

02 March 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Export of onions

Context:

In the interest of farmers, the Government permits export of onions with effect from 15th March 2020.

Details:

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Department of Commerce issued a notification in this regard.
- The notification says that Onions, which were in the “prohibited” category as per the present policy, will be under the category “free” in the revised policy.
- The effect of the notification will be that the export of all varieties of onions has been made ‘free’ without any condition of Letter Of Credit and Minimum Export Price, with effect from the said date.

About the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT):

- The DGFT is an attached office of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, formed in 1991.
 - It is headed by the Director General of Foreign Trade.
 - It is involved in the regulation and promotion of foreign trade through regulation.
 - Keeping in line with liberalization and globalization and the overall objective of increasing of exports, the DGFT has since been assigned the role of a “facilitator”.
 - The shift was from prohibition and control of imports/exports to promotion and facilitation of exports/imports, keeping in view the interests of the country.
 - The Directorate is responsible for formulating and implementing the Foreign Trade Policy with the main objective of promoting India’s exports.
 - The DGFT also issues scrips/authorization to exporters and monitors their corresponding obligations through its network of regional offices. It is headquartered in New Delhi.
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2. Zonal Cultural Centres

Context:

To preserve and promote various forms of folk art and culture of the tribals throughout the country including West Bengal, the Government of India has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs).

Details:

- Sahitya Akademi, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture, encourages the preservation and promotion of languages, especially the unrecognized and tribal languages.
- The Akademi periodically organizes language conventions throughout the country in this regard.
- No funds are provided directly to States/UTs. However, annual grant-in-aid is provided to all the ZCCs for organizing various cultural activities and programmes in their member States
- For more on the zonal cultural centres, check [PIB dated 9th Dec, 2019](#).
- **The Zones are also implementing a number of schemes to promote folk/tribal art and culture:**
- **Award to Young Talented Artists:** Talented youngsters of the age group 18-30 years are selected and given a one-time cash award of Rs. 10,000/-.

- **Guru Shishya Parampara:** Disciples are trained under veterans in art forms which are rare and vanishing. The Guru and artists under him/her are given monthly remuneration.
 - **Theatre Rejuvenation:** To promote theatre activities including stage shows and production-oriented workshops, etc. honorarium up to Rs. 30,000/- per show are given.
 - **Research & Documentation**
 - **Shilpgram:** To promote folk and tribal art and crafts of the zone by organizing seminars, workshops, exhibitions, craft fairs, design development and marketing support to the artisans living in the rural areas.
 - **Octave:** To promote and propagate the rich cultural heritage of the North East region.
 - **National Cultural Exchange Programme (NCEP):** Artists from different zones showcase their talent in other parts of the country. The main aim of this scheme is exchange of artistes, musicians, performers and sculptors, etc. between different regions with in the country for the promotion of rich cultural heritage of India.
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3. Nominations for World Heritage List for the year 2020

Context:

Nomination dossiers of ‘Dholavira: A Harappan City’ and ‘Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate’ have been submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020 – Culture Minister.

UNESCO World Heritage List:

- This list comprises the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. A **World Heritage Site** is a landmark or an area selected by the [UNESCO](#) for having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance, which is legally protected by international treaties.
- The sites are regarded important for the collective and preservative interests of humanity.
- To be selected, a World Heritage Site must be an already-classified landmark, unique in some respect as a geographically and historically identifiable place having special cultural or physical significance.
- The sites are intended for practical conservation for posterity, which otherwise would be subject to risk from human or animal trespassing, unmonitored/uncontrolled/unrestricted access, or threat from local administrative negligence.
- The list is maintained by the international World Heritage Program administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 "states parties" that are elected by their General Assembly.
- As of July 2019, a total of 1,121 World Heritage Sites exist across 167 countries. The maximum number of sites in one country is 55, both China and Italy having 55 each. India is in fifth position with 38 sites.
- The first place to be declared a World Heritage Site: City of Quito (capital of Ecuador) in 1978.

Also read: [UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India](#)

Tentative Lists

- States Parties are encouraged to submit Tentative Lists to the UNESCO.
- This list consists of properties which they consider to be cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value and therefore suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List.
- The Tentative List should be submitted at least one year prior to the submission of any nomination.
- Nominations to the World Heritage List will not be considered unless the nominated property has

already been included on the State Party's Tentative List.

- Both Dholavira and the Deccan Sultanate forts and monuments are included in India's Tentative List. There are another 40 sites in the Indian list.
- Both were submitted in 2014.

Dholavira: A Harappan City

- Dholavira is located in the Khadir Island in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.
- It belonged to the Mature Harappan Phase.
- It is a fortified quadrangular city set in a harsh and arid land. It was once a thriving metropolis for 1200 years between 3000 BCE and 1800 BCE.
- It had access to the sea.
- The city's ruins show large-scale use of dressed stone in construction.
- Highly polished stone pillars of square or circular section having a central hole are also seen. To create a pillar, such segments were piled to attain the requisite height and a wooden pole was inserted to ensure stability. This method of constructing a column was an ingenious alternative to a monolithic column.
- The city also had an excellent water conservation system that ensured regular water supply to the parched land.
- Many antiquities have also been found during excavations.
- **Why is it included in the list?**
 - The excavated site demonstrates the ingenuity of the Harappan people to evolve a highly organised system of town planning with perfected proportions, interrelation of functional areas, street pattern and an efficient water conservation system that supported life for more than 1200 years in a hot and arid climate.
 - Its water management system was one of the most efficient in the ancient world.
 - The city had a three-tier zonation comprising of distinct upper (citadel, bailey) and middle (having a distinct street-pattern, large scale enclosure and a ceremonial ground) towns enclosed by a lower town (with narrower streets, smaller enclosures and industrial area – this feature distinguishes it from the other metropolises of the Indus Valley Civilisation.
 - The importance of Dholavira's planning was furthered with the excavation of Kampilya in Uttar Pradesh, a city considered of mythical origin in the Gangetic plains. Belonging to the Gangetic Civilization, which is considered the second phase of urbanization of the Indian subcontinent, Kampilya adopted the town planning principles (in terms of scale, hierarchy of space and road network) established in Dholavira.
- The area is protected and managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Globally, Dholavira can be compared to the cities of the Ancient River Valley Civilization, the urban metropolises of the Egyptian, Chinese and Mesopotamian civilisations.
- In the region, Dholavira can be compared to the other major cities of Harappan culture like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Rakhigarhi, Banawali and Lothal. The excavated remains of the complete water system distinguish this site from others.

Monuments and Forts of the Deccan Sultanate

- The 'Monuments of the Deccan Sultanate' is a serial property comprising of four components.
- They constitute the most representative, most authentic and best-conserved examples of Deccan Sultanate monuments in India.
- The series demonstrates the exemplary convergence of national and international styles of Islamic architecture and their intersections with the prevalent Hindu architecture of the period in southern India, in present-day Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- The contributions of Deccan Sultanate to the arts and architecture of India is impressive with iconic Indo-Islamic monuments constructed in Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur and Hyderabad.
- These sites emerged as important medieval fortifications and walled cities of the Deccan Sultanates

with a vigorous new architectural style of the sultanate that emerged from encounters with the Deccan Hindu heartland of the period.

- Individually, each of the components of the Deccan Sultanate cover important aspects of Sultanate history with Gulbarga evolving as the first capital of the Bahmani Kingdoms in mid-14th century CE including its impressive fortifications, Jami Masjid and royal tombs
 - Bidar emerged as the next Bahmani capital in the mid-15th Century CE.
 - Further evolution of the Deccani Sultanate style was done by the Adil Shahi dynasty in the monuments at Bijapur such as the Gol Gumbaz that stands as the 2nd largest dome in world history.
 - The final diversification and manifestation of the style is seen in the Qutub Shahi monuments of Golconda fort, tombs and the Charminar at Hyderabad. The iconic Charminar is a ceremonial gateway built to celebrate the foundation of Hyderabad in 1591 A.D.
 - Subtly blending influences from Iran, West Asia, southern India, and sometimes Europe, as well as southern and northern India, the arts produced under these Deccan sultanates are markedly different from those of the rest of India and especially from those created under the Mughal patronage.
 - The monuments and citadels provide a unique testimony to the social, economic, cultural, political and technological landscape of the period as well as unique expressions of the religious and artistic flowering of the Islamic Sultanate in Southern India.
 - The monuments were also accompanied by the development of syncretic forms of art, architecture, language, literature, music, cuisine and costume.
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4. Scheme for Pension and Medical Aid to Artistes

About the Scheme:

- The scheme aims to improve the financial and socio-economic status of the old-aged artistes and scholars including various folk artists who have contributed significantly in their specialized fields of arts, letters, etc., but are leading a miserable life or are in penury condition.
- An amount of maximum Rs. 4000/- per month is being given to each beneficiary, out of which minimum Rs. 500/- financial assistance from State/UT Govt. is included.
- In the case of death of a beneficiary, the financial assistance may be transferred, in the name of the spouse of the beneficiary till life if such request is received in the Culture Ministry from the spouse along with the requisite documents within a period of six months from the date of death of the beneficiary artiste.

Context:

The above information was provided by the Minister of State for Culture and Tourism in the Lok Sabha.

5. Scheme of Scholarship and Fellowship to Promote Art and Culture

About the Scheme:

The scheme, implemented by the Culture Ministry, consists of three components:

1. **Award of Scholarships to Young Artists in Different Cultural Fields:** Under this scheme component, up to 400 scholarships (in a Batch Year) are awarded to persons of outstanding promise in the age group of 18-25 years. An amount of Rs. 5,000/- p.m. is given for 2 years for advanced

training within India.

- Award of Senior/Junior Fellowships to Outstanding Persons in the Fields of Culture:** Under this scheme component, up to 400 Senior/Junior Fellowships (in a Batch Year) are awarded to outstanding persons in the age group above 40 years (Sr.) and 25 to 40 years (Jr.) respectively. An amount of 20,000/-p.m. and Rs. 10,000/- p.m. is given to Senior/Junior Fellows respectively for 2 years for cultural research.
- Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research:** Under this scheme component, up to 25 Scholarships and 15 Fellowships (in a Batch Year) are awarded to outstanding persons in order to invigorate and revitalise the various institutions under the Ministry of Culture and other identified cultural institutions in the country, by encouraging scholars/academicians to affiliate themselves with these institutions to work on projects of mutual interest. An honorarium of Rs. 80,000/- p.m. plus contingencies and Rs. 50,000/-p.m. plus contingencies are given to Fellows and Scholars respectively for 2 years.

Context:

The above information was provided by the Minister of State for Culture and Tourism in the Lok Sabha.

6. Women in Defence Forces

Details:

The year-wise induction details of women officers in the three armed forces during the past three years and the current year is as follows:

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Indian Army	949	819	364	01
Indian Air Force*	59	59	51	00
Indian Navy	57	38	54	18 (in progress)

*excluding Medical and Dental branch officers.

- The Indian Army is committed to complying with the judgement of Supreme Court passed in February 2020 granting permanent commission to the women officers as per their qualification, professional experience, specialization, if any and organization requirement. Read more on this on [CNA dated 18th Feb, 2020](#).
- The commanding posts in the Indian Air Force (IAF) are decided purely on merit basis. There is no embargo for detailment of women officers for Commanding Officers' post in the IAF.
- Male and female officers inducted into the Navy in various Branches/Cadres/Specialisations under similar schemes are treated at par and without discrimination for posting/billeting.

Context:

The above information was given by the Minister of State for Defence in the Rajya Sabha.

7. Start-Ups Dealing with Defence Production and Indigenisation of Imported Equipment

Details:

There has been a surge in start-ups dealing with defence production and indigenisation of imported equipment in the last three years. The following are some of the major initiatives that have been taken by the Government to remove entry barriers for private industry including start-ups in the defence domain:

- Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework was launched in 2018 with the aim for achieving self-reliance and to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, startups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia. Read more on [PIB dated 10th Nov, 2019](#).
- The 'Make-II' procedure has been simplified to encourage wider participation of Indian industry, with impetus for MSME/start-ups and timely induction of equipment into the Indian Armed Forces.
- Industrial licensing regime for Indian manufacturers in the defence sector has been liberalized. This has reduced entry barriers for new entrants in this sector, particularly SMEs.
- FDI Policy has been revised and under the revised policy, foreign investment up to 49 % is allowed through automatic route and above 49 % under the Government route.
- The Defence Research & Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)) has evolved a new industry-friendly policy for the transfer of DRDO-developed technologies to industries. DRDO has also promulgated a new patent policy to facilitate Indian industries to get free access to use DRDO patents.
- DRDO has launched a program termed as Technology Development Fund (TDF) for meeting the requirements of Tri-Services, Defence Production and DRDO. The scheme has been established to promote self-reliance in Defence Technology as a part of the '[Make in India](#)' initiative by encouraging participation of public/private industries especially MSMEs.
- A Defence Investor Cell (DIC) was set up by the Department of Defence Production (DDP) in 2018 to provide help, support and guidance to defence industry, MSMEs and start-ups.
- Mission Raksha Gyanshakti: This Mission was launched with the objective to encourage IPR for self-reliance in defence. IPR is the key enabler for developing an ecosystem of innovation and indigenization. As part of Mission Raksha Gyanshakti, an IPR Division has been constituted in DDP.

8. Samagra Shiksha Scheme

Context:

The Department of School Education and Literacy has launched the Samagra Shiksha - an Integrated Scheme for School Education as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with effect from the year 2018-19.

Details:

- This programme subsumes the three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- For more on the [Samagra Shiksha Scheme](#), click on the linked article.

9. National Pension Scheme

Context:

34,279 Persons Enrolled in NPS - Traders up to 26th February 2020.

Details:

The National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons has been launched in September 2019 to provide old age protection to the traders, shopkeepers and self-employed persons.

For more on the National Pension Scheme (NPS), click [here](#).

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

Context:

42,06,439 persons enrolled so far in PM-SYM.

Details:

It is a central government scheme that is introduced for old age protection and social security of Unorganised Workers.

To read more on the [Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan Dhan \(PM-SYM\)](#), click on the linked article.

11. Central Accident Database Management System

Details:

- The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has launched an Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD) System.
- The primary purpose of IRAD is to enhance road safety, and thus endeavours to generate various types of insights through the Analytics Dashboard, Trend Analysis, etc. and therefore, decision making by Apex Authorities.
- The project will be piloted in six states.

Context:

The above information was given by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways in the Rajya Sabha.

12. Black carbon from agricultural burning & forest fire may influence melting of Gangotri Glacier

Context:

Scientists from Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, (WIHG), an autonomous institution under the Department of Science & Technology, in a study conducted at Chirbasa station near Gangotri Glacier, for the year 2016, found that black carbon (BC) concentration in this region changes drastically during summer.

Details:

- Black carbon concentration in the region increases by 400 times during summers, according to the study.
- The study suggests agricultural burning and forest fire as the reason behind this seasonal increase. This can trigger glacial melt because of the light-absorbing nature of black carbon.
- It was revealed by investigating the occasional high values of black carbon extricated, that the seasonal cycle of increase was significantly influenced by the emissions resulting from agriculture burning (in the western part of the country), forest fires (along the Himalayan slopes) in summer, and to some extent by the contribution from long-range transport of pollutants in winter, depending upon the prevailing meteorological conditions.

Black Carbon:

- Black carbon is the sooty black material emitted from gas and diesel engines, coal-fired power plants, and other sources that burn fossil fuel. It comprises a significant portion of particulate matter or PM, which is an air pollutant.
- Black carbon is a global environmental problem that has negative implications for both human health and climate.
- Inhalation of black carbon is associated with health problems including respiratory and cardiovascular disease, cancer, and even birth defects.
- Black carbon also contributes to climate change causing changes in patterns of rain and clouds.
- The Equivalent Black Carbon (EBC) aerosols contribute significantly towards global warming due to its light-absorbing nature. Their presence in the eco-sensitive zone, such as the Himalayan glacier valleys, is a matter of serious concern and needs to be meticulously monitored. However, baseline data on BC is rarely available from most of the glaciated Himalayan region.
- This is for the first time that scientists have been able to carry out measurements on ambient EBC mass concentration at a high altitude site.

13. National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

Context:

8.16 lakh candidates benefit from the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme.

About the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS):

- It was launched with the objective of providing Apprenticeship Training to 50 lakh youth by 2020.
- Under the scheme, the Government will share 25% of the prescribed stipend subject to a maximum of Rs 1500/- per month per apprentice with the employers.
- It has a user friendly on-line portal designed to facilitate easy processing of the entire apprenticeship cycle.
- State Apprenticeship Advisers (SAAs) and Regional Directorates of Apprenticeship (RDAs) act as implementing agencies in their respective state/Regions.

- To improve the industry connect, Directorate General of Training (DGE&T), M/o Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has adopted the German model of Vocational Education system in India by Introducing Dual System of Training (DST).
 - Dual System combines practical training in the industry and theoretical training along with foundation practical in ITI (s) which leads to better ITI — Industry linkage.
 - Under this, ITIs (industrial training institutes) are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with industries under information to the respective State.
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14. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalaya Yojana

Context:

4.39 lakh candidates trained under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalaya Yojana in 2 years.

For more on the scheme, check [PIB dated Jul 23, 2019](#) under the headline ‘Training and Employment of Rural Youth’.

15. IITFC Programme

Details:

- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has launched the Incredible India Tourist Facilitators (IITF) Certification Programme.
- This is a pan-India online learning program that is open to all, subject to fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, and can be undertaken from anywhere in the country.
- The Programme aims at creating a pool of trained professionals for facilitating the visit of tourists at destinations across the country.
- There are two categories of IITF Certification Programme namely, Basic & Advanced (Heritage & Adventure) with an optional specialization programme of fluency in a spoken foreign language other than English.
- The programme will help in enhancing the overall experience of the tourists, who would benefit from the knowledge of the local tourist facilitators and it will also help in creating employment opportunities even in the remotest parts of the country.

Context:

The above information was given by the Minister of State (I/c) of Culture and Tourism in the Lok Sabha.

16. Ministry of Jal Shakti

Details:

Climate Change and Water Contamination:

- Climate model simulation studies done by various agencies including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) project possible linkages of climate change with frequency and intensity of weather related events. However, any direct link between climate change and flooding resulting in water contamination has not been established.
- The flow in rivers is dynamic and depends on many parameters such as rainfall, its distribution and intensity in the catchment, catchment characteristics and withdrawals/utilisations of water basins.
- The [Central Water Commission \(CWC\)](#) monitors major rivers.
 - Considering the annual average flow of the last 20 years of terminal sites of major rivers, no appreciable increasing/decreasing trend in total water availability in the country has been observed.
- The Ministry of Jal Shakti has drafted bills namely National Water Framework Bill, River Basin Management (RBM) Bill and Model Bill to 'Regulate and Control the Development and Management of Ground Water' for bringing reforms in the water sector.
 - The draft RBM Bill proposes optimum development of inter-State rivers by facilitating inter-State coordination ensuring scientific planning of land and water resources taking basin/sub-basin as unit with unified perspectives of water in all its forms (including soil moisture, ground and surface water).
 - The National Water Framework Bill provides an overarching national legal framework based on principles for protection, conservation, regulation and management of water as a vital and stressed natural resource, under which legislation and executive action on water can take place at all levels of governance.
 - The Model Bill will enable states/UTs to enact suitable ground water legislation for regulation for its development which includes provision of rain water harvesting.

Per Capita Availability of Water:

- Water availability per person is dependent on population of the country and for India, per capita water availability in the country is reducing due to increase in population.
- The average annual per capita water availability in the years 2001 and 2011 was assessed as 1816 cubic meters and 1545 cubic meters respectively which may further reduce to 1486 cubic meters and 1367 cubic meters in the years 2021 and 2031 respectively.
- As per Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 135 litres per capita per day (lpcd) has been suggested as the benchmark for urban water supply. For rural areas, a minimum service delivery of 55 lpcd has been fixed under Jal Jeevan Mission, which may be enhanced to higher level by states.

Piped Water Connection to every Household:

- In 2019, the Government of India, in partnership with the States, had launched the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) which aims at providing potable water at service level of 55 litre per capita per day (lpcd) to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) by 2024.
- Read more on the Jal Jeevan Mission [here](#).

Context:

The above information was given by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti.

