06 July 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Agreement signed between GOI and World Bank

Context:

World Bank and Government of India sign $750 million agreement for Emergency Response Programme for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.

Details:

- The World Bank and the Government of India signed a $750 million agreement for the **MSME Emergency Response Programme** to support the increased flow of finance into the hands of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
- The World Bank's MSME Emergency Response Programme will address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some 1.5 million viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact of the current shock and protect millions of jobs.
- GOI is focused on ensuring that there is abundant financial sector liquidity available flow to NBFCs, and that banks which have turned extremely risk-averse, continue taking exposures in the economy by lending to NBFCs.
- This project will support the Government in providing targeted guarantees to incentivize NBFCs and banks to continue lending to viable MSMEs to help sustain them through the crisis.
- The World Bank Group, including its private sector arm – the International Finance Corporation (IFC), will support the government's initiatives to protect the MSME sector by:
  - Unlocking liquidity
  - Strengthening NBFCs and SFBs: Improving the funding capacity of key market-oriented channels of credit, such as the NBFCs and Small Finance Bank (SFBs), will help them respond to the urgent and varied needs of the MSMEs.
  - Enabling financial innovations
- The World Bank has to date committed $2.75 billion to support India's emergency COVID-19 response, including the new MSME project.
- The first $1 billion emergency support was announced in April this year for immediate support to India's health sector.
- Another $1 billion project was approved in May to increase cash transfers and food benefits to the poor and vulnerable, including a more consolidated delivery platform – accessible to both rural and urban populations across state boundaries.

2. COVID Tests cross 1 crore milestone

Context:

The number of COVID tests has crossed the 10 million (1 crore) milestone in the country.

Details:

- The total number of COVID labs cross 1100.
- There are 788 labs in the government sector and 317 private labs.
- The various kinds of tests for COVID-19 and the labs providing these are as follows:
  - Real-Time RT PCR based testing labs

- o TrueNat based testing labs
- o CBNAAT based testing labs
- The national recovery rate now stands at 60.86%.
- There are 2,53,287 active cases and all are under active medical supervision.

3. Indian Railways

Context:

On a mission mode, the Indian Railways takes steps to transform itself as a **'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network** by 2030.

Details:

- The Railways is looking to solarise railway stations by utilizing its vacant lands for Renewable Energy (RE) projects.
- The Ministry of Railways has decided to install solar power plants on its vacant unused lands on a mega scale.
- The Indian Railways' present demand would be fulfilled by the solar projects being deployed, making it the first transport organisation to be energy self-sufficient.

Also read: National Solar Mission

4. NHAI to Rank Roads for Quality Service

Context:

In its effort to improve the quality of roads, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, has decided to undertake performance assessment and ranking of the highways in the country.

Details:

- The assessment audit and ranking of the National Highways are aimed to take corrective recourse, wherever needed, to improve the quality and provide a higher level of service to highway commuters.
- The assessment parameters are based on different international practices and studies for benchmarking highway performances in the Indian context.
- The criteria for the assessment have been broadly categorised in three main heads:
  - o Highway efficiency (45%)
  - o Highway safety (35%)
  - o User services (20%)
- Additionally, important parameters like operating speed, access control, time taken at toll plaza, road signages, road markings, accident rate, incident response time, crash barriers, illumination, availability of Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS), functionality of structures, provision for grade-separated intersections, cleanliness, plantation, wayside amenities and customer satisfaction will also be considered while conducting the assessment.

- The score obtained by each Corridor in each of the parameters will provide feedback and corrective recourse for higher standards of operation, better safety and user experience to improve existing highways.
- This will also help in identifying and filling gaps of design, standards, practices, guidelines and contract agreements for other NHAI projects.

5. National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO)

Context:

NATMO publishes 4th updated version of its COVID-19 Dashboard.

About NATMO:

- NATMO was established in 1956 as the National Atlas Organisation.
- Professor S.P. Chatterjee, the doyen of Indian Geography was the Founder-Director of this institute.
- It was renamed in 1978 to give it a broad-based responsibility in the field of thematic cartography and geographical research.
- It is under the administrative control of the Department of Science &Technology of the Government of India.
- It is headquartered in Kolkata.
- Major functions of NATMO:
  - Compilation of the National Atlas of India
  - Preparation of the National Atlas maps in regional languages
  - Preparation of thematic maps based on research studies on environmental and associated aspects and their impact on social and economic development
  - Any other work entrusted by the Central Government or its agencies to NATMO
  - Installation of automated Mapping System for increasing speed and efficiency in mapping
  - Division of Digital mapping System & Digitized and Scanning of existing maps on digital format
  - Geographical Researches
  - Remote Sensing & GIS, Digital Image processing
  - Division on Cartography for the Visually Impaired
  - Capacity and Infrastructure building of NATMO to convert/to upgrade in digital mode