

23 Dec 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

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1. CoWIN

Context:

IT Minister announces launch of Grand Challenge for strengthening the COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) system.

What is the Challenge?

- CoWIN is a Grand Challenge for strengthening the COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) system, a digitalised platform to be used to effectively roll out and scale up the mechanism for COVID Vaccine Distribution System, nationally.

Launched by:

- It was launched by the ministries of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Details of the Challenge:

- The challenge invites participation from talented and innovative startups and emerging technology specialists to augment and scale the CoWIN platform.
- It will be launched on the MSH (MeitY Startup Hub) portal (which is a collaborative platform developed under the aegis of MeitY towards building meaningful synergies in the Indian tech startup space).
- MoHFW has identified seven focus areas of technology development to holistically address the likely limitations associated with complete and effective vaccine distribution system (VDS) and its seamless administration across India.
- These challenges try to broadly address the priority areas relating to infrastructure, monitoring and management, dynamic learning and information systems, constraints of human resources-including technical capacities, vaccine logistics management and tracking enlisted beneficiaries for any adverse event following immunization on real time basis.

- The top 5 applicants will be provided the CoWIN APIs (Application Programming Interface) to prove the efficacy of their solutions for possible integration with the platform.

2. Department of Fisheries

Context:

Year-end review of the Department of Fisheries.

Background:

- The fisheries sector has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries and is a source of cheap and nutritious food.
- It is also a means of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country, providing income and employment to more than 28 million people.
- The fisheries sector occupies an important place in the socio-economic development of the country.
- It is also a fast-growing sector in India.
- India is the second-largest fish producing country in the world accounting for 7.56% of global production and contributing about 1.24% to the country's Gross Value Added (GVA) and over 7.28% to the agricultural GVA.
- Fish is also an affordable and rich source of animal protein, and is an important option to mitigate hunger and nutrient deficiency.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):

- It is an umbrella scheme for the fisheries sector aimed at bringing about a Blue Revolution through the sustainable development of the sector.

To know more about the scheme, click [here](#).

KCC to Animal Husbandry Farmers and Fisheries:

- Almost 45000 Kisan Credit Cards have been issued to fishers and fish farmers.

To know more about Kisan Credit Cards, check [PIB dated Feb 11, 2020](#).

Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund:

- In its Budget 2018, the Union Government had set aside Rs. 7,550 crore for the setting up of a dedicated Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF).
- FIDF will provide concessional finance to the State Governments/Union Territories, State entities, cooperatives, individual entrepreneurs, etc. for the development of fisheries infrastructure facilities both in marine and inland fisheries sector.
- FIDF will fund infrastructure facilities such as fishing harbours/fish landing centres, fish seed farms, fish feed mills/plants, cage culture in reservoirs, mariculture activities, introduction of deep sea fishing vessels, setting up of disease diagnostic and aquatic quarantine facilities, creation of cold

chain infrastructure facilities such as ice plants, cold storage, fish transport facilities, fish processing units, fish markets, etc.

- The Fund would be created in collaboration with [NABARD](#), NCDC and Specified commercial banks.
 - The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) will be the Nodal Implementing Agency for overall coordination of the FIDF activities.
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3. International Science Literature Festival – VIGYANIKA

Context:

International Science Literature Festival – VIGYANIKA organized to mark the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

Details:

- Vigyanika is the International Science Literature Festival being organised under the [India International Science Festival](#).
 - Vigyanika was jointly organised by CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MOES) and Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA) to mark the birth anniversary of eminent Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
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4. Kisan Diwas

Context:

23rd December is observed as Kisan Diwas in India in honour of former Prime Minister Choudhary Charan Singh (who was born on [23rd December](#) 1902).

About Kisan Diwas (National Farmers' Day):

- In 2001, the government decided to recognise Charan Singh's contribution to the agriculture sector and welfare of farmers by celebrating his birth anniversary as Kisan Diwas.

Also read: [PM KISAN Scheme](#)

5. Post Matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes (PMS-SC)

Context:

Cabinet approves changes in Post Matric Scholarship for SCs. The revamped scheme is expected to benefit more than 4 crore SC students in the next five years.

Background:

- The post-matric scholarship scheme had nearly shut down as the central government has been providing only 11% of funding since 2017, prompting many states to discontinue it.

About PMS-SC:

- The scheme has been in existence since 1944 and has helped students to pursue any post-matric course starting from class 11 onwards, with the government meeting the cost of education.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and implemented through State Government and UT administration.
- The Scheme provides financial assistance to the Scheduled Caste students studying at post matriculation or post-secondary stage to enable them to complete their education.
- It is given to students whose parents' annual income does not exceed Rs. 2.5 lakh.
- The scholarship includes maintenance allowance, reimbursement of compulsory non-refundable fees, study tour charges, book allowance, thesis typing/printing charges for research scholars, book bank facility, etc.
- Due to this scheme, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (higher education) among the SCs has increased from six per cent in 2002-03 to 23 per cent in 2018-19.

Benefits of approved changes:

- The Cabinet has now approved a total investment of Rs 59,048 crore for the scheme, of which the central government will spend Rs 35,534 crore — around 60 per cent of the total. State governments will have to cover the remaining amount.
- This brings in greater involvement of the central government.
- Apart from the funding, the Cabinet has approved a number of revisions to the existing scheme.
 - For instance, a campaign will be launched to enroll students from the poorest households passing Class 10, in the higher education courses of their choice.
- It is estimated that 1.36 crore poorest students, who are currently not continuing their education beyond Class 10 would be brought into the higher education system in the next 5 years.
- In addition to this, the scheme will be run on an online platform with cyber security measures that would assure transparency, accountability, efficiency, and timely delivery of the assistance without any delays.
- Transfer of financial assistance to the students under the scheme will be on DBT mode.

Also read: [National Commission for Scheduled Castes \(NCSC\)](#)

5. Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM)

Context:

DRDO launched Medium Range Surface to Air Missile successfully.

Details:

- The maiden launch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM), Army Version was done from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the Coast of Odisha.
- The missile completely destroyed a high speed unmanned aerial target which was mimicking an aircraft with a direct hit.

About MRSAM:

- Army version of MRSAM is a [Surface to Air Missile](#) developed jointly by DRDO, India and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel for use of the Indian Army.
- MRSAM Army weapon system comprises of Command post, Multi-Function Radar and Mobile Launcher system.
- After its induction into the Indian army, the missile will significantly enhance the combat effectiveness of the defence forces.

