

31 July 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. Finance Commission's report on agricultural exports

Context:

15th Finance Commission's HLEG on Agricultural Exports submits report.

Details:

- The 15th Finance Commission had set up a High Level Group (HLG) on Agricultural Exports whose objective was to recommend measurable performance incentives for states to encourage agricultural exports and to promote crops to enable high import substitution.
- The major recommendations of the HLG are:
 - Focus on 22 crop value chains – demand-driven approach
 - Solve Value Chain Clusters (VCC) holistically with a focus on value addition
 - Create State led export plan with participation from stakeholders
 - The private sector should play an anchor role
 - Centre should be an enabler
 - A robust institutional mechanism to fund and support the implementation
- State-led Export Plan
 - This would be a business plan for a crop value chain cluster, that will lay out the opportunity, initiatives and investment required to meet the desired value chain export aspiration.
 - These plans will be action-oriented, time-bound and outcome-focused.
 - The Group recommended that for the success of these plans, they should be prepared by collaboration with private players and commodity boards. The Centre should play the role of an enabler.

2. Commercial coal mining

Context:

The Coal Ministry has accepted the Chhattisgarh Government's suggestion to change 5 mines with 3 other new mines put under commercial coal auctions in the state.

To know more about commercial coal mining, check [PIB dated June 11, 2020](#).

3. The Bureau of the Executive Board of WHO

Context:

The Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare presided over a meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board as Chairman of the Executive Board of the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), virtually.

Details:

- In May 2020, India's health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan was elected the Chair of the WHO's Executive Board.
- The Executive Board comprises of 34 members elected for three-year terms.
- The Chair of the Executive Board is elected by its members on being nominated by the Regional Committees of the six WHO Regions, by rotation.
- At the 72nd Regional Committee Session of WHO South-East Asia in September 2019, Member States had nominated India to be a member of the WHO Executive Board from the Region to replace Sri Lanka whose term expired in May 2020.
- The main **functions of the Board** are to implement the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly and advise and facilitate its work.

4. Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs)

Context:

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released guidelines for ARHCs.

About ARHCs Scheme:

- The Housing Ministry had launched the ARHCs scheme as a sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) as a part of the [Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan](#).
- The chief objective of the initiative is to provide dignified and affordable living spaces to the urban poor/migrants in need.
- Estimated to benefit about 3.5 lakh people, the government is also considering allowing 100% FDI in the scheme.
- **Implementation models:**
 - The scheme provides an opportunity for all States/UTs to convert their existing vacant houses constructed under various Central/State Government schemes into ARHCs.
 - Another model allows construction, operation and maintenance of ARHCs by public or private entities on their own available vacant land for a period of 25 years.
- ARHCs will be a mix of single/double bedroom Dwelling Units and Dormitory of 4/6 beds including all common facilities which will be exclusively used for rental housing for a minimum period of 25 years.
- **Benefits of the scheme:**
 - Ensure dignified living environments for urban poor and migrants close to their workplaces at affordable rates.
 - This will unlock existing vacant housing stock and make them available in urban space.
 - It will propel new investment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship in the rental housing sector by encouraging Private/Public Entities to efficiently utilize their vacant land available for developing ARHCs.
 - Prevent the proliferation of slums.
 - Strengthen municipal finances at ULB level.
 - Ensure a sustained supply of workforce and increased productivity for industries and manufacturing units.

5. Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

Context:

GOI launches a programme for the benefit of artisans involved in the manufacturing of Agarbatti under the 'Gramodyog Vikas Yojana'.

Details:

- Under the pilot programme, each targeted cluster of artisans will be supported with about 50 Automatic Agarbatti making machines and 10 mixing machines.
- Accordingly, a total of 200 Automatic Agarbatti making machines and 40 mixing machines will be provided to the artisans.
- Also, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) will provide training and assist artisans working in this area, with Agarbatti manufacturing machines.
- The programme aims to enhance the production of 'Agarbatti' in the country and create sustainable employment for the traditional artisans, by providing them with regular employment and an increase in their wages.
- It is also expected to boost the domestic Agarbatti industry and reduce its imports.

Steps taken by the government to boost the indigenous production of 'Agarbatti':

1. Placing the 'Agarbatti' item from "Free" trade to "Restricted" trade in the import policy.
2. Enhancing the import duty from 10% to 25% on 'round bamboo sticks' used for the manufacturing of Agarbatti.

6. SKOCH Award

Context:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs received the SKOCH Gold Award for its "Empowerment of Tribals through IT enabled Scholarship Schemes" project.

About SKOCH Awards:

- SKOCH Award, instituted in 2003, is the highest civilian honour in the country conferred by an independent organisation.
- It recognises people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.
- It is given in the areas of digital, financial and social inclusion; governance; inclusive growth; excellence in technology and applications; change management; corporate leadership; corporate governance; citizen service delivery; capacity building; empowerment and other such softer issues.
- It is given to both institutions/organisations and individuals.

7. Muslim Women Rights Day

Context:

"Muslim Women Rights Day" organised at the National Commission for Minorities office in New Delhi.

Details:

- The day has been organised as the anniversary of the enacting of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019.
- This law had made instant triple talaq a crime.

Read more on the [triple talaq bill](#) in the linked article.

