

05 June 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

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1. World Environment Day

What's in News?

On the occasion of World Environment Day, the Prime Minister reiterated the pledge to preserve the planet's rich biodiversity.

This topic has been covered in [4th June 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis](#).

2. International Yoga Day

What's in News?

In the light of the prevailing health emergency in the country due to COVID-19, this year's International Yoga Day is set to go digital internationally.

Details:

- International Yoga Day is observed every year on the 21st of June.
- It was declared by the UN General Assembly on 11th December 2014.
- Yoga is a mental, physical and spiritual discipline or practice that has its origins in India.
- The day of 21st June was suggested by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the UN

because it is the longest day of the year.

- The day also has special relevance in several different parts of the globe.
- The draft resolution was introduced in the General Assembly by India's Permanent Representative.
- The draft received support from 177 members and they adopted the text without a vote. Many international leaders supported this initiative.
- The resolution was co-sponsored by 175 countries, which is the highest number of co-sponsors for a UN General Assembly resolution of such a type.
- This year, the event will highlight the utility of Yoga for individuals, to develop immunity to combat the global pandemic and strengthen the community in managing some of the significant aspects of the COVID-19 crisis.

3. North East – A New Business Destination of India

What's in News?

Union Minister of State (I/C) for Development of North Eastern Region and Minister of State in Prime Minister's office have asserted that the North East would emerge as new business destination of India.

Initiatives taken by the government for the comprehensive and holistic development of this region:

- The Government has taken adequate measures to address the connectivity issues and also encouraging entrepreneurship in the region.
- There has been a significant development in terms of Road, Rail and Air connectivity, helping facilitate the movement of goods and persons across the region.
- States Like Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya which had not seen Railways hitherto are now connected with Railways.
- States like Sikkim have seen an Airport for the first time.
- Indo-Bangladesh treaty for exchange of enclaves, has cleared the decks for ease of business, ease of movement and ease of commuting, which was earlier a tedious task.
- A train to Bangladesh from Tripura, to be launched soon is heralding a new chapter and opening new vistas in the development of this region by providing the entire region access to the seaports.
- The Government has also come up with a new scheme called "North East Road Sector Development Schemes" (NERSDS) for development and proper maintenance of inter states roads within the region, which has colloquially acquired the name of 'Orphaned Road' because of its persistence neglect by both the connecting states.

- The government and the Ministry of DoNER is also committed towards promoting self-help groups by encouraging livelihood projects to provide sustainable income to the most needy group of people, especially to the women folk who by tradition are quite industrious in this part of the country.
 - Desired impetus has also been accorded to the projects in areas like Horticulture, Tea, Bamboo, Piggery, Sericulture, Tourism etc.
 - The Government has amended the century old Forest Act by taking home grown bamboo out of the purview of the Forest Act.
 - Bamboo from the North East is going to be an important vehicle of trade not only for India but also for the entire subcontinent.
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4. Nagar Van Scheme

What's in News?

With biodiversity the theme of World Environment Day (WED), the ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) has launched Nagar Van Scheme.

Details:

- The scheme emphasises on urban forestry.
- Under the scheme, around 200 urban forests are to be developed all over the country in the next five years.
- The launch of 'Nagar Van' scheme will provide an opportunity to the states to manage urban ecosystems.

Warje Urban Forest:

- Warje Urban Forest in Pune has been showcased as it can become a role model for the country in implementation of the Nagar Van scheme.
- Warje, situated on the bank of the Mutha river has a catchment area in the western hills that brings along fertile soil and sufficient water.
- The Union Government took a significant and ambitious step to increase the green cover on barren lands. The project 'Urban Forest' was then started by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Control (MoEFCC) with assistance from the Forest Department, Government of Maharashtra.
- It was totally barren and used as a dump yard by the residents in the vicinity. Stressing on the need for creating a balance between development and environment conservation, big corporates extended their support.

- Public Private Participation as seen in Warje is one of its best examples.
- A number of residents have planted and adopted trees in memory of their loved ones at Smriti Van in Warje.
- A total of 9500 trees were planted in the area under CSIR initiative between 2015 and 2017.
- The neglected land has now been transformed into an area of rich biodiversity of various species of plants, birds, butterflies, reptiles and mammals.
- The project also helps in absorbing approximately 129,000 Kg carbon-dioxide and producing about 5,62,000 Kg oxygen per year.
- Undoubtedly, Project Urban Forests is helping in maintaining the ecological balance, serving both environmental and social development goals.

Importance of Urban Forests:

- Urban forests play an important role in the ecology of human habitats in many ways.
- They offer many benefits like impacting climate and the economy while providing shelter to wildlife and recreational area for city dwellers.
- The World Economic Forum says that cities that have more trees are less noisy, with lower pollution levels.
- A fully-grown tree can annually absorb up to 150kg of carbon dioxide (CO₂) – one of the main greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.
- Trees can moderate temperatures in heavily built cities, where heat radiated from concrete on buildings and roads, makes these areas hotter than the surrounding countryside, in a phenomenon known as ‘heat island’ effect.
- Food and Agriculture Organization adds that trees in urban areas reduce ozone, sulphur dioxide and particulate matter; remove large quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and release oxygen.
- In many countries, there is a growing understanding of the importance of urban forests.
- Cities like Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg have large forests within their urban areas.
- In India, most cities have gardens and parks, but not forests.

Note:

- India is endowed with rich biodiversity having several species of animals and plants and hosts 4 of the 35 global bio-diversity hotspots containing several endemic species.
- India has 8% of world biodiversity with only 2.5% of world land mass.
- Also, the freshwater availability in the second most populous country in the world is just 4%.

5. '#iCommit' initiative

What's in News?

The Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, initiated the '#iCommit' campaign, on the occasion of World Environment Day.

- The '#iCommit' initiative is centred around the idea of building an energy resilient future.
- The initiative is a clarion call to all stakeholders and individuals to continue moving towards energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability to create a robust and resilient energy system in the future.
- The '#iCommit' initiative, driven by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India is uniting a diverse set of players such as Governments, Corporates, Multilateral and Bilateral Organisations, Think Tanks and Individuals.
- The initiative will also celebrate and promote key undertakings of Government of India such as National Electric Mobility Mission 2020, FAME 1 and 2, DeenDayalUpadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, the Saubhagya Scheme, Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojna (UDAY), Atal Distribution system Improvement Yojna, Smart Meter National Programme, Pradhanmantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahaabhiya (KUSUM), Solar Parks, Grid Connected Rooftop, Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LED for All (UJALA), Atal Jyoti Yojna (AJAY) amongst others.

6. Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings Initiative

What's in News?

On occasion of World Environment Day, today, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE program, launched the "Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings" initiative that will pioneer ways to make workplaces healthier and greener.

- The Market Integration and Transformation Program for Energy Efficiency (MAITREE), under which this initiative has been launched, is a part of the US-India bilateral Partnership between the Ministry of Power and USAID and is aimed at accelerating the adoption of cost-effective energy efficiency as a standard practice within buildings, and specifically focuses on cooling.

Details:

- As part of this pilot, “Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings” Initiative, EESL has taken the leadership by being the first to implement this framework in its own offices.
- The EESL office pilot will address this problem by developing specifications for future use in other buildings throughout the country.
- It will aid in evaluating the effectiveness and cost benefits of various technologies and their short and long-term impacts on air quality, comfort, and energy use.

EESL:

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), under the administration of Ministry of Power, is working towards mainstreaming energy efficiency and is implementing the world’s largest energy efficiency portfolio in the country.
- Driven by the mission of Enabling More – more transparency, more transformation, and more innovation, EESL aims to create market access for efficient and future-ready transformative solutions that create a win-win situation for every stakeholder.

7. Van Dhan Scheme

What’s in News?

Van Dhan Kendras, established under the scheme initiated by TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs are leading the way in helping tribals generate their livelihood in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED).
- It targets livelihood generation for tribal gatherers and transforms them into entrepreneurs.
- The idea behind the scheme is to set-up tribal community owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in predominantly forested tribal districts.
- A Kendra constitutes of 15 tribal SHGs, each comprising of up to 20 tribal Non-timber forest product (NTFP) gatherers or artisans i.e. about 300 beneficiaries per Van Dhan Kendra.

TRIFED:

- TRIFED, as the apex national organisation involved in the improvement of the livelihood and empowerment of tribal people.
- It is the nodal agency for the implementation of the Van Dhan scheme.

8. Research proposals invited for COVID-19 for bilateral collaboration in science between India & Australia

What's in News?

Prime Minister of India and the Prime Minister of Australia, jointly announced a Special COVID-19 Collaboration in 2020 during an India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit on 04 June 2020.

- Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology, GOI and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), Australia have invited joint research projects on COVID-19 from interested scientists and researchers under the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF).
- A platform for bilateral collaboration in science, jointly managed and funded by the governments of India and Australia.
- The objective of the grant opportunity is to fund short collaborative research projects with tangible outcomes focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read more about India- Australia Bilateral Virtual Summit covered in [5th June 2020 CNA](#).

9. Awareness campaign on 'Prevention of Human and Animal Mortality on Highways'

Context:

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSME has launched a national awareness campaign on 'Prevention of Human and Animal Mortality on Highways'.

Details:

- The minister underlined the need for generating awareness and education for the masses at large towards reducing or eliminating mortality on the roads of both human beings and animals.
- India witnesses nearly five lakh road accidents every year, in which about 1.5 lakh lives are lost.
- In order to bring down these figures by 20-25 per cent by 31st March 2021, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has identified over five thousand black spots, and the process for their rectification including temporary and permanent measures is being carried out on urgent basis.
- Various Road safety measures have been highlighted to be focused upon on stretches of National Highways such as, traffic calming measures, Crash Barriers, Repairing, rehabilitation and reconstruction of dilapidated and narrow bridges, Road Safety Audit, Reduction of fatalities on vulnerable roads, Highway Patrolling, and Safety during Construction.

- Ministry is conscious about the need to protect animal life on the roads. Studies have been conducted for road engineering favourable to animal movement, constructing underpasses, elevated corridors, via-ducts, cut and cover, guardwall, fencing, watch tower, solar pumps, ponds for drinking water for animals, etc.

10. Aerosol characterization and radiative effects at High Altitude site in Western-Trans Himalayas

Context:

- Researchers at the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital (an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology) have found that aerosol radiative forcing larger than the global averages, implying some amount of radiative effects, in spite of the clean atmosphere over the trans-Himalayas.
- A deep scientific study of aerosol generation, transport, and its properties have important implications in the understanding and mitigation of climate change via atmospheric warming, which among many things, impacts the snow and glacier dynamics over the trans-Himalayan region.

Aerosol:

- An aerosol is a suspension of fine solid particles or liquid droplets in air or another gas.
- Aerosols can be natural or anthropogenic.
- Examples of natural aerosols are fog, mist, dust, forest exudates.

Details:

- The atmospheric aerosols play a key role in the regional/global climate system through scattering and absorption of incoming solar radiation and by modifying the cloud microphysics.
- Despite the large progress in quantifying the impact of different aerosols on radiative forcing, it still remains one of the major uncertainties in the climate change assessment.
- Precise measurements of aerosol properties are required to reduce the uncertainties, especially over the oceans and high altitude remote location in the Himalayas where they are scarce.
- The transport of light-absorbing carbonaceous aerosols and dust from the polluted Indo-Gangetic Plain and desert areas over the Himalayas constitutes a major climatic issue due to severe impacts on atmospheric warming and glacier retreat.
- This heating over the Himalayas facilitates the “elevated-hat pump” that strengthens the temperature gradient between land and ocean and modifies the atmospheric circulation and the monsoon rainfall.

- A better understanding of the aerosol optical and microphysical properties through the study can improve the modeling of aerosol effects in view of aerosol-climate implications via modifications in atmospheric warming and changes in the snow/glacier albedo over the trans-Himalayan region.

Note:

- Measurements of aerosol optical and microphysical properties started during the last decade at the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) at the high altitude background sites of Hanle and Merak in the trans-Himalayas under the frameworks of Aerosol Radiative Forcing over India (ARFI) and Astronomical Site Survey program of Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bangalore.
- In addition to this, few in-situ measurements of carbonaceous aerosols and ionic species have also been performed at Himansh Observatory (Spiti Valley) in the western Himalayas.