

10 February 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. World Pulses Day

Context:

India hosts the UN World Pulses Day celebrations in New Delhi.

About World Pulses Day:

- World Pulses Day is a designated United Nations global event to recognize the importance of pulses (chickpeas, dry beans, lentils, dry peas and lupins among others) as a global food.
- It has been proclaimed on February 10 of each year since 2019 by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 20, 2018.
- This celebration is in recognition of the decisive role that pulses can play in achieving the comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative goals and targets of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a plan of action that seeks to strengthen universal peace.
- The purpose of World Pulses Day is to raise awareness of the importance of Pulses in contributing to sustainable food production aimed towards food security.
- The event in New Delhi was organized this year by NAFED in collaboration with Global Pulse Confederation (GPC).

About NAFED:

- The National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) is the Central Nodal agency of the Government of India for procurement of Pulses & Oilseeds, Copra and Cotton under PM Aasha at Minimum Support Price (MSP), in every crop season.
- It was established in 1958 with the objective of promoting cooperative marketing of agricultural produce to benefit the farmers.

About GPC:

- The Global Pulse Confederation (GPC), established in 1963 in France, is now headquartered at Dubai since 2009.
- It is a non-profit confederation to promote production, consumption, awareness and trade of pulses, representing every component of supply chain related to the pulse industry such as growers, traders, government bodies, trade promotion entities, processors and consumers.
- It is a confederation of 26 national associations and thousands of corporates engaged in pulses trade in over 50 countries.

Pulses and their importance:

- Pulses, also known as legumes, are the edible seeds of leguminous plants cultivated for food. Dried beans, lentils and peas are the most commonly known and consumed types of pulses.
- Pulses do not include crops that are harvested green (e.g. green peas, green beans)—these are classified as vegetable crops. Also excluded are those crops used mainly for oil extraction (e.g. soybean and groundnuts) and leguminous crops that are used exclusively for sowing purposes (e.g. seeds of clover and alfalfa).
- Pulses are packed with nutrients and have high protein content, making them an ideal source of protein particularly in regions where meat and dairy are not physically or economically accessible.
- Pulses are low in fat and rich in soluble fibre, which can lower cholesterol and help in the control of

blood sugar.

- Because of these qualities they are recommended by health organizations for the management of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and heart conditions. Pulses have also been shown to help combat obesity.
 - For farmers, pulses are an important crop because they can both sell them and consume them, which help farmers maintain household food security and create economic stability.
 - **Environmental benefits:**
 - The nitrogen-fixing properties of pulses improve soil fertility, which increases and extends the productivity of the farmland. By using pulses for intercropping and cover crops, farmers can also promote farm biodiversity and soil biodiversity, while keeping harmful pests and diseases at bay.
 - Furthermore, pulses can contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing dependence on the synthetic fertilizers used to introduce nitrogen artificially into the soil. [Greenhouse gases](#) are released during the manufacturing and application of these fertilizers, and their overuse can be detrimental to the environment.
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2. Star Rating of Mines in India

Context:

Web Portal launched for the star rating of mines in India.

Details:

- The portal enables all operational coal mines across India for self-rating, their subsequent validation by Coal Controller's Organization (CCO), further evaluation and finally award of star rating.
 - Based on the star ratings obtained through a well-defined mechanism on this web portal, the highest scoring mines in the country will be awarded in a public ceremony.
 - Besides, all the mines will be given an official certificate by the CCO mentioning their star rating and the particular reporting year.
 - The Ministry of Coal had formulated a star rating policy for coal mines in India in 2019.
 - The rating system was instituted through the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), in which ratings will be awarded to the mining leases for their efforts and initiatives taken for implementation of the Sustainable Development Framework (SDF).
 - The Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), established in 1948, is a multi-disciplinary government organisation under the Department of Mines, Ministry of Mines, engaged in promotion of conservation, scientific development of mineral resources and protection of environment in mines other than coal, petroleum & natural gas, atomic minerals and minor minerals.
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3. Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority

About the IEPF Authority:

- IEPF is a fund set up under the Section 205C of the Companies Act, 1956 to pool all the dividends of the Asset Management Companies, matured deposits, share application interests or money, debentures, interests, etc. that are unclaimed for seven years.
- All the money collected from the mentioned sources has to be transferred to IEPF.

- Investors, who are trying to seek a refund for their unclaimed rewards can do so from the IEPF.
- It was formed in 2016.
- The IEPF Authority administers the IEPF (fund).
- The Authority is entrusted with the responsibility of administration of the Investor Education Protection Fund (IEPF), make refunds of shares, unclaimed dividends, matured deposits/debentures, etc. to investors and to promote awareness among investors.

Context:

The Union Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs mentioned the performance of the IEPF Authority in a written reply to a question the Lok Sabha.

4. National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Details:

- The government is compiling a national list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).
- Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture, is the nodal agency for the Scheme for ‘Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India’.
- The SNA is collaborating with [Zonal Cultural Centres](#) of the Culture Ministry, collating and preparing a list of ICH elements for the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- The list of ICH elements is being compiled and at least 100 elements will be documented by March, 2020 and the aim is to document at least 20 new elements in ICH list every year.
- The establishment of an ‘Indian Institute for Culture’ is at the conceptual stage.
- Also being conceptualised is a ‘National Culture Mapping’ portal for aggregating art forms and artists. This is in the pilot phase.

Context:

The above information was provided by the Union Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism in the Lok Sabha.

5. Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR – 2020

Context:

The fifth edition of the Joint Military Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR - 2020 between India and the United Kingdom will be conducted at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom in February 2020.

About Exercise Ajeya Warrior:

- The joint military exercise will comprise of 120 soldiers each from the Indian and United Kingdom Army who would be sharing their experiences gained during conduct of various counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in the past.
- The aim of this exercise is to conduct company level joint training with emphasis on counter terrorists operation in urban and semi-urban areas. Training on modern weapon systems, equipment

and simulator training have also been planned.

- The exercise is conducted alternatively in the United Kingdom and India.
 - The first edition of the exercise was conducted in 2013 at Belgaum, Karnataka.
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6. Boosting Domestic Production of Defence Equipment

The government has taken the following policy initiatives to boost production and promote indigenous design, development & manufacture of defence equipment in collaboration with the Indian private sector:

- The Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) has been revised in 2016 wherein specific provisions have been introduced for stimulating growth of the domestic defence industry including private sector.
- A new category of procurement “Buy [Indian-IDD (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)]” has been introduced in DPP - 2016 to promote indigenous design and development of defence equipment.
- Under the revised FDI policy, FDI is allowed under automatic route up to 49% and beyond 49% through government route wherever it is likely to result in access to modern technology or for other reasons to be recorded.
- An innovation ecosystem for defence titled **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** has been launched in April, 2018.
 - iDEX is aimed at the creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging industries including MSMEs, Start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia and provide them grants/funding and other support to carry out R&D which has potential for future adoption for Indian defence and aerospace needs.
- The “Make” Procedure has been simplified with provisions for funding of 90% of the development cost by the government to Indian industry and reserving government funded Make-I projects not exceeding a development cost of Rs.10 crores & procurement cost Rs. 50 crores per year for MSMEs.
- Separate procedure for “Make-II” category has been notified under DPP to encourage indigenous development and manufacture of defence equipment. A number of industry friendly provisions such as relaxation of eligibility criterion, minimal documentation, provision for considering proposals suggested by industry/individual, etc. have been introduced in this procedure.
- Through the “Strategic Partnership (SP)” Model, long-term strategic partnerships with Indian entities can be established through a transparent and competitive process by global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), which will enable technology transfers to set up domestic manufacturing infrastructure and supply chains.
- The government has notified a Policy for indigenisation of components and spares used in Defence Platforms in March, 2019 with the objective to create an industry ecosystem which is able to indigenize the imported components (including alloys & special materials) and sub-assemblies for defence equipment and platform manufactured in India.
- Offset guidelines have been made flexible by allowing change of Indian Offset Partners (IOPs) and offset components, even in signed contracts.
 - Foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) are now allowed to provide the details of IOPs and products after signing of contracts.
 - Defence offset means “a supplier places work to an agreed value with firms in the buying country, over and above what it would have brought in the absence of the offset.”
 - Hence under defence offset, a foreign supplier of equipment agrees to manufacture a given percent of his product (in terms of value) in the buying country. Sometimes this may take place with technology transfer.

- The new defence offset policy is expected to become a chief instrument for India to develop its indigenous defence manufacturing sector.
- Defence Products list requiring Industrial Licences has been rationalised and manufacture of most of the parts or components does not require Industrial License.

7. 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Context:

India will host the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) at Gandhinagar, Gujarat in February 2020.

Details:



- As the host, India shall be designated the President for the next three years.
- The Government of India is a signatory to the Convention on Conservation of Migratory wild Animals (CMS) since 1983.
- The theme of CMS COP 13 in India is, “**Migratory species connect the planet and we welcome them home**”.
- The **CMS COP 13 logo is inspired by ‘Kolam’**, a traditional art form from southern India. In the logo, Kolam art form is used to depict key migratory species in India like Amur falcon, humpback whale and marine turtles.
- The **mascot for CMS COP13**, “Gibi - The Great Indian Bustard” is a critically endangered species which has been accorded the highest protection status under the [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#).
 - **About the Great Indian Bustard:**
 - The great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) or Indian bustard is a bustard found on the Indian subcontinent.
 - It is a large bird with a horizontal body and long bare legs, giving it an ostrich like appearance.
 - It is among the heaviest of the flying birds.

- These birds are often found associated in the same habitat as the blackbuck.
- The Indian subcontinent is also part of the major bird flyway network, i.e, **the Central Asian Flyway (CAF)** that covers areas between the Arctic and Indian Oceans, and covers at least 279 populations of 182 migratory water bird species, including 29 globally threatened species.

About the Convention on Conservation of Migratory wild Animals (CMS):

- As an environmental treaty of the United Nations, CMS provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.
 - CMS brings together the States through which migratory animals pass, the Range States, and lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures throughout a migratory range.
 - It is the only global convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and migration routes.
 - Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed on Appendix I of the Convention.
 - CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them.
 - The Convention entered into force on 1 November 1983.
 - Its Secretariat is in Bonn, Germany.
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8. National Deworming Day (NDD)

Context:

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare conducts the tenth round of the National Deworming Day (NDD).

About the NDD:

- As part of this campaign, children and adolescents aged 1-19 years are being administered Albendazole (400 mg) across government, government-aided schools, anganwadis, private schools and other educational institutions.
 - The NDD is implemented with an objective to reduce the prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH), commonly called the parasitic intestinal worms, among all children and adolescents.
 - Infections with the main STH – roundworm, whipworm and hookworms – contribute to 50.1 lakh disability adjusted life-years (DALYs) worldwide (WHO, 2010). One DALY can be thought of as one lost "healthy" year from a life.
 - In India, over 22 crore children under 14 years are at risk of STH infections (WHO, 2017).
 - Launched in 2015, the NDD is the largest public health program implemented on a single day reaching crores of children and adolescents through two NDD rounds every year.
 - NDD will be observed in 34 States/UTs over weeks and is expected to reach an estimated 30 crore of the target population.
 - Implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development, NDD is a key intervention of Anemia Mukta Bharat.
 - In preparation for the NDD rounds, Anganwadi workers and teachers are trained on community mobilization and administration of deworming tablet.
 - Deworming through Albendazole is an evidence-based, globally-accepted, effective solution used to control worm infections in all children.
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9. Saakshar Bharat Mission

Context:

Around 7.64 crore learners successfully passed the biannual Basic Assessment Test under Saakshar Bharat Mission.

About the Saakshar Bharat Mission:

- It is the revamped version of the National Literacy Mission (which was launched in 1988).
 - This mission, formulated in 2009, goes beyond reading, writing and arithmetic.
 - It seeks to create awareness of social disparities. It aims to create a literate society through a variety of teaching learning programmes for non-literate and neo-literate of 15 years and above.
 - The objective of the Scheme is achieving 80% literacy level at national level, by focusing on adult women literacy so as to reduce the gap between male and female literacy.
 - The four key elements of the programme are:
 - Imparting functional literacy and numeracy to non-literates.
 - Acquiring equivalency to formal educational system.
 - Imparting relevant skill development programme.
 - Promoting a learning society by providing opportunities for continuing education.
 - It is under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
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10. Government Committed to Eradication of Child Labour

Details:

- As per the information received from the States/UTs, the total number of children rescued from child labour, rehabilitated and mainstreamed to formal education system is 40050 (2019 - 20).
- The government enacted the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 to boost efforts to eradicate child labour and also have stringent provisions in the law in this regard.
- For more on child labour in India, and the legislations thereof, check [Child Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act](#).

Also read [National Child Labour Project Scheme](#).

Context:

The above information was given by the Union Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment in the Lok Sabha.

11. National Policy on Bio-fuels 2018

Context:

National Biofuel Policy-2018 envisages an indicative target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol by 2030.

Details:

For more on the National Policy on Bio-fuels 2018, click [here](#).

12. Atal Bhujal Yojana

For more on [Atal Bhujal Yojana](#), click on the linked article.

Context:

The Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti mentioned this scheme in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

13. Namami Gange Programme (NGP)

Context:

Quality of Water after Implementation of NGP.

Details:

- Water quality of river Ganga is assessed as per primary water quality criteria for outdoor bathing notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF & CC) in terms of:
 - Potential Hydrogen (pH) (6.5-8.5)
 - Dissolved Oxygen (DO) ($\geq 5\text{mg/L}$)
 - Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) ($\leq 3\text{mg/L}$)
 - Faecal Coliform (FC) ($\leq 2500\text{MPN/100ml}$)
- Under the Namami Gange Programme, the monitoring of water quality of river Ganga is carried out by State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) in 5 Ganga main stem States, and the data is compiled by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- Based on the manual water quality assessment by CPCB in 5 Ganga main stem states in 2019, the observed water quality indicates that **Dissolved Oxygen** which is an indicator of river health has been found to be within acceptable limits of notified primary bathing water quality criteria and satisfactory to support the ecosystem of the river across all seasons and also for almost entire stretch of river Ganga.
- Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) has been found to be within the acceptable limits except marginal exceedance in locations/stretches.
- Cleaning of river Ganga is a continuous process and under the NGP, several initiatives have been taken by the Government which includes abatement and control of pollution at the source of pollution generation by adopting activities such as establishment/upgradation of Wastewater Treatment Plants for the towns located on Ganga main stem and its tributaries, river front development, construction of Ghats and crematoria surface cleaning activities and solid waste management.

Read more on [National Mission for Clean Ganga](#).

