NIT, Trichy and NIT, Jalandhar for developing concepts related to Space Science and technology in line with the national policy of 'Start-up India'.
- Regional Academic Centre for Space (RAC-S) was established at NIT, Kurukshetra to develop Academia-Industry ecosystem for Space technology.
- A special programme for School Children called **"Yuva VIgyani KAryakram (YUVIKA)"** was organized, in tune with the Government's vision "Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan". The Program is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications.
- The Department of Land Resources in collaboration with ISRO has published the fifth edition of Wasteland Atlas-2019. Read more on the Wasteland Atlas in PIB dated 5th Nov 2019 under the heading 'Wastelands Atlas'.

Read more on ISRO.

Year End Review: Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)

Major achievements of DoNER during the calendar year 2019 are as follows:

- The Government of India approved the **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)** to meet the gaps in social & physical infrastructure in North Eastern Region (NER). Read more on NESIDS at PIB dated 12 Dec 2019.
- India's first Bamboo Industrial Park is to be set up at Manderdisa in Dima Hasao District of Assam. The project will be completed by March 2021.
- **Destination North East**, an event promoting and popularising the North Eastern Region, culture, heritage and business opportunities was organised at Varanasi in November 2019. Read more about the event at PIB dated 21 Nov 2019.
- **North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP)**
  - o It is a livelihood project funded by the Government of India.
  - o It has facilitated the establishment of community-based micro-credit organisations and non-farm enterprises in its project areas.
  - o It provides employment to Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- **North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP):** Read more about NERLP at PIB dated 4th Dec 2019.
- North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Ltd. (NEHHDC) developed 30 innovative handicrafts and handlooms products in its Craft Promotional Centre (CPC) and at clusters in the North Eastern Region. It also opened a showroom in Gujarat and an online shopping portal.
- **North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd. (NERAMAC)**
  - o It was established in 1982 as a marketing organisation in the field of Agri-Horti sector of NER, under the administrative control of DoNER.
  - o It was set up to support farmers and producers of NER to achieve remunerative prices for their produce and also to enhance the agricultural, procurement, processing and marketing

infrastructure of NER.

Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR)

Context:

The Union Minister for Communications, Law & Justice and Electronics & Information Technology launched a web portal called 'Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR)' for the customers in Delhi to facilitate blocking and tracing of stolen/lost mobile phones in Delhi.

Details:

- During the event, the Minister said that the Government has decided to give 5G Spectrum for trial to all operators in the country.
- The launch of the CEIR in Delhi will facilitate the following:
  - Request for blocking of stolen or lost mobile phone by customers.
  - Blocking of such mobile phones across mobile networks.
  - Allowing services to other existing customers who have mobile phones with the same **IMEI number**.
  - Sharing of traceability date with Police Authorities.
  - Unblocking of recovered/found stolen or lost mobile phones.

What is IMEI Number?

- International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) is supposed to be a unique identity of a mobile phone device.
- It is a 15- or 17-digit code that uniquely identifies mobile phone sets.
- The IMEI code can enable a GSM (Global System for Mobile communication) or UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunications Service) network to prevent a misplaced or stolen phone from initiating calls.
- In most mobile communications devices, the IMEI appears on the display when the user enters the character sequence *#06# (star-pound-zero-six-pound) into the keypad.
- The IMEI code may also be printed inside the battery compartment. When a phone set is lost or stolen, the owner can call the CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) and blacklist the device according to its IMEI number.
- After that action, the set will in most cases become useless, even if someone swaps out the unit's SIM card (subscriber identity module).
- IMEI number being programmable, some miscreants do reprogram the IMEI number, which results in the cloning of IMEI causing multiple devices with same IMEI number.
- Immediately after purchasing a mobile communications device, the owner should record the IMEI code in a secure place so that it can be quickly accessed in the event of loss or theft.
- If such IMEI is blocked, a large number of mobile phones will get blocked being handsets with the same IMEI causing inconvenience to many genuine customers. Thus, there is a need to eliminate duplicate/fake IMEI mobile phones from the network.

Total Forest and Tree Cover

Context:

The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change released the biennial "India State of Forest Report (ISFR)", in New Delhi.

Details:

- In the present assessment, the total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.73 million hectares which is 24.56 percent of the geographical area of the country.
- As compared to the assessment of 2017, there is an increase of 5,188 sq. km in the total forest and tree cover of the country.
- The top three states showing an increase in forest cover are Karnataka followed by Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.
- **Major Findings:**
  - Area-wise Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
  - In terms of forest cover as a percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are Mizoram (85.41%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%), Meghalaya (76.33%), Manipur (75.46%) and Nagaland (75.31%).

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  - **Mangrove Cover:**
    - Mangrove cover has been separately reported in the ISFR 2019 and the total mangrove cover in the country is 4,975 sq km.
    - An increase of 54 sq Km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2017.
    - Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Gujarat (37 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (16 sq km) and Odisha (8 sq km).

About the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019:

- The report is published by the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** which has been mandated to assess the forest and tree resources of the country including wall-to-wall forest cover mapping in a biennial cycle.
- Starting in 1987, 16 assessments have been completed so far.
- ISFR 2019 is the 16th report in the series.
- The report provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock inside and outside the forest areas, carbon stock in India's forests, forest types and biodiversity, forest fire monitoring and forest cover in different slopes & altitudes. Special thematic information on forest cover such as hill, tribal districts, and the northeastern region has also been given separately in the report.
- This is carried out once every two years.
- It is carried out with mid-resolution satellite data based on interpretation of LISS-III data from Indian Remote Sensing satellite data (Resourcesat-II).
- The satellite data interpretation is followed by rigorous ground-truthing. Information from other collateral sources is also used to improve the accuracy of the interpreted image.

Year End Review-2019: Ministry of Labour and Employment

Major initiatives of the Ministry of Labour & employment are mentioned below:

Legislative Initiatives: Labour Law Reforms

- **Labour Codes:** The existing central labour laws have been codified into 4 Codes:
  - o Labour Code on Wages: Passed by Parliament and assented to by the President.

- o Labour Code on Industrial Relations: Introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- o Labour Code on Social Security & Welfare: Introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- o Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions: Referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour for examination.
- o More on the Labour Codes in CNA dated Jun 24th 2019.

Shram Suvidha Portal

- It is a web portal for all matters connected to labour law compliance.
- The Unified Shram Suvidha Portal is developed to facilitate reporting of inspections, and submission of returns.
- It has been envisaged as a single point of contact between employer, employee and enforcement agencies bringing in transparency in their day-to-day interactions.
- The objective of the Web Portal is to consolidate information of Labour Inspection and its enforcement.

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM)

- It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for the benefit of unorganised workers.
- Read more on PM-SYM.

National Career Service Project (NCS)

- This is being implemented for the transformation of the National Employment Service to provide a variety of employment-related services like career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, apprenticeship, internships, etc.
- The services under NCS are available online and can be accessed directly, through Career Centres, Common Service Centres, post offices, mobile devices, cyber cafes, etc.
- The various stakeholders on the NCS platform include job-seekers, industries, employers, employment exchanges (career centres), training providers, educational institutions and placement organisations.

National Career Service Centres for Differently-Abled (NCSC-DAs)

- 21 National Career Service Centres for Differently Abled (NCSC-DAs) are functioning in the country under the administrative control of the Directorate General of Employment, M/O Labour & Employment.
- These Centres evaluate residual capacities of Persons with Disabilities, provide Vocational Training, and extend Vocational Rehabilitation assistances, etc. to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

National Career Service Centre Centres (NCSCs) for SC/STs

- This is for the benefit of SC/ST job seekers.

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY)

Year End Review 2019 - Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

Year-end review of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions: Major Initiatives:

'Good Governance Index' launched on 'Good Governance Day'

Read more on the CNA dated Dec 30, 2019.

Shillong Declaration

Read more on the Shillong Declaration on Aug 9 2019 PIB under the headline "22nd National e-Governance Conference, 2019".

Nagpur Resolution

Read more on this in PIB dated 22 Dec 2019.

National e-Governance Awards, 2019

- With a view to recognize and promote excellence in the implementation of e-Governance initiatives, the Government of India presents National Awards on e-Governance every year.
- The 14 awards were given in 6 categories to recognize achievements in the area of e-Governance, with Gold and Silver Awards in each category.

Year End Review of Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The major initiatives of the Tribal Affairs Ministry are mentioned below:

Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY)

Read more on the PM Van Dhan Yojana here.

National Level Tribal Research Institute (NTRI)

- The Ministry has mooted the proposal for setting up of National Level Tribal Research Institute to act as a knowledge hub and repository of information related to STs.
- The NTRI is to spearhead research and evaluation studies on tribal issues and to provide handholding support to State TRIs in their functioning.
- NITI Aayog has provided in-principle approval for the NTRI.

TRIFED

- TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited) under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs strives to promote the economic development of the Tribal communities of the country through marketing development and sustained upgradation of their skills and products.
- In collaboration with TRIFED, M/o Tribal Affairs organised a National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav" in New Delhi in November 2019 to disseminate rich tribal culture, heritage and traditions of the region. More on Aadi Mahotsav at PIB dated 15 Nov 2019.