

## 07 July 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

### 1. Ministerial on Climate Action

#### Context:

The fourth edition of the virtual Ministerial on Climate Action witnessed countries exchanging views on how countries are aligning economic recovery plans with the Paris Agreement and the critical enabling conditions to ensure continued climate action.

#### Details:

- The meeting was co-chaired by the European Union, China and Canada to advance discussions on the full implementation of the Paris Agreement under the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) and to demonstrate continued political commitment to global climate action.
- The virtual meeting was attended by representatives from more than 30 countries.
- The Union Environment Minister highlighted India's achievements in the ministerial:
  - India has achieved a reduction of 21% in the emission intensity of its GDP between 2005 and 2014.
  - India's renewable energy installed capacity has increased by 226% in the last 5 years and stands at more than 87 Gigawatt.
  - The share of non-fossil sources in installed capacity of electricity generation increased from 30.5% in March 2015 to 37.7% in May 2020.
  - 80 million LPG connections provided in the rural areas providing them with clean cooking fuel and a healthy environment.
  - Over 360 million LED bulbs distributed under the [UJALA scheme](#).
  - India has moved on to [Bharat Stage VI norms](#) from Bharat Stage IV by April 2020.

Also read: [Paris Agreement](#)

### 2. World Bank to help rejuvenate the Ganga

#### Context:

World Bank provides \$400 million to enhance support for rejuvenating the Ganga.

#### Details:

- The World Bank and the Government of India signed a loan agreement to enhance support for the Namami Gange programme that seeks to rejuvenate the Ganga river.
- The Second National Ganga River Basin Project will help stem pollution in the iconic river and strengthen the management of the river basin which is home to more than 500 million people.
- The government's Namami Gange programme seeks to ensure that the river returns to a pollution-free, ecologically healthy state.

About the National Ganga River Basin Project:

- The World Bank has been supporting the government's efforts since 2011 through the ongoing **National Ganga River Basin Project**, which helped set up the [National Mission for Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#) as the nodal agency to manage the river, and financed sewage treatment infrastructure in several riverside towns and cities.
- The National Ganga River Basin Project is a World Bank project with the objective to support India's National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) in:
  - Building capacity of its nascent operational-level institutions, so that they can manage the long-term Ganga clean-up and conservation program.
  - Implementing a diverse set of demonstrative investments for reducing point-source pollution loads in a sustainable manner, at priority locations on the Ganga.
- There are two components to this Project:
  - Institutional development: The objectives of this component are to build the functional capacity of the NGRBA's operational institutions at both the central and state levels, and to provide support to associated institutions for implementing the NGRBA program.
  - Priority infrastructure investments: The objective of this component is to finance demonstrative infrastructure investments to reduce pollution loads in priority locations on the river.
- The four main sectors of investments are municipal wastewater management, industrial pollution control, solid waste management and riverfront management.
- The NMCG is considered the operational wing of the Project.

### About the Ganga:

- The Ganga is considered India's most important and iconic river.
- It flows down from its glacial source in the high Himalayas to course through five states in the northern plains before draining into the waters of the Bay of Bengal through the Sunderbans delta, the largest mangrove system in the world.
- Along its 2,500 km journey, the river enriches huge swathes of agricultural land and sustains a long procession of towns and cities.
- The sprawling Ganga basin, an area of 860,000 sq km spread across 11 states, is the world's most populous river basin.
- It houses close to half of India's population.
- Over 40 percent of the country's GDP is generated in this region.
- The basin provides more than one-third of India's surface water, 90 percent of which is used for irrigation.
- Paradoxically, this fertile region is also home to some of the poorest sections of India's population, with more than 200 million people living below the national poverty line.
- Cultural significance of the Ganga:
  - As India's holiest river, the Ganga has a cultural and spiritual significance that far transcends the basin's boundaries.
  - It is worshipped as a living goddess and, since time immemorial, people from across the country have flocked to the many historic temple towns the lie along the river's banks to pray and bathe in its flowing waters.

### Pollution in the Ganga:

- The Ganga today is facing formidable pollution pressures, along with the attendant threats to its biodiversity and environmental sustainability.
- An ever-growing population, together with inadequately planned urbanization and industrialization, has affected the quality of the river's waters.
- Today, the Ganga's waters are sullied by the incessant outpouring of sewage, as well as by the large volumes of solid and industrial waste that are churned out by human and economic activity along the river's banks.

- The absence of adequate infrastructure, along with weak environmental governance and little technical expertise to manage these extreme pollution pressures, has resulted in the rapid deterioration of the water's quality in recent decades.
- The Ganga's mainstem runs through 50 major Indian cities, almost all of which have a population of more than 50,000 people.
- These towns and cities generate some 3 billion litres of sewage every day, only a fraction of which is treated before it reaches the river.
- While domestic sewage accounts for 70-80 percent of the wastewater that flows into the Ganga, Industrial effluents add another 15 percent, with far-reaching impacts on human and aquatic health due to their toxic nature.
- And, in the absence of adequate solid waste management in most cities, mounds of uncollected garbage add to the pervasive pollution.

### 3. Guidelines for Evaluation of Nano-based Agri-input and food products in India

#### Context:

Union Ministers release Guidelines for Evaluation of Nano-based Agri-input and food products in India.

#### Details:

- The formulation of these 'Guidelines' is one of the most important steps for delineating quality, safety and efficacy assessment of the novel nano-formulations which can be commercialized in the country.
- These guidelines are also intended to provide transparent, consistent and predictable regulatory pathways for nano-based agri-input and food products in India.
- The initiative has brought on board all the Departments and Ministries dealing with Nanotechnology, and nano-based products.
- The present 'Guidelines' apply to nano-agri-input products (NAIPs) and nano-agri products (NAPs). These 'Guidelines' also apply to nanocomposites and sensors made from nanomaterials and those that require direct contact with crops, food and feed for data acquisitions. These guidelines provide assistance on specific requirements for NAIPs and NAPs.
- The guidelines have been prepared jointly by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare through concerted inter-ministerial efforts coordinated by the DBT.
- These guidelines would help policymakers and regulators to frame effective provisions for future novel nano-based products in the agri-input and food sectors of India. They will also encourage Indian innovators and industries to develop and commercialise new nano-based formulations and products in these sectors.

