

04 Jan 2021: PIB Summary & Analysis

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1. Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica

Context:

40th Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica launched.

Details of the expedition:

- The 40th expedition journey will be flagged off from Goa on January 5, 2021, with 43 members onboard.
- The chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasily Golovnin will make this journey and will reach Antarctica in 30 days.
- After leaving behind a team of 40 members, it would return to India in April 2021.
- On return, it will also bring back the winter team of the preceding trip.
- The scientific and logistic activities of the 40th Indian Antarctic expedition are limited due to the existing challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The focus is to support the ongoing scientific projects on climate change, geology, ocean observations, electric and magnetic flux measurements, environmental monitoring; resupplying of food, fuel, provisions and spare; and accomplishing the return of the winter crew.

Indian Antarctic Programme:


- The Indian Antarctic expeditions began in 1981.
- The first trip comprised a team of 21 scientists and support staff led by Dr SZ Qasim.
- After a humble beginning, the Indian Antarctic programme has built three permanent research base stations in Antarctica—named Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri, and Bharati.
- **As of today, India has two operational research stations in Antarctica named Maitri and Bharati.**
- The [National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research \(NCPOR\)](#), Goa, manages the entire Indian Antarctic program. Read more on the Centre and the Indian base stations in Antarctica in the linked article

2. CSIR-NPL

Context:

CSIR-NPL celebrates its 75th Foundation Day.

About CSIR-NPL:

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) – National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is one of the premier CSIR laboratories.
 - It was established in January 1947 and is located in New Delhi.
 - It is the national metrology institute of India and is the major research institute in the field of physical sciences.
 - The main aim of the laboratory is to strengthen and advance physics-based research and development for the overall development of science and technology in the country.
 - NPL has the responsibility of realizing the units of physical measurements based on the International System (SI units) under the subordinate legislations of Weights & Measures Act 1956 (reissued in 1988 under the 1976 Act).
 - NPL also has the statutory obligation to realize, establish, maintain, reproduce and update the national standards of measurement & calibration facilities for different parameters.
 - The laboratory is maintaining, at present, six out of seven SI base units. These are metre, kilogramme, second, kelvin, ampere candela. R&D work is under way for realizing and establishing the seventh SI base unit of mole (mol). The SI supplementary units are radian (rad) & steradian (sr).
 - The derived units for physical measurement that the laboratory currently maintains are: force, pressure, vacuum, luminous flux, sound pressure, ultrasonic power & pressure and the units for electrical and electronic parameters viz., dc voltage; resistance; current and power; ac voltage; current and power; low frequency voltage; impedance and power; high frequency voltage; power; impedance; attenuation and noise; microwave power; frequency, impedance; and attenuation and noise.
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3. TRIFOOD Parks

Context:

TRIFOOD Parks to be set up in Madhya Pradesh.

Details:

- TRIFED signs an MoU with Akhil Bhartiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to set up TRIFOOD Parks in 5 districts of MP.

TRIFOOD:

- It is a joint initiative of TRIFED (under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs) and the Ministry of Food Processing.
- TRIFOOD Parks are food processing centres aiming at promoting value addition to minor forest produce.
- It was launched under the [Van Dhan Yojana](#) in 2020.
- The parks procure raw materials from the Van Dhan Kendras and process them to be sold across the country through Tribes India outlets.
- The minimum support price for minor forest produce is fixed by the Tribal Affairs Ministry and it is revised every three years by a pricing cell constituted under the Ministry.

4. Sagarmala Seaplane Services

Context:

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways is kicking off the Sagarmala Seaplane Services (SSPS).

About Sagarmala Seaplane Services:

- The Ministry is commencing operations of the Seaplane services, on select routes, under a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework through prospective airline operators.
- The project execution and implementation would be through the Sagarmala Development Company Ltd (SDCL), which is under the administrative control of the Ministry.
- The proposed locations under the Hub & Spoke Model are given in the image below:



- One such Seaplane Service is already in operation between Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, inaugurated in October 2020.
 - To provide connectivity and easier accessibility to remote locations, SDCL is exploring plans to leverage the potential of the vast coastline and numerous water bodies/ rivers across India by commencing seaplane operations.
 - Sea Plane will utilize the nearby water bodies for take-off and landing and thus connect those places in a much economical way as conventional airport infrastructure like a runway and terminal buildings are not required for seaplane operations.
 - **Benefits of seaplane operations:**
 - Provide faster and comfortable transportation across the nation.
 - Improve air connectivity to tourist/religious destinations.
 - Boost domestic and international tourism.
 - Save travel time to remote/hilly areas.
 - Boost business activities in the regions.
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5. GST compensation shortfall

10th Instalment of Rs.6,000 crore released to the States as back to back loan to meet the GST compensation shortfall.

Details:

- The Finance Ministry has released the 10th weekly instalment of Rs.6,000 crore to the States to meet the GST compensation shortfall.
- The amount has been released to 23 states and 3 UTs with legislative assemblies.
- The remaining 5 States, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implementation.
- Now, more than 50 percent of the estimated GST compensation shortfall has been released to the States & UTs with legislative assemblies.

Background:

- The Government of India had set up a special borrowing window in October 2020 to meet the estimated shortfall of Rs.1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of GST.
- The borrowings are being done through this window by the Government of India on behalf of the States and UTs.
- The borrowings have been done in 10 rounds.
- In addition to providing funds through the special borrowing window to meet the shortfall in revenue on account of GST implementation, GOI has also granted additional borrowing permission equivalent to 0.50 % of Gross States Domestic Product (GSDP) to the states choosing Option-I to meet GST compensation shortfall to help them in mobilising additional financial resources.

- All the states have given their preference for Option-I.

Read more about Option I in **PIB dated Aug 29, 2020**.

Read previous PIB [here](#).

