

16 Dec: PIB Summary and Analysis

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1. MoU between India and the USA

Context:

Cabinet approves an MoU between India and the US for exchange of information in areas of mutual interest in the electricity sector.

Details:

- The MoU is between the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), India and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), USA.
- The MoU will help in improving regulatory and policy framework for developing an efficient wholesale power market and enhancing grid reliability.

About Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC):

- CERC is a statutory body functioning under Sec 76 of the Electricity Act 2003.
- It was initially constituted under the Electricity Regulatory Commissions Act, 1998 in the year 1998.
- The Commission intends to promote competition, efficiency and economy in bulk power markets, improve the quality of supply, promote investments and advise government on the removal of institutional barriers to bridge the demand supply gap and thus foster the interests of consumers.
- **Functions of CERC:**
 - to regulate the tariff of generating companies owned or controlled by the Central Government;
 - to regulate the tariff of generating companies other than those owned or controlled by the Central Government specified, if such generating companies enter into or otherwise have a composite scheme for generation and sale of electricity in more than one State;
 - to regulate the inter-State transmission of electricity;
 - to determine tariff for inter-State transmission of electricity;

- to issue licences to persons to function as transmission licensee and electricity trader with respect to their inter-State operations;
 - to adjudicate upon disputes involving generating companies or transmission licensee to refer any dispute for arbitration;
 - to levy fees for the purposes of the Act;
 - to specify Grid Code having regard to Grid Standards;
 - to specify and enforce the standards with respect to quality, continuity and reliability of service by licensees;
 - to fix the trading margin in the inter-State trading of electricity, if considered, necessary;
 - to discharge such other functions as may be assigned under the Act.
 - CERC also performs a few advisory functions such as formulating the National Electricity Policy and Tariff Policy, etc.
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2. Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS)

Context:

The AICTE has decided to release the instalment of Rs. 20,000/- as maintenance allowance under the Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS).

About the Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS):

- Under the PMSSS, the youths of J&K and Ladakh are supported by way of scholarship in two parts namely the academic fee & maintenance allowance.
 - The scheme is under the All India Council for Technical Education ([AICTE](#)).
 - The scheme is being implemented in the wake of the Expert Group that was constituted by the Prime Minister in 2010 for enhancing employment opportunity among the youths of J&K and Ladakh.
 - The Scheme aims to build the capacities of the youths of J&K and Ladakh by Educating, Enabling and Empowering them to compete in the normal course.
 - The academic fee covers tuition fee and other components as per the ceiling fixed for various professional, medical and other under-graduate courses.
 - In order to meet expenditure towards hostel accommodation, mess expenses, books & stationery etc., a fixed amount of Rs.1.00 Lakh is provided to the beneficiary and is paid in instalments @ Rs. 10,000/- per month directly into the student's account.
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3. Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)

Context:

CEO, Prasar Bharati elected Vice President of ABU.

Details:

- Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been elected the Vice President of the ABU. **Read more on Prasar Bharati in [This Day in History dated Sep 6](#).**

About Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU):

- The ABU was established in 1964 as a non-profit, non-governmental, non-political, professional association with a mandate to assist the development of broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - ABU promotes the collective interests of television and radio broadcasters as well as key industry players and facilitates regional and international media cooperation.
 - It is a member of the World Broadcasters' Union and works closely with the other regional broadcasting unions on matters of common concern such as reserving frequencies for broadcasters, harmonisation of operating and technical broadcasting standards and systems and finalising the Broadcasting Treaty.
 - Currently, the ABU has over 260 members in over 70 countries on four continents.
 - It is headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
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4. Tribes India

Context:

Tribes India expands its range by introducing more products.

Know more about [Tribes India e-Marketplace](#) in the linked article.

5. National Hydrology Project

Context:

Union Minister of Jal Shakti reviews progress made under National Hydrology Project in its mid-term.

National Hydrology Project:

- The National Hydrology Project (NHP) was started in 2016 as a Central Sector Scheme with 100% grant to implementing agencies on a pan-India basis with a budget outlay of Rs 3680 Crore to be spent over a period of 8 years.
- The project aims at improving the extent, reliability and accessibility of water resources information and to strengthen the capacity of targeted water resource management institutions in India.
- Thus, the NHP is facilitating the acquisition of reliable information efficiently which would pave the way for an effective water resource development and management.
- Under the Project, the **National Water informatics Centre (NWIC)** has been established, which is a nationwide repository of water resources data.

- NHP will improve and expand hydrology data and information systems, strengthen water resources operation and planning systems, and enhance institutional capacity for water resources management.
 - The project will thus strengthen the information base and institutional capacity for evidence-based decision making in water resources planning and operational management at the basin scale across India using the latest technology and tools.
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6. Tidbits

1) Government of India and NDB sign agreement

GOI and the [New Development Bank \(NDB\)](#) signed a loan agreement for lending \$1,000 million for 'supporting India's economic recovery from COVID-19' by supporting expenditures on rural infrastructure related to natural resource management (NRM) and rural employment generation under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme ([MGNREGS](#)).

2) Government of India and World Bank sign project

The Government of India and the [World Bank](#) signed a \$400 million project to support India's efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the second operation in a programmatic series of two. The first operation of \$750 million was approved in May 2020. The programme will strengthen the capability of state and national governments in India to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable from the shocks triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

