

03 June 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Decisions taken in the Cabinet Meeting

Context:

Several decisions were taken by the Cabinet which met on 3rd June.

Decisions taken:

- The Cabinet approved the amendments to the Essential Commodities Act.
 - With the amendment, commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes will be removed from the list of essential commodities. This will remove fears of private investors of excessive regulatory interference in their business operations.
 - The freedom to produce, hold, move, distribute and supply will lead to harnessing of economies of scale and attract private sector/[foreign direct investment](#) into the agriculture sector. It will help drive up investment in cold storages and modernization of food supply chain.
 - It has been provided in the Amendment, that in situations such as war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity, such agricultural foodstuff can be regulated.
 - However, the installed capacity of a value chain participant and the export demand of an exporter will remain exempted from such stock limit imposition so as to ensure that investments in agriculture are not discouraged.
 - The amendment announced is expected to help both farmers and consumers while bringing in price stability. It will create competitive market environment and also prevent wastage of agri-produce that happens due to lack of storage facilities.
- Cabinet approved 'The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020'.
 - The Ordinance will create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders will enjoy freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce. It will also promote barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade and commerce outside the physical premises of markets notified under State Agricultural Produce Marketing legislations.
 - It will open more choices for the farmer, reduce marketing costs for the farmers and help them in getting better prices. It will also help farmers of regions with surplus produce to get better prices and consumers of regions with shortages, lower prices.
 - The ordinance also proposes an electronic trading in transaction platform for ensuring a seamless trade electronically.
 - The ordinance basically aims at creating additional trading opportunities outside the APMC market yards to help farmers get remunerative prices due to additional competition. This will supplement the existing MSP procurement system which is providing stable income to farmers.
 - It is intended to create a 'One India One Agricultural Market'.
- Cabinet approved 'The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020'.
 - The ordinance is expected to empower farmers for engaging with processors, wholesalers, aggregators, wholesalers, large retailers, exporters etc., on a level playing field without any fear of exploitation.
 - It will transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor and also enable the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs.
 - It will reduce cost of marketing and improve income of farmers.
 - It is expected to attract private sector investment for building supply chains for supply of Indian farm produce to global markets.

2. Kolkata Port

Context:

Cabinet approves renaming of Kolkata Port Trust as Syama Prasad Mookerjee Trust.

About Kolkata Port:

- The Kolkata Port is the first Major Port as well as the only riverine port of the country.
- It came to be governed by a Trust on 17th October, 1870 on appointment of the Commissioners for Improvement of the Port of Calcutta as per Act V of 1870.
- It features at Serial Number 1 in The First Schedule, Part I—Major Ports of the Indian Ports Act, 1908 and is governed by the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.

Naming of Ports:

- Generally, the Major Ports in India are named after the city or the town in which they are situated.
- Some ports, however, in special cases or in due consideration of contribution made by eminent leaders have been renamed after great national leaders in the past.

Old Port Name	New Port Name	Name changed in the Year
Nhava Sheva Port Trust	Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust	1989
Tuticorin Port Trust	V.O. Chidambaranar Port Trust	2011
Ennore Port Limited	Kamarajar Port Limited	2014
Kandla Port	Deendayal Port	2017

3. Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)

Context:

The Cabinet approved the establishment of the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H).

About the PCIM&H:

- The Cabinet has given its approval to re-establish Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) as a Subordinate Office under the Ministry of AYUSH.
- This will be done by merging two central laboratories at Ghaziabad - Pharmacopoeia Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM) and Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Laboratory (HPL). Both were established in 1975.
- **Currently, the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) is an autonomous body under the aegis of the Ministry of AYUSH established since 2010.**
 - Originally established as Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine (PCIM) in 2010, it was renamed as Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) in 2014 to include homoeopathy in its name.

- The chief objective of the Commission is to promote and preserve the well-being of humans and animals in India, by bringing out official standards for quality of drugs included in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani & Homoeopathy systems of Medicine used by AYUSH professionals and consumers.
- The merger is aimed at optimizing the use of infrastructural facilities, technical manpower and financial resources of the three organizations for enhancing the standardization outcomes of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs towards their effective regulation and quality control.
- This merger will facilitate focused and cohesive development of standards of AYUSH drugs and publication of pharmacopoeias and formularies.
- It is also intended to accord legal status to the merged structure of PCIM&H and its laboratory by virtue of making necessary amendment and enabling provisions in the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

4. Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) and Project Development Cells (PDCs)

Context:

Cabinet has approved the setting up of the Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) and Project Development Cells (PDCs) in Ministries/Departments of Government of India for attracting investments in India.

About EGoS:

- In order to provide support and facilitation to investors for investing in India and to boost growth in key sectors of the economy, an Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) is approved with the following composition:
 - Cabinet Secretary (Chairperson)
 - CEO, Niti Aayog (Member)
 - Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (Member Convenor)
 - Secretary, Department of Commerce (Member)
 - Secretary, Department of Revenue (Member)
 - Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (Member)
 - Secretary of Department concerned (to be co-opted)
- **EGoS Objectives:**
 - To bring synergies and ensure timely clearances from different departments and Ministries.
 - To attract increased investments into India and provide investment support and facilitation to global investors.
 - To facilitate investments of top investors in a targeted manner and to usher policy stability & consistency in the overall investment environment.
 - To evaluate investments put forward by the departments on the basis of their (i) project creation (ii) actual investments that come. Further, these departments would be given targets for completion of various stages by the Empowered Group.

About PDCs:

- A PDC is approved for the development of investible projects in coordination between the Central Government and State Governments and thereby grow the pipeline of investible projects in India and in turn increase FDI inflows.
- **PDC Objectives:**
 - To create projects with all approvals, land available for allocation and with the complete Detailed Project Reports for adoption/investment by investors.

- To identify issues that need to be resolved in order to attract and finalise the investments and put forth these before the Empowered Group.

5. MoU between India and Bhutan on Cooperation in Environment

Context:

The Cabinet has given its approval for signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Royal Government of Bhutan on Cooperation in the areas of Environment.

Background:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) of the Government of the Republic of India and the National Environment Commission (NEC) of the Royal Government of Bhutan in 2013.
- This MoU expired in 2016.
- Noting the benefits of the earlier MoU, both sides have decided to continue cooperation and collaboration in the field of Environment.

Details of the MoU:

- It will enable the establishment and promotion of closer and long-term cooperation between the two countries in the field of environment protection and management of natural resources on the basis of equity, reciprocity and mutual benefits, taking into account the applicable laws and legal provisions in each country.
- Keeping in view the bilateral interest of both sides and mutually agreed priorities, a Memorandum of Understanding covering the following areas of environment has been considered:
 - Air
 - Waste
 - Chemical management
 - Climate change
 - Any other areas jointly decided upon
- The MoU will enter into force from the date of signature and will remain in force for a period of ten years.
- The Participants intend to encourage organizations, private companies, government institutions at all levels and research institutions on both sides to establish cooperation activities aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- The Participants also intend to hold Joint Working Group/bilateral meetings to review and analyze the progress of activities and shall keep their respective Ministries/Agencies, duly informed of progress and achievements.

6. SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support)

Context:

Government to conduct skill mapping of citizens returning from overseas.

About SWADES:

- The GOI has launched SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support) to conduct a skill mapping exercise of the returning citizens under the Vande Bharat Mission.
- This is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of External Affairs.
- It aims to create a database of qualified citizens based on their skillsets and experience to tap into and fulfil demand of Indian and foreign companies.
- The collected information will be shared with the companies for suitable placement opportunities in the country.
- The returning citizens are required to fill up an online SWADES Skills Card. The card will facilitate a strategic framework to provide the returning citizens with suitable employment opportunities through discussions with key stakeholders including State Governments, Industry Associations and Employers.
- MSDE's implementation arm, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is supporting the implementation of the project.
- The SWADES Skill Form (online) was made live on 30th May 2020 and has garnered around 7000 registrations.
- Amongst the data gathered so far, the top countries from where the citizens are returning are UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.
- As per the skill mapping, these citizens had been primarily employed in sectors such as oil & gas, construction, tourism & hospitality, Automotive and Aviation.
- The data also suggests that the States which have shown highest returning labour are Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana.

7. Pan-India Real Time Market in Electricity

Context:

Union Power Minister launches pan-India Real Time Market in electricity.

Details:

- This move has placed the Indian electricity market amongst a league of few electricity markets in the world, which have real time market.
- The real time market is an organized market platform to enable the buyers and sellers pan-India to meet their energy requirement closer to real time of operation.
- Introduction of real time market will bring the required flexibility in the market to provide real time balance while ensuring optimal utilization of the available surplus capacity in the system.
- It will also help manage diversity in the demand pattern in the country with an organized market at national level.
- **How it works?**
 - The real time market would be for every 30 minutes in a day based on double sided closed auction with uniform price.
 - The concept of “Gate Closure” has been introduced for bringing in the desired firmness in schedules during the hours of market operation.
 - Buyers/sellers shall have the option of placing buy/sell bids for each 15-minute time block.
 - The proposed real time market would provide an alternate mechanism for Discoms to access larger market at competitive price.
 - On the other hand, generators would also benefit by participating in the real time market with their un-requisitioned capacity.

- A mechanism has been provided for generators having long-term contract and participating in this market to share the net gains with the Discoms.
- National Load Despatch Centre-POSOCO is facilitating necessary automation in coordination with power exchanges to ensure faster transactions and settlements in the real time market framework.
- **Expected benefits:**
 - The real time market would help to mitigate challenges to the grid management due to intermittent and variable nature of renewable energy generation and therefore, help to integrate higher quantum of renewable energy resources into the grid.
 - It is expected that shorter bidding time, faster scheduling, and defined processes (e.g. gate closure) are expected to enable the participants to access resources throughout the all India grid, promoting competition. It would lead to better portfolio management by the utilities with efficient power procurement planning, scheduling, despatch, and imbalance handling.
 - The distribution companies would be able to manage their power purchase portfolio optimally and need not tie up excess capacity. It would lead to cost optimization of power purchase and serving the consumers with reliable supply as any last minute requirement of power can easily be bought from the Real Time market.
 - The earlier regime of managing the grid by load shedding due to last minute changes can be easily avoided.

8. Amery Ice Shelf (AIS)

Context:

Major Impact on climate due to extension of Amery Ice Shelf (AIS), NCPOR study reveals.

Details:

- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) predicts that there would be a 24% increase in the expansion of Amery Ice Shelf (AIS) boundaries by 2021 and another 24% expansion by 2026 from its 2016 positions.
- The prediction made by NCPOR is based on a 16-year-long satellite-based observation that covered an area of 60,000 sq. km across the AIS.
- Scientists feel that this study would help understand the ongoing changes in the ocean and atmospheric forces better.

Ice shelves:

- The floating sheets of ice called the ice shelves play a multi-faceted role in maintaining the stability of a glacier.
- Ice shelves connect a glacier to the landmass.
- The ice sheet mass balance, sea stratification, and bottom water formation are important parameters for the balancing of a glacier. Latent and sensible heat processes do play important roles here.
- The insulation of ice shelves from atmospheric forcing is dependent on a temperature gradient that the ocean cavity beneath the ice shelves provides. It is the pressure exerted by the ice shelves upon the ocean cavity that determines this temperature gradient.
- There is always a stress on the sea ice and ice sheets itself plays an indirect role in reducing the amplitude of the ocean swell. This is assisted by the freezing atmospheric temperature, which is capable of promoting a change in the morphology of ice shelves.

Amery Ice Shelf:

- The AIS is one of the largest glacier drainage basins in the world, located on the east coast of Antarctica, at about 70°S Latitude, 70°E Longitude.
- The AIS dynamics and mass balance help in understanding the changes in the global climate scenario.
- It becomes clear from the study that the AIS is losing its stability owing to the impact of a downstream giant glacial drainage system over the past 19 years, thereby advancing the ice shelf boundaries due to higher freezing rates than basal melting.
- If this continues, it is entirely possible that in the next six years (2021 to 2026), the positions of the ice shelf would closely coincide with the actual boundary conditions.

