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**WEEKEND
BATCH**

**29
SEPTEMBER**

CONTENTS

PIB (1st to 15th September, 2019)

Sr. No.	Area	Topics	Page No.
1	Environment	UNCCD COP14	04
2	Economy	Mechanism revision of ethanol price for supply to Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies	04
3	International Relations	4th General Assembly of Association of World Election Bodies (AWEB)	05
4	Defence	Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2019	06
5	Defence	Induction of AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter	06
6	Security	India – Japan Defence Cooperation	07
7	Science & Tech.	Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFTAM)	07
8	Environment	Methods to enhance water security	08
9	Security	EX TSENTR 2019	09
10	Social Issues	Institutions of Eminence (IoE) Scheme	10
11	Defence	28TH Indo–Thai CORPAT	11
12	Economy	India Post Payments Bank	11
13	Economy	'ANGAN'	12
14	Economy	India's second Multi Modal Terminal	13
15	International Relations	16th AEM-India Consultations	14
16	Economy	Achievements of Ministry of Civil Aviation	14
17	Polity	NCST recommends inclusion of Union Territory of Ladakh Under 6th Schedule	15
18	Government Schemes	National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons	16
19	Science & Tech.	India joins the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Research and Development Hub	17
20	Social Issues	TRIFED-GIZ	17

1 UNCCD COP14**CONTEXT**

14th Conference of Parties (COP14) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida.

ABOUT

- Brazil, China, India, Nigeria, Russia and South Africa have agreed to make the Sustainable Development Goal of achieving land degradation neutrality a national target.
- Delhi Declaration will form the future course of action.
- Participants included were ministers and representatives of governments, non-government and intergovernmental organizations, scientists, women and youth from the 197 Parties. They will take decisions with actions that aim to strengthen land-use policies worldwide and address emerging threats, such as forced migration, sand and dust storms, and droughts.

About UNCCD:

- The UNCCD is an international agreement on good land stewardship.
- It helps people, communities and countries to create wealth grow economies and secure enough food and water and energy, by ensuring land users have an enabling environment for sustainable land management.
- Through partnerships, the Convention's 197 Parties set up robust systems to manage drought promptly and effectively. Good land stewardship based on a sound policy and science helps integrate and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, builds resilience to climate change and prevents biodiversity loss.

2 MECHANISM REVISION OF ETHANOL PRICE FOR SUPPLY TO PUBLIC SECTOR OIL MARKETING COMPANIES**Ministry/Agency: Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)****CONTEXT:**

Cabinet approves Mechanism revision of ethanol price for supply to Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for procurement of ethanol w.e.f. December'19 for one year period.

ABOUT:

- OMCs are advised to continue according to priority of ethanol from 1) sugarcane juice/sugar/sugar syrup, 2) B heavy molasses 3) C heavy molasses and 4) Damaged Food grains/other sources, in that order.
- All distilleries will be able to take benefit of the scheme and large number of them are expected to supply ethanol for the EBP programme. Remunerative price to ethanol suppliers will help in reduction of cane farmer's arrears, in the process contributing to minimizing difficulty of sugarcane farmers.
- Ethanol availability for EBP Programme is expected to increase significantly due to higher price being offered for procurement of ethanol from all the sugarcane based routes, subsuming "partial sugarcane juice route" and "100% sugarcane juice route" under "sugarcane juice route" and for the

first time allowing sugar and sugar syrup for ethanol production. Increased ethanol blending in petrol has many benefits including reduction in import dependency, support to agricultural sector, more environmental friendly fuel, lesser pollution and additional income to farmers.

Background:

- Government has been implementing Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme wherein OMCs sell petrol blended with ethanol up to 10%. This programme has been extended to whole of India except Union Territories of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands with effect from 01st April, 2019 to promote the use of alternative and environment friendly fuels. This intervention also seeks to reduce import dependence for energy requirements and give boost to agriculture sector.
- Government has notified administered price of ethanol since 2014. For the first time during 2018, differential price of ethanol based on raw material utilized for ethanol production was announced by the Government. These decisions have significantly improved the supply of ethanol thereby ethanol procurement by Public Sector OMCs has increased from 38 crore litre in ethanol supply year 2013-14 to estimated over 200 crore litre in 2018-19.
- Consistent surplus of sugar production is depressing sugar price. Consequently, sugarcane farmer's dues have increased due to lower capability of sugar industry to pay the farmers. Government has taken many decisions for reduction of cane farmer's dues.
- With a view to limit sugar production in the Country and to increase domestic production of ethanol, Government has taken multiple steps including, allowing diversion of B heavy molasses and sugarcane juice for ethanol production. As the ex-mill price of sugar and conversion cost have undergone changes, there is a need to revise the ex-mill price of ethanol derived from different sugarcane based raw materials. There is also a demand from the industry to include sugar and sugar syrup for ethanol production to help in solving the problem of inventory and liquidity with the sugar mills.

3

4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ASSOCIATION OF WORLD ELECTION BODIES (AWEB)

Ministry/Agency: Election Commission

CONTEXT:

Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Sunil Arora assumed Chairmanship of Association of World Election Bodies (AWEB) for the term 2019-21 as India takes over the Chair from Romania.

ABOUT:

- India was unanimously nominated to be the Vice-Chair of AWEB at the last General Assembly held at Bucharest in 2017.
- The AWEB Flag was handed over to the new Chairman, Sh. Sunil Arora. The Flag will remain with Election Commission of India for the two year term till 2021.
- CEC Sh Sunil Arora along with the two Election Commissioners of India Sh. Ashok Lavasa and Sh. Sushil Chandra also launched ECI's quarterly magazine – 'VOICE International' which shares best practices from more than 25 Countries.
- India, the host nation for 4th general assembly, has been one of the founding members of the A-WEB.
- India hosted the three day AWEB meetings in Bengaluru. The International Conference on "Initiatives and Challenges of Social Media and Information Technology in Elections" was held on concluding day.

- The very Preamble of AWEB Charter spells out the vision of AWEB wherein it mentions the need for strengthening cooperation between and among EMBs for the purpose of ensuring a credible electoral process in the world; committing to promote conditions conducive to free, fair, transparent and participative elections and to the development of a democratic culture in the world; promoting gender equality and the inclusion of People with Disabilities and other marginalized communities in the electoral process.
- EMBs from Ukraine, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Political Parties Registration Commission of Sierra Leone, Indonesia and Mauritius joined the A-WEB family as Members and the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) as an Associate Member.
- Since its inception in October 2013, A-WEB has marched ahead empowering the democratic framework of member countries. With 120 EMBs from 111 countries as its Members and 21 International Organisations as Associate Members, it has truly become the largest global organisation of Election Management Bodies providing momentum to the spread of electoral democracy, the Chair noted.

4**EXERCISE YUDH ABHYAS 2019****Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Defence****CONTEXT:**

As part of the on-going Indo-US defence cooperation, a joint military training, Exercise YudhAbhyas - 2019 was conducted at Joint Base Lewis Mc Chord, Washington, USA from 05-18 September 2019.

ABOUT:

- Exercise YudhAbhyas is one of the largest joint running military training and defence corporation endeavours between India and USA. This was the 15th edition of the joint exercise hosted alternately between the two countries.
- Exercise YudhAbhyas provides an opportunity to the armed forces of both countries to train in an integrated manner at Battalion level with joint planning at Brigade level. Multiple scenarios will be rehearsed during the joint exercise with a view to understand each other's organisational structure and battle procedures which would result in a higher degree of jointmanship that would further facilitate interoperability between the armed forces of both countries to meet any unforeseen contingency across the globe. The exercise is also an ideal platform to learn from each other's expertise and experiences of planning and execution of operations.
- Both armies jointly train, plan and execute a series of well-developed operations for neutralization of threats of varied nature.

5**INDUCTION OF AH-64E APACHE ATTACK HELICOPTER****Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Defence****CONTEXT:**

The IAF formally inducted the AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter into its inventory at Air Force Station Pathankot.

ABOUT:

- Apache attack helicopters are being purchased to replace the Mi-35 fleet.

- Alongside the capability to shoot fire and forget anti-tank guided missiles, air to air missiles, rockets and other ammunitions, Apache helicopters also have modern EW capabilities to provide versatility to helicopter in a network centric aerial warfare.
- Apaches have been an integral part of numerous historic campaigns worldwide. These aircraft have been modified specifically to suit the exacting standards demanded by IAF
- IAF has signed a contract with 'The Boeing Company' and US Government for 22 Apache Attack Helicopters. The first eight helicopters have been delivered on schedule and the last batch of helicopters is to be delivered by March 2020. These helicopters will be deployed in the Western regions of India.
- The helicopter is capable of delivering variety of weapons which include air to ground Hellfire missiles, 70 mm Hydra rockets and air to air Stinger missiles. Apache also carries one 30 mm chain gun with 1200 rounds as part of area weapon sub system. To add to the lethality of the helicopter, it carries fire control radar, which has a 360° coverage and nose mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night vision systems.
- The addition of Apache Attack Helicopter is a significant step towards modernisation of Indian Air Force helicopter fleet. This procurement will enhance the capability of IAF in providing integrated combat aviation cover to the army strike corps. These tandem seating helicopters are day/night, all weather capable and have high agility and survivability against battle damage. These are easily maintainable even in field conditions and are capable of prolonged operations in tropical and desert regions.

6 INDIA – JAPAN DEFENCE COOPERATION

CONTEXT:

Defence Minister of India was on a bilateral visit to Japan from 2 to 3 September 2019.

ABOUT:

- The first bilateral exercise between the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (**JGSDF**) and the Indian Army in the area of counter-terrorism "**Dharma Guardian**" was held in the autumn of 2018.
- The Japan-India-U.S. trilateral maritime exercise "**MALABAR 2019**" will be held from late September to early October this year.
- The second Japan-India-U.S. trilateral **mine-countermeasures exercise (MINEX)** was held in July this year, and expressed their resolve to continue the trilateral exercise in the same framework from next year onwards.
- The conduct of **Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX)** in 2018.
- The first bilateral exercise between Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) and the Indian Air Force '**SHINYUU MAITRI 18**' was held in December 2018
- First participation of the JASDF in the India-U.S. bilateral exercise "**Cope India**" as observers in December.

7 GLOBAL FUND FOR AIDS, TB AND MALARIA (GFTAM)

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

CONTEXT:

India has announced a contribution of 22 million US Dollars to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFTAM) for the 6th replenishment cycle (2020-22), an increase of 10% over the amount contributed by us in the 5th cycle.

ABOUT:

- India was the first implementing country to host a replenishment milestone of the Global Fund and now has become first among G20, BRICS and implementer countries to announce the pledge for the 6th Replenishment Conference, setting precedent for other donors to contribute generously for the cause.
- India is adequately financing efforts to accomplish our goals of TB, HIV and Malaria elimination and with our increased pledge, India has inched a step closer in this direction by stepping up the Global Fund efforts to strengthen health systems and save 16 million more lives across the globe.

Partnership between India and Global Fund

- India shares a sustained partnership with the Global Fund since 2002 both as recipient and as a donor.
- Global Fund support with investment of US \$ 2.0 billion so far has made significant contribution in attaining targets related to HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria reduction and escalating our fight against these three diseases.
- In the current funding cycle (2018-21), the Global Fund has allocated US\$ 500 million to India. As a donor, India has contributed US\$ 46.5 million so far till 2019 including US\$ 20 million for the 5th Replenishment.

8**METHODS TO ENHANCE WATER SECURITY****Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare****CONTEXT:**

Shri T. Mohapatra, DG ICAR and secretary DARE highlighted the efforts of ICAR in scientific water management in line with the Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

ABOUT:**Benefits of several water conservation methods:**

- About 35-40% water could be saved and 20-25% reduction in fertilizer use could be ensured by scheduling of irrigation.
- Moisture sensors and automated irrigation systems which can be controlled by a farmer using mobile phone will help in deciding the time and amount of irrigation to be carried out.
- Constructive use of water, which includes use of recycled water and proper selection of crops, also helps in enhancing water security.
- Alternatives like cultivation of Fruits, Millets, Bajra and selection of proper varieties of crops also ensure constructive utilisation of water.
- Using Bio mulch and Hydro Gels which ensures slow release of water and utilising microbes that help in efficient absorption of water shall help in further ensuring reduced and proper utilisation of water in agriculture.

Water availability and water use in India:

- India with a geographical area of 328 M ha supports more than 18% of the world's population, but has only 4.2% of freshwater resources.
- The country receives annual precipitation (including snowfall) of almost 4000 billion cubic meters (BCM), which results into estimated average water potential of 1869 BCM. Per capita annual water availability has declined from 5177 m³ in 1951 to 1508 m³ by 2014 and likely to reduce further to 1465 m³ and 1235 m³ by 2025 and 2050, respectively.

- Water is the critical input of agriculture and about 80% of the current water use is drawn by agriculture.
- Out of 140 million ha of net sown area in the country, net irrigated area accounts about 68.38 million ha (48.8%) and remaining 51.2% is under rainfed.
- Out of the net irrigated area, about 40% is irrigated through canal systems and 60% is irrigated through groundwater.

Important challenges:

- An important challenge facing the irrigation sector in India is the growing gap between Irrigation Potential Created (IPC) and Irrigation Potential Utilized (IPU), and uneven distribution of water over the length of the canal system.
- The overall irrigation efficiency of the major and medium irrigation projects is estimated to be around 38%. The efficiency of surface irrigation system can be improved from about 35-40% to around 50-60% and that of groundwater from about 65-70% to 72-75%.
- Low irrigation efficiency (35-40%), inequity in water distribution, mismatch between irrigation water supply and crop water demand, tail enders deprivation, irrigation induced salinity and waterlogging are some of the major challenges being faced in the canal commands.
- Similarly, in the groundwater irrigated command, indiscriminate withdrawal of groundwater has resulted in decline of groundwater table in North-Western and Southern regions.
- Contrary to this, the groundwater development in the Eastern region is sub-optimal. The stage of groundwater development in India is 63.3%. However, it is 166%, 140%, 137% and 120% in states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi, respectively, which has serious negative consequences.

9

EX TSENTR 2019

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Defence

CONTEXT:

This year the exercise is planned between 09 September to 23 September 19 at Donguz training ranges, Orenburg, Russia.

ABOUT:

- Exercise TSENTR 2019 is part of the annual series of large scale exercises that form part of the Russian Armed Forces' annual training cycle.
- The series rotates through the four main Russian operational strategic commands. Russia holds a major military exercise every year at one of its four military Commands i.e Vostok (East), Zapad (West), TSENTR (Centre) and Kavkas (South).
- These annual exercises have slowly begun taking an international character, with Belarus participating in ZAPAD-2017 and China and Mongolia participating in VOSTOK-2018. This year, invitations for participation have been extended to nine other countries.
- Apart from host Russia, military contingents from China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan will also take part in this mega event.
- The exercise aims at evolving drills of the participating armies and practicing them in the fight against the scourge of international terrorism thereby ensuring military security in the strategic central Asian region.
- The TSENTR-2019 strategic measures will focus on evaluating the level of troop preparedness, the acquisition of the required skills and raising the level of inter-operability and demonstrate the readiness of the participating armies.

- The exercise TSENTR 2019 will comprise two modules. The first module will include counter-terror operations, repelling air strikes, reconnaissance operations and defensive measures, while the second will focus on offensive operations.

10 INSTITUTIONS OF EMINENCE (IOE) SCHEME

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Human Resource Development

CONTEXT:

On 4th September 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, on the advice of UGC and the Empowered Expert Committee issued orders to 5 public Universities conveying their declaration as Institutions of Eminence (IoE).

ABOUT:

- The institutes included are **IIT Madras, Banaras Hindu University, IIT Kharagpur, University of Delhi and University of Hyderabad.**

Earlier, in the first round under the IoE scheme, **6 institutions** were selected as IoEs:

Public Category	Private Category
Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore	Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Manipal
Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi	Birla Institute of Technology & Sciences (BITS), Pilani
Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay	Jio Institute under the Greenfield category.

Benefits of Institutions of Eminence

- **Government Institutions** to get **additional funding upto 1000 Cr.**
- The selected Institutions under IoE shall have **complete academic and administrative autonomy.**
- The Institutions of Eminence will have **complete financial autonomy** to spend the resources raised and allocated, subject to general conditions & restrictions of the Statutes and GFR.
- **Academic collaborations with foreign higher educational institutions** (in top 500) would be **exempt from government approvals.**
- **Freedom to hire personnel from industry**, etc, as faculty who are experts in their areas but may not have the requisite higher academic qualifications.
- **Freedom to recruit faculty from outside India** (limit of **25%** of its faculty strength for public institution).
- **Freedom to enter into academic collaborations** with other Institutions within the country.
- Freedom to have **own transparent merit based system** for admission of students.
- Freedom to **admit additionally foreign students** on merit subject to a maximum of **30%** of the strength of admitted domestic students.
- Freedom to **fix and charge fees from foreign students** without restriction.
- Freedom to determine the domestic student fees, subject to the condition that no student who gets selected admission is turned away for lack of finance. Every Institute to encourage scholarships and extension of loans facility.

- Freedom to **offer courses within a program as well as to offer degrees in newer areas, including inter-disciplinary ones**, after approval of its Governing Council and conforming to the minimum prevailing standards.
- Freedom to have the **flexibility of course structure** in terms of number of credit hours and years to take a degree, after approval of their Governing Council and conforming to the minimum prevailing standards.
- Flexibility in **fixing of curriculum and syllabus, with no UGC mandated curriculum structure**.
- Freedom to **offer online courses as part of their programmes with a restriction that not more than 20% of the programme** should be in online mode. Certificate courses can entirely be through online mode.
- Students enrolment capacity to be 10,000 in 15 years. (Lower figure permitted with justification)
- Faculty Student Ratio should be 1:20 at the time of Notification and should increase to 1:10 in five years.
- **UGC Inspection shall not apply to Institutions of Eminence.**

11 28TH INDO-THAI CORPAT

Ministry/Agency: The Ministry of Defence

CONTEXT:

28th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is being conducted from 05 – 15 September 2019.

ABOUT:

- IN ships and aircraft of Andaman and Nicobar Command have been participating in the biannual Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) with the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) since 2003.
- The Objectives of the Indo-Thai CORPAT are to ensure effective implementation of United Nations Conventions on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) which specify regulations regarding protection and conservation of natural resources, conservation of marine environment, prevention and suppression of illegal, unregulated fishing activity/ drug trafficking/ piracy, exchange of information in prevention of smuggling, illegal immigration and conduct of Search and Rescue operations at sea.
- The 28th cycle of Indo-Thai CORPAT is poised to further enhance strong bilateral ties and maritime cooperation between India and Thailand. The CORPAT is truly reflective of the strong desire for a peaceful Indian Ocean safeguarded through good maritime order in the region.

12 INDIA POST PAYMENTS BANK

CONTEXT:

The Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Law & Justice Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad has announced the rollout of Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) Services by India Post Payments Bank (IPPB).

ABOUT:

- With the launch of AEPS services, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has now become the single largest platform in the country for providing interoperable banking services to the customers of ANY BANK by leveraging the last mile unprecedented reach of the Postal network.

- IPPB's unparalleled network complimented with robust interoperable technology platform set up by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is poised to take banking to each & every household across the remotest parts of the country.
- With AePS services any common person with a bank account linked to Aadhaar can perform basic banking services such as cash withdrawals and balance enquiry irrespective of the bank they hold their account with.
- To avail these services, a customer with an Aadhaar linked account can simply authenticate his/her identity with fingerprint scan & Aadhaar authentication to complete a transaction. AePS services are bank-agnostic and are driven by an inexpensive infrastructure enabling low cost delivery of doorstep banking services to every section of the society without discrimination, thus bringing forth the dawn of a 'Truly Inclusive Financial System'.

About India Post Payments Bank:

- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by Government of India.
- IPPB was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on September 1, 2018. The bank has been set up with the vision to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India.
- The fundamental mandate of India Post Payments Bank is to remove barriers for the unbanked & under banked and reach the last mile leveraging the Postal network comprising 155,000 Post Offices (135,000 in rural areas) and 300,000 Postal employees.
- IPPB's reach and its operating model is built on the key pillars of India Stack - enabling Paperless, Cashless and Presence-less banking in a simple and secure manner at the customers' doorstep, through a CBS-integrated smartphone and biometric device.
- Leveraging frugal innovation and with a high focus on ease of banking for the masses, IPPB delivers simple and affordable banking solutions through intuitive interfaces available in 13 languages.
- IPPB is committed to provide a fillip to a less cash economy and contribute to the vision of Digital India. India will prosper when every citizen will have equal opportunity to become financially secure and empowered.

13**'ANGAN'**

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Power

CONTEXT:

An international conference ANGAN (Augmenting Nature by Green Affordable New-habitat) focussed on Energy Efficiency was organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

ABOUT:

- The International Conference provides a platform to deliberate on interdependence between organizations, systemic sustainability and feedback loops for better resource efficiency. Given the formidable challenge of providing adequate energy of desired quality to the consumers at reasonable costs, improving the efficiency in high energy consumption sectors like buildings have become important component of our integrated energy policy.

- Due to lack of awareness and knowledge about latest technologies, financial assistance, suppliers and purchase of energy efficient equipment, etc. efforts on energy efficiency and conservation in this sector have been moderate and therefore require greater push. This event aims to provide thrust in this direction so as to address such challenges faced by the stakeholders.

About Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):

- The BEE is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- It assists in developing policies and strategies with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.
- BEE coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies, and other organizations to identify and utilize the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing the functions assigned to it under the Energy Conservation Act.

14

INDIA'S SECOND MULTI MODAL TERMINAL

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Shipping

CONTEXT:

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation India's second riverine Multi Modal terminal built at Sahibganj in Jharkhand on 12 September, 2019.

ABOUT:

- This is the second of the three Multi Modal Terminals (MMTs) being constructed on river Ganga under JalMargVikas Project (JMVP). Earlier, in November, 2018 the Prime Minister had inaugurated the MMT at Varanasi.
- The Multi-Modal terminal at Sahibganj will open up industries of Jharkhand and Bihar to the global market and provide Indo-Nepal cargo connectivity through waterways route.
- It will play an important role in transportation of domestic coal from the local mines in Rajmahal area to various thermal power plants located along NW-1.
- Other than coal, stone chips, fertilisers, cement and sugar are other commodities expected to be transported through the terminal.
- The multi-modal terminal will also help to create direct employment of about 600 people and indirect employment of about 3000 people in the region.
- The convergence of Road-Rail-River Transport at Sahibganj through the new multi-modal terminal will connect this part of the hinterland to Kolkata, Haldia and further to the Bay of Bengal. Also, Sahibganj will get connected to North-East States through Bangladesh by river-sea route.

Background:

- The MMTs are being built as part of the JalMargVikas Project that aims to develop the stretch of River Ganga between Varanasi to Haldia for navigation of large vessels upto 1500-2000 tonnes weight, by maintaining a draught of 2-3 metres in this stretch of the river and setting up other systems required for safe navigation.
- The objective is to promote inland waterways as a cheaper and more environment friendly means of transport, especially for cargo movement. Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is the project Implementing Agency.

15 16TH AEM-INDIA CONSULTATIONS**Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Commerce & Industry****CONTEXT:**

- Economic Ministers from ten ASEAN Member States and the Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of India (“the Ministers”) met on 10 September 2019 at Bangkok in Thailand for the sixteenth AEM-India Consultations.

ABOUT:

- The Ministers noted the on-going **efforts for the ratification of the ASEAN-India Investment Agreement** and looked forward to the full ratification by all Parties as soon as possible.
- The Ministers agreed to initiate the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to make the AIFTA more user-friendly, simple, and trade facilitative for businesses and to constitute a Joint Committee, as provided in Article 17 of the AITIGA, for this purpose.
- The Ministers expressed their support for the Fourth ASEAN-India Business Summit and Business Excellence Award, which will be held in Manila in October 2019.

India – ASEAN trade:

- Based on preliminary ASEAN data, two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and India grew by 9.8 per cent from USD 73.6 billion in 2017 to USD 80.8 billion in 2018.
- The recovery of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows from India in 2018 amounted to USD 1.7 billion. This placed **India as ASEAN’s sixth largest trading partner and sixth largest source of FDI among ASEAN Dialogue Partners**.
- According to India’s preliminary data, FDI inflows into India from ASEAN in 2018 was USD 16.41 billion, approximately 36.98 per cent of total FDI flow into India.

16 ACHIEVEMENTS OF MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION**Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Civil Aviation****CONTEXT:**

Ministry of Civil aviation has undertaken many initiatives in the direction of enabling affordable flying and healthy aviation sector growth.

ABOUT:

- **Some of the key initiatives are:**
 - **India’s tallest Air Traffic Control tower** was inaugurated **at the Indira Gandhi International Airport** which will ensure up-scaled services and systems for efficient, smooth and uninterrupted air traffic management.
 - **‘Aviation Jobs’** is a unique web-based portal launched by Ministry of Civil Aviation which seeks to bring together job seekers and prospective employers in the Indian civil aviation sector. It is a common platform for enabling candidates to register their job interests across various sub-sectors. At the same time it facilitates sourcing of information about candidates available in the market by prospective employers with a view to improve prospects for employment or re-employment in the civil aviation ecosystem

As part of Digital initiatives the Ministry has taken up following initiatives:

- **eDGCA:** It is a project conceptualized to completely automate the processes and functions of DGCA and its constituent directorates as well as to provide a strong base for IT infrastructure and service delivery framework.
- **DigiSky–** an online portal to regulate the entire gamut of activities relating to governance and operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)/Unmanned Aircraft Vehicles (UAVs)/drones has been made operational. While ensuring safety and security in drone operations, it will also help in promotion of drone technologies.
- **Esahaj-**100% of security clearances pertaining to the Ministry have been made online on Esahaj online portal launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The portal is operational for granting clearances in respect of 24 categories.
- **DigiYatra:** Trial for rollout of DigiYatra initiative has been started at Bangalore and Hyderabad airports. The initiative envisages seamless and hassle free passenger travel using biometric technologies to improve passenger experience, reduce queue waiting time as passengers can walk through e-gates by using advanced security solutions. It will remove redundancies at check points and enhance resource utilization.

17

NCST RECOMMENDS INCLUSION OF UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH UNDER 6TH SCHEDULE

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Tribal Affairs

CONTEXT:

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) recommends inclusion of Union Territory of Ladakh Under 6th Schedule of Constitution of India.

ABOUT:

- The Commission took note of the fact that the newly created Union Territory of Ladakh is predominantly a tribal region in the country.
- The Scheduled Tribe population represent 66.8 percent in Leh, 73.35 percent in Nubra, 97.05 percent in Khalsti, 83.49 per cent in Kargil, 89.96 per cent in Sanku and 99.16 per cent in Zaskar areas of the Ladakh region.
- The official figures, however, does not include a number of communities including SunniMuslims in the region, who are claiming for Scheduled Tribe status. Taking into account this, the total tribal population in Ladakh region is more than 97 percent.
- The region is inhabited by following Scheduled Tribes, namely:
 - Balti
 - Beda
 - Bot, Boto
 - Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, Shin
 - Changpa
 - Garra
 - Mon
 - Purigpa.
- The Commission noted that prior to creation of Union Territory of Ladakh, people in Ladakh region had certain agrarian rights including right on land which restricted people from other parts of the country to purchase or acquire land in Ladakh.

- Similarly, the Ladakh region has several distinct cultural heritages by communities such as Drokpa, Balti and Changpa, among others, which needs to be preserved and promoted.
- The provisions under paragraph (1) of the Sixth Schedule regarding autonomous districts and autonomous regions states that the tribal areas in each item of Parts I, II and II(A) and in Part-III of the table appended to paragraph 20 of Sixth Schedule shall be an autonomous district.
- Further, paragraph 21 of the Sixth Schedule empowers Parliament to amend any provisions of the schedule.
- The Commission is of the view that the autonomous district councils of erstwhile Union Territory of Mizoram had helped in mitigating the genuine aspirations of people. Similarly, Clause 3(58) (b) of the General Clauses Act 1897 defines State shall mean a State specified in the First Schedule to the Constitution and shall include a Union Territory.
- The Commission after careful consideration recommends that the Union Territory of Ladakh be brought under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The Commission feels that this will help in:
 - Democratic devolution of powers;
 - Preserve and promote distinct culture of the region.
 - Protect agrarian rights including rights on land
 - Enhance transfer of funds for speedy development of Ladakh region.

18

NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME FOR TRADERS AND SELF EMPLOYED PERSONS

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Labour & Employment

CONTEXT:

The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi launched the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons at Ranchi.

ABOUT:

- It is a pension scheme for the Vyaparis (shopkeepers/retail traders and self-employed persons) with annual turnover not exceeding Rs 1.5 crore.
- With this nation-wide launch, the facility for enrollment under the scheme has been made available to the prospective beneficiaries through 3.50 lakh Common Service Center (CSCs) across the country.
- The eligible Vyaparis can visit their nearest CSCs and get enrolled under the scheme. At the time of enrollment, the beneficiary is required to have an Aadhaar card and a saving bank/ Jan-dhan Account passbook only.
- GSTIN is required only for those with turnover above Rs. 40 lakhs.
- The enrolment under the scheme is free of cost for the beneficiaries.
- The enrolment is based upon self-certification.
- It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for entry age of 18 to 40 years with a provision for minimum assured pension of Rs 3,000/- monthly on attaining the age of 60 years.
- The beneficiary should not be income tax payer and also not a member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (Govt.) /PM-SYM.
- The Central Government shall give 50 % share of the monthly contribution and remaining 50% contribution shall be made by the beneficiary.

- The monthly contribution is kept low to make it affordable. For example, a beneficiary is required to contribute as little as Rs.100/- per month at a median entry age of 29 years.
- This scheme will target enrolling 25 lakh subscribers in 2019-20 and 2 crore subscribers by 2023-2024. An estimated 3 crore Vyaparis in the country are expected to be benefitted under the pension scheme.

19

INDIA JOINS THE GLOBAL ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT HUB

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Science & Technology

CONTEXT:

India has joined the Global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Research and Development (R&D) Hub as a new member.

ABOUT:

- This expands the global partnership working to address challenges and improve coordination and collaboration in global AMR R&D to 16 countries, the European Commission, two philanthropic foundations and four international organisations (as observers).
- The Global AMR R&D Hub was launched in May 2018 in the margins of the 71st session of the World Health Assembly, following a call from G20 Leaders in 2017.
- The Global AMR R&D Hub supports global priority setting and evidence-based decision-making on the allocation of resources for AMR R&D through the identification of gaps, overlaps and potential for cross-sectoral collaboration and leveraging in AMR R&D.
- The operation of the Global AMR R&D Hub is supported through a Secretariat, established in Berlin and currently financed through grants from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG).
- From this year onward, India will be the member of Board of members of Global AMR R&D Hub.
- AMR is the ability of a microbe to resist the effects of medication that once could successfully treat the microbe.
- Today, the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance continues unabated around the world. Given the important and interdependent human, animal, and environmental dimensions of antimicrobial resistance, India considers it reasonable to explore issues of antimicrobial resistance through the lens of One Health approach which should be supported by long-term commitments from all stakeholders.

20

TRIFED-GIZ

Ministry/Agency: Ministry of Tribal Affairs

CONTEXT:

Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda launched the Biggest Tribal movement to promote tribal enterprise through Bamboonomics in the country.

ABOUT:

- TRIFED introduced the “**The 4P1000 Initiative: The Tribal Perspective through Bamboonomics**”.
- **The 4P1000 Initiative: The international initiative “4per1000”**, launched by France on 1 December 2015 at the COP 21, consists of federating all voluntary stakeholders of the public and private sectors.
- TRIFED will involve the tribal community of India for rehabilitating the degraded land without compromising the income of the poor in the garb of environmentally friendly development.
- **Bamboonomics** has been designed in such a way that while doing the environmental services, the tribals will be earning.
- TRIFED will integrate its PradhanMantri Van DhanYojna (PMVDY) with this new global environmental intervention termed as TICD (TRIFED’s Initiative to Combat Desertification).
- TRIFED proposed a business model to supplement the income of tribal community and put it on the world scale by partnering with the German Cooperation (GIZ). It called for globalization of this movement by further international cooperation.
- TRIFED’s message to UNCCD is that the 4P1000 Initiative with the tribal perspective through Bamboonomics is the best answer for combating desertification and rehabilitation of degraded wastelands.
