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CONTENTS

PIB (1st to 15th March, 2019)

Sr. No.	Area	Topics	Page No.
1	International Relations	Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue – 2019	04
2	Miscellaneous	Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019	04
3	Governance	Young Scientist Programme	05
4	Internal Security	BOLD-QIT project	06
5	Governance	Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana	07
6	Environment	Hazardous Waste (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016	07
7	Governance	Quality Assurance Scheme	08
8	Disaster Management	Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)	08
9	Environment	India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)	09
10	Defence	Guided Pinaka	10
11		Joint Ex Al Nagah 2019	11
12		Man Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)	11

1 Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue – 2019

CONTEXT:

- In continuation of the process of engaging the global strategic community in an annual review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, the second edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) - 2019 was held on 05 and 06 March 2019 at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.

ABOUT:

- This dialogue was built upon the foundation laid by the inaugural edition and examined five fresh themes:
 - Practical solutions for achieving cohesion in the region through maritime connectivity;
 - measures to attain and maintain a free-and-open Indo-Pacific;
 - a regional approach to the region's transition from a 'Brown' to a 'Blue' economy;
 - opportunities and challenges arising from the maritime impact of 'Industry 4.0'; and
 - How the twin conceptualisations of 'SAGAR' and 'SAGARMALA'.

BACKGROUND:

- The idea of IPRD was first conceptualised and conducted in 2018, as the apex level conference of the Indian Navy, organised by the National Maritime Foundation as the Navy's Knowledge Partner.
- The permanent theme of this annual dialogue is a review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The aim is to focus attention on the Indo-Pacific, as a maritime geographical-entity, while deliberating aspects of great relevance to regional geopolitics.
- The 2018 edition of the IPRD sought to highlight the opportunities that lay before India's maritime policy-shapers, policy-makers, and, the practitioners of the country's maritime policies.

This first edition dwelt upon four basic themes:

- The growth, opportunities and vulnerabilities of maritime merchandise trade, including associated infrastructure such as ports and multi-modal connectivity, as seen from the very different perspectives of large and small littoral and island nations;
- Regional connectivity-models;
- Pan-regional challenges such as sustaining persistent surveillance at sea, the increasing digitisation of the maritime space, the dangers of cyber-malevolence that are already afflicting the maritime domain, etc.;
- The role of Indian industry within both, the private and the public sectors, in enhancing holistic maritime-security.

2 Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019

CONTEXT:

- Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 has been placed in the Guinness World Records in three sectors.

ABOUT:

- It includes largest traffic and crowd management plan, the biggest painting exercise of public sites under paint my city scheme and biggest sanitation and waste disposal mechanism.

- A three member team from Guinness World Records visited the Prayagraj for this purpose. Exercise at large scale was done before the team members for three days from February 28 to March 3.
- Five bathing festivals of the Kumbh have concluded successfully with more than 22 crore pilgrims taking a holy dip.

3 Young Scientist Programme

CONTEXT:

- Indian Space Research Organisation launched a special programme for school children called "Young Scientist Programme" "Yuva Vigyani Karyakram".

ABOUT:

- The Program is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities.
- ISRO has chalked out this programme to "Catch them young".
- The residential training programme will be of around two weeks duration during summer holidays and it is proposed to select 3 students each from each State/ Union Territory to participate in this programme every year covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.
- Those who have finished 8th standard and currently studying in 9th standard will be eligible for the programme.
- The selection is based on the academic performance and extracurricular activities, which is clearly mentioned in the selection criteria already circulated to Chief Secretaries of States/ Administrators of UTs.
- Students belong to the rural area have been given special weightage in the selection criteria.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

- ▶ It was formed in 1969, headquartered in the city of Bengaluru.
- ▶ ISRO superseded the erstwhile Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) established in 1962.
- ▶ It is managed by the Department of Space, which reports to the Prime Minister of India.
- ▶ It built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975.
- ▶ In 1980, Rohini became the first satellite to be placed in orbit by an Indian-made launch vehicle, SLV-3.
- ▶ ISRO sent a lunar orbiter, Chandrayaan-1, on 22 October 2008 and a Mars orbiter, Mars Orbiter Mission, on 5 November 2013, making India the first nation to succeed on its first attempt to Mars, and ISRO is the fourth space agency in the world as well as the first space agency in Asia to reach Mars orbit
- ▶ In January 2014, ISRO used an indigenous cryogenic engine in a GSLV-D5 launch of the GSAT-14.
- ▶ On 18 June 2016, ISRO set a record with a launch of twenty satellites in a single payload, one being a satellite from Google.

- ▶ On 15 February 2017, ISRO launched one hundred and four satellites in a single rocket (PSLV-C37) and created a world record.
- ▶ ISRO launched its heaviest rocket, Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-Mark III (GSLV-Mk III), on 5 June 2017 and placed a communications satellite GSAT-19 in orbit. With this launch, ISRO became capable of launching 4-ton heavy satellites into GTO.

4 BOLD-QIT project

CONTEXT:

- The Union Home Minister inaugurated the project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) under CIBMS (Comprehensive Integrated Border Management system) on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri district of Assam.

Why is it needed?

- Border Security Force is responsible for safeguarding of 4,096 Km long International Border with Bangladesh. At various places, it is not possible to erect Border Fence due to the geographical barriers.
- The 61 Kms of Border area in Dhubri where River Brahmaputra enters into Bangladesh is consisting of vast char lands and innumerable river channels thus making border guarding in this area, a daunting task especially during rainy season.

About the project:

- BOLD-QIT is the project to install technical systems under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS), which enables BSF to equip Indo-Bangla borders with different kind of sensors in unfenced riverine area of Brahmaputra and its tributaries.
- Now, the entire span of River Brahmaputra has been covered with data network generated by Microwave communication, OFC Cables, DMR Communication, day and night surveillance Cameras and intrusion detection system.
- These modern gadgets provide feeds to BSF Control Rooms on the Border and enable BSF Quick Reaction Teams to thwart any possibility of Illegal Cross Border Crossing/ Crimes.
- The implementation of this project will not only help BSF to curb all type of cross border crimes but also provide respite to the troops from round the clock human surveillance.

Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS)

- ▶ CIBMS integrates, manpower, sensors and command and control so that situational awareness can be improved and quick response as per circumstances can be facilitated. One of the major components of CIBMS is the 'virtual fence'.
- ▶ This will be very helpful, keeping the difficult geographical features in mind.
- ▶ The second component is the command and control, to help in optimum utilization of resources for border management.
- ▶ Another component is power management so that CIBMS can run without any interruptions.

5 Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana

CONTEXT:

- The Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana at Vastral in Gujarat.
- He also distributed the PM-SYM pension cards to select beneficiaries.

ABOUT

- The scheme will assure a monthly pension of Rs.3000 for the enrolled unorganized sector workers during their old age.
- It is for the first time since independence that such a scheme is envisaged for the crores of workers engaged in the informal sector.
- The PM-SYM along with the health coverage provided under 'Ayushman Bharat' and life & disability coverage provided under 'Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana' and 'Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana', will ensure comprehensive social security coverage for the workers in the unorganized sector at their old age.

6 Hazardous Waste (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016

CONTEXT:

- In order to strengthen the implementation of environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in the country, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016.

ABOUT:

- The amendment has been done keeping into consideration the "Ease of Doing Business" and boosting "Make in India" initiative by simplifying the procedures under the Rules, while at the same time upholding the principles of sustainable development and ensuring minimal impact on the environment.
- Some of the salient features of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019 are as follows:
 - Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
 - Exporters of silk waste have now been given exemption from requiring permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - Electrical and electronic assemblies and components manufactured in and exported from India, if found defective can now be imported back into the country, within a year of export, without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - Industries which do not require consent under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, are now exempted from requiring authorization also under the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, provided that hazardous and other wastes generated by such industries are handed over to the authorized actual users, waste collectors or disposal facilities.

7 Quality Assurance Scheme

CONTEXT:

- For sensitizing small laboratories to basic doable quality practices, National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) launched voluntary scheme called Quality Assurance Scheme (QAS) for Basic Composite (BC) Medical Laboratories (Entry Level) in February, 2019.

ABOUT:

- The laboratories performing only basic routine tests like blood glucose, blood counts, rapid tests for common infections, liver & kidney function tests and routine tests of urine will be eligible to apply under this scheme.
- The scheme requires minimal documentation and a nominal fee has been prescribed for availing the scheme. Components of competence assessment have been added for assuring quality and validity of test results.
- The scheme will help to bring quality at the grass root level of India's health system where laboratories follow the imperatives of quality in all their processes.
- This will inculcate the habit of quality and facilitate the laboratories to achieve benchmark accreditation of ISO 15189 over a period of time.
- Through this scheme, patients availing services of small labs in primary health centers, community health centers, doctor's clinic, standalone small labs, labs in small nursing homes will also have access to quality lab results.

National Accreditation Board for Testing & Calibration Laboratories (NABL)

- ▶ It is an autonomous society providing Accreditation (Recognition) of Technical competence of a testing, calibration, medical laboratory & Proficiency testing provider (PTP) & Reference Material Producer (RMP) for a specific scope following respective ISO standards.
- ▶ It has Mutual Recognition Arrangements with Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA), and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).
- ▶ NABL provides accreditation in all major fields of Science and Engineering such as Biological, Chemical, Electrical, Electronics, Mechanical, Fluid-Flow, Non-Destructive, Photometry, Radiological, Thermal & Forensics under testing facilities and Electro-Technical, Mechanical, Fluid Flow, Thermal, Optical & Radiological under Calibration facilities.
- ▶ NABL also provides accreditation for medical testing laboratories.
- ▶ In addition, NABL also offers accreditation for Proficiency testing providers & Reference Material producers and is now signatory to APLAC MRA for both.

8 Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)

CONTEXT:

- The Union Cabinet approved the "Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)" for Flood Management Works in entire country and River Management Activities and works related to Border Areas for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Benefits:

- The FMBAP Scheme will be implemented throughout the country for effective flood management, erosion control and anti-sea erosion.
- The proposal will benefit towns, villages, industrial establishments, communication links, agricultural fields, infrastructure etc. from floods and erosion in the country.
- The catchment area treatment works will help in reduction of sediment load into rivers.

Salient features:

- The Scheme "FMBAP" has been framed by merging the components of two continuing XII Plan schemes titled "Flood Management Programme (FMP)" and "River Management Activities and Works related to Border Areas (RMBA)".
- The aim of the Scheme is to assist the State Governments to provide reasonable degree of protection against floods in critical areas by adopting optimum combination of structural and non-structural measures and enhancing capabilities of State / Central Government officials in related fields.
- The works under the scheme will protect valuable land from erosion and flooding and help in maintaining peace along the border.
- The Scheme aims at completion of the on-going projects already approved under FMP.
- Further, the scheme also caters to Hydro-meteorological observations and Flood Forecasting on common rivers with the neighbouring countries.
- It also includes survey and investigations, preparation of DPR etc. of water resources projects on the common rivers with neighbouring countries like Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, Sapta Kosi-Sun Kosi Projects in Nepal which would benefit both countries.

9 India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)

CONTEXT:

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) in New Delhi.

ABOUT

- India is one of the first countries in the world to develop a comprehensive Cooling Action plan which has a long term vision to address the cooling requirement across sectors and lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand.
- Cooling requirement is cross sectoral and an essential part for economic growth and is required across different sectors of the economy such as residential and commercial buildings, cold-chain, refrigeration, transport and industries.
- The thrust of the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) is to look for synergies in actions for securing both environmental and socio-economic benefits.
- The India Cooling Action seeks to:
 - reduce cooling demand across sectors by 20% to 25% by 2037-38,
 - reduce refrigerant demand by 25% to 30% by 2037-38,
 - Reduce cooling energy requirements by 25% to 40% by 2037-38,
 - Recognize "cooling and related areas" as a thrust area of research under national S&T Programme,

- Training and certification of 100,000 servicing sector technicians by 2022-23, synergizing with Skill India Mission.
- The following benefits would accrue to the society over and above the environmental benefits:
 - Thermal comfort for all – provision for cooling for EWS and LIG housing,
 - Sustainable cooling – low GHG emissions related to cooling,
 - Doubling Farmers Income – better cold chain infrastructure – better value of produce to farmers, less wastage of produce,
 - Skilled workforce for better livelihoods and environmental protection,
 - Make in India – domestic manufacturing of air-conditioning and related cooling equipment's,
 - Robust R&D on alternative cooling technologies – to provide push to innovation in cooling sector.
- Cooling is also linked to human health and productivity. Linkages of cooling with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are well acknowledged. The cross-sectoral nature of cooling and its use in development of the economy makes provision for cooling an important developmental necessity.
- The development of ICAP has been a multi-stakeholder inclusive process encompassing different Government Ministries/Departments/Organizations, Industry and Industry Associations, Think tanks, Academic and R&D institutions.

10**Guided Pinaka****CONTEXT:**

- Guided Pinaka developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was successfully test fired at Pokhran ranges after two successful trials.

ABOUT:

- The consecutive successful missions of Guided Pinaka prove the efficacy, reliability and high precision capabilities of the weapon system.
- The weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system.
- In all the missions, the weapon systems impacted the intended targets with high precision and achieved desired accuracies.
- Telemetry Systems tracked and monitored the vehicle all through the flight path. All the mission objectives have been met.
- The indigenously developed Guided Pinaka by DRDO will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hits.

Different system components of Guided missiles

- ▶ **Guidance systems:** The most common method of guidance is to use some form of radiation, such as infrared, lasers or radio waves, to guide the missile onto its target.
- ▶ **Targeting systems:** Another method is to target the missile by knowing the location of the target and using a guidance system such as INS, TERCOM or satellite guidance. This guidance system guides the missile by knowing the missile's current position and the position of the target, and then calculating a course between them.

- ▶ **Flight system:** Whether a guided missile uses a targeting system, a guidance system or both, it needs a flight system. The flight system uses the data from the targeting or guidance system to maneuver the missile in flight, allowing it to counter inaccuracies in the missile or to follow a moving target.
- ▶ **Engine:** Missiles are powered by an engine, generally either a type of rocket engine or jet engine. Rockets are generally of the solid propellant type for ease of maintenance and fast deployment, although some larger ballistic missiles use liquid-propellant rockets. Jet engines are generally used in cruise missiles, most commonly of the turbojet type, due to its relative simplicity and low frontal area.
- ▶ **Warhead:** Missiles generally have one or more explosive warheads, although other weapon types may also be used. The warheads of a missile provide its primary destructive power (many missiles have extensive secondary destructive power due to the high kinetic energy of the weapon and unburnt fuel that may be on board). Warheads are most commonly of the high explosive type, often employing shaped charges to exploit the accuracy of a guided weapon to destroy hardened targets.

11 Joint Ex Al Nagah 2019

CONTEXT:

- Indo Oman Joint Exercise Al Nagah III 2019, a joint military exercise between Indian and Royal Army of Oman (RAO) was held at HQ Jabel Regiment, Nizwa, Oman.

ABOUT:

- The Indian Army and RAO contingents were specifically selected for the exercise based on expertise and professional competence and took part in event that saw hone their tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in semi-urban scenario in mountainous terrain under UN mandate.
- Due emphasis was laid on increasing interoperability between forces from both countries which is crucial for success of any joint operation. Both sides jointly trained, planned and executed a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in such a scenario.
- Ex Al Nagah 2019 contributed immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's military as also facilitate in tackling the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.

12 Man Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)

CONTEXT:

- In a major boost for Army, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test fired indigenously developed, low weight, fire and forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) for the second time today in the ranges of Rajasthan desert.

ABOUT:

- MPATGM is incorporated with advanced features including state-of-the-art Imaging Infrared Radar (IIR) Seeker with integrated avionics.

- The first test was conducted on 13th March 2019.
- In both the missions, the missiles hit the designated targets precisely at different ranges. All the mission objectives have been met.

Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)

- ▶ The MPATGM is a third-generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM), which has been under development by DRDO in partnership with Indian defence contractor VEM Technologies Ltd.
- ▶ The missile is fitted with a high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) warhead and has a maximum engagement range of about 2.5 Kms.
- ▶ These third generation missiles are meant to equip India Army's both infantry and mechanised units by the early 2020s.
