

Weekly Current Affairs June Week 1

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1. Polity

1. Centre forms Cauvery Management Authority

Acting on the Supreme Court's direction, the Centre has constituted a Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA) to address the dispute over sharing of river water among **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry**. In a gazette notification, the **Ministry of Water Resources** said it has framed a scheme constituting the CMA and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee to give effect to the decision of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal as modified by the Supreme Court order.

Composition:

The authority would comprise a chairman, eight members besides a secretary. Out of eight members, two each will be full-time and part-time members, while the rest four would be part-time members from states.

Functions:

- Exercise power and discharge such duty for "sufficient and expedient for securing compliance and implementation" of the Supreme Court order in relation to "storage, apportionment, regulation and control of Cauvery waters".
- Supervise operation of reservoirs and with regulation of water releases therefrom with the assistance of regulation committee
- The authority will also look at regulated release of water by Karnataka, at the inter-state contact point presently identified as Billigundulu gauge and discharge station, and located on the common border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- The authority at the beginning of the water year (June 1 each year) would determine the total residual storage in the specified reservoirs.
- The authority has also been tasked to advise the states to take suitable measures to improve water use efficiency, by way of promoting micro-irrigation (drip and sprinkler), change in cropping pattern, improved agronomic practices, system deficiency correction and command area development.
- It has to also prepare an annual report covering the activities of the authority for the preceding year.

Additional info:

1. The chairman of the authority should either be a "senior and eminent engineer" with an experience of water resource management and handling of inter-state water dispute or an IAS officer with an experience in water resources management and handling the inter-state dispute
2. The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee has to meet once in 10 days during the months of June and October when the south-west and north-east monsoon set in and again after the monsoon has set in.

3. The Centre will initially contribute a sum of Rs. 2 crore for the functioning of the authority.
4. The share of each state will be determined on the basis of the flows so assumed together with the available carry-over storage in the reservoirs.
5. The top court had modified the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) award of 2007. **It had raised the 270 tmcft share of Cauvery water for Karnataka by 14.75 tmcft and reduced Tamil Nadu's share**, while compensating it by allowing extraction of **10 tmcft groundwater** from the river basin, saying the issue of drinking water has to be placed on a "higher pedestal"

2. Society

1. JANAUSHADHI SUVIDHA

The government has launched the 'JANAUSHADHI SUVIDHA', the Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**. The affordable sanitary napkins will now become available at over 3600 Janaushadhi Kendras functional in 33 States/UTs across India.

Importance:

- **Affordability** - SUVIDHA napkins at Rs. 2.50 per pad (average price of sanitary napkins available in the market today is around Rs. 8 per pad)
- **Accessibility** - available at over 3600 Janaushadhi Kendras functional in 33 States/UTs across India.
- **Health Security** - to that section of Women in India who still use unhygienic aids during menstrual period due to non-affordability of some of the popular brands of sanitary napkins available in the market today. Such unhygienic aids cause fungal infections, Reproductive Tract Infection, Urinary Tract Infection, Cervical cancer and also make women vulnerable to infertility.
- **Ease of use and disposal** - Jan Aushadhi Suidha comes with a special additive, which makes it **biodegradable** when it comes in contact with oxygen after being discarded.
- **'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suidha'** for the underprivileged Women of India.

2. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana;

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by **the Department of Pharmaceuticals** to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses. PMBJP stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs. **Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the implementation agency for PMBJP.

Mission;

- Create awareness among the public regarding generic medicines.
- Create demand for generic medicines through medical practitioners.
- Create awareness through education and awareness program that high price need not be synonymous with high quality.
- Provide all the commonly used generic medicines covering all the therapeutic groups.
- Provide all the related health care products too under the scheme.

3. Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction

It is an international treaty that establishes procedures that provide for the prompt return of children wrongfully retained or removed from their habitual residence. The Convention was concluded in 1980 and entered into force between the signatories in 1983. Tunisia and Jamaica are the recent signatories to accede to the convention (in 2017).

- The convention is intended to enhance the international recognition of rights of custody and access arising in place of habitual residence, and to ensure prompt return of the child who is wrongfully removed or retained from the place of habitual residence.
- It seeks to return children abducted or retained overseas by a parent to their country of habitual residence for the courts of that country to decide on matters of residence and contact.
- The convention shall apply to any child, up to the age of 16 years who is a habitual resident of any of the contacting states.

India's stand;

The government has clarified that it is not yet ready to sign the Hague treaty. On the other hand, the government is planning to follow the Japan example and put safeguards in place before acceding to the Hague treaty.

Reasons;

- The ratification of the convention would be dissatisfactory for all Indian women who returned home with their children after the conflict with their husbands abroad, as it would force them to go back to the foreign country for settlement purpose. In majority of cases it is woman rather than man fleeing. As per Law commission, 68% taking parents were women. 85% of these women were primary caregivers of the child.
- Require all those women who have escaped from the abusive relationship abroad to send back their child to the country of father's residence.
- Litigations of these kinds can be used by man to force his wife to give up on alimony.
- India does not automatically recognize foreign judgments signing convention would require the law to be changed and India would have to accept judgments irrespective of ethical norms
- India does not have central authority to trace unlawfully removed children and send them back to country of habitual residence.

- Treaty uses the word ‘abduction’ which is not right, as parents take away their child for the fear of losing due to love and affections. Thus raises an ethical versus legal issue and even law commission objected to use of word abduction.

Law Commission in 218th report examined the issues and **advised the government to sign the Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction**. The Commission observed that due to the absence of a law, Indian courts had not followed a pattern in such cases. A Committee headed by **Justice Rajesh Bindal**, in April 2018, had submitted its report on legal issues related to Inter-country removal & retention of children to the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Stressing upon the need for mediation as the first step, the Committee has recommended;

- The Government may establish an ‘**Inter Country Parental Child Removal Disputes Resolution Authority**’.
- The Authority may **be chaired by a retired High Court Judge**, with Members from Legal and Social sector background along with representatives from key Ministries.
- The authority has been envisaged to provide a one window solution in cases of inter country removal and retention of Children. The Authority may examine the inter country cases of removal and retention of children vis-a-vis the cultural context, merit of the case, and the best interest of the Child.

4. 22% Drop in Maternal Mortality Rate

MMR
(Maternal mortality ratio)

Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is the number of women who die during pregnancy and childbirth, per 100,000 live births.

$$\frac{\text{No of women dies}}{100,000 \text{ live births}}$$

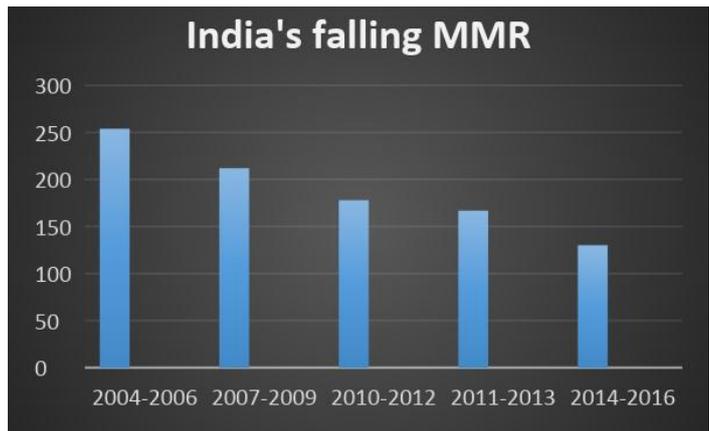
India has registered a significant decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) recording a 22% reduction in such deaths since 2013, according to the **Sample Registration System (SRS)** bulletin. Maternal Mortality Ratio of India has declined from 167 in 2011-2013 to 130 in 2014-2016. Amongst the States, **Uttar Pradesh with 30%** decline has topped the chart in the reduction of Maternal

Deaths. Three states have **already met the SDG target for MMR of 70 per 100,000**. These are **Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu**, while **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana** are within striking distance Mission Indradhanush and Intensified Mission Indradhanush with their focused approach are significantly turning the tide in favour of India. Other major initiatives under the umbrella of National Health Mission (NHM) also contributed to the success.

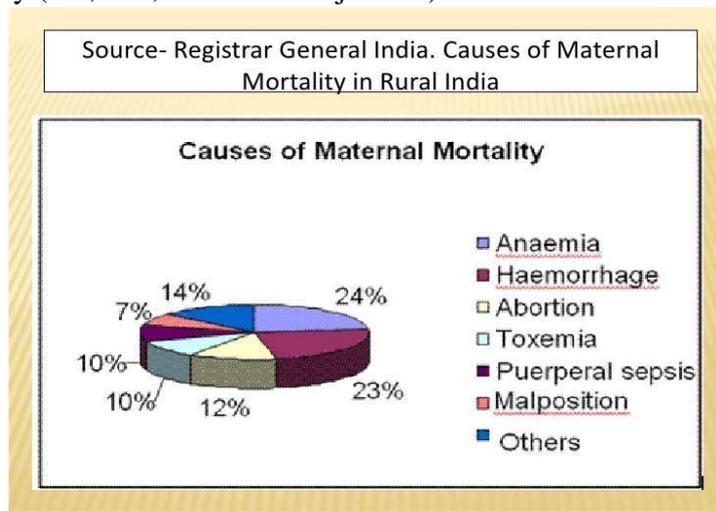
Initiatives under NHM

- Promotion of institutional deliveries through **Janani Suraksha Yojana**
- Operationalization of sub-centres, Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres and District Hospitals for providing 24x7 basic and comprehensive obstetric care services.

- Name Based Web enabled **Tracking of Pregnant Women** to ensure antenatal, intra-natal and postnatal care.
- Engagement of more than 8.9 lakhs Accredited Social Health Activists (**ASHAs**) to generate demand and facilitate accessing of health care services by the community.



- **Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health Programme (ARSH)** – Especially for adolescents to have better access to family planning, prevention of sexually transmitted Infections, Provision of counselling and peer education.
- **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK)** entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to absolutely free and no expense delivery including Caesarean section
- Universal Immunization Programme (**UIP**)
- **Integrated Action Plan for Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (IAPPD)** launched in four states with highest infant mortality (UP, MP, Bihar and Rajasthan).
- **India New-born Action Plan (INAP)**
- **Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs)** have been established for management of severe acute malnutrition in children.
- **Home Based New-born Care (HBNC)**
- **Mother and Child Protection Card** in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development to monitor service delivery for mothers and children.
- **Auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs).**



Sample Registration System (SRS)

With a view to generate reliable and continuous data on these indicators, the **Office of the Registrar General, India**, initiated the scheme of sample registration of births and deaths in India popularly known as Sample Registration System (SRS) in 1964- 65 on a pilot basis and on full scale from 1969-70. The SRS since then has been providing data on regular basis.

International Relations

1. IBSA summit

IBSA is a unique Forum which brings together **India, Brazil and South Africa**, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.

2018 IBSA Ministerial meet was recently held in **Pretoria, South Africa**. The outcome of this meeting was a document titled **IBSA Declaration on South-South Cooperation**. This document calls for contribution of each of the member of IBSA forum to contribute to greater understanding of development cooperation as a common endeavour of the global South.



About IBSA;

Launched in 2003 through **Brasilia declaration**. Determined to:

- contribute to the construction of a **new international architecture**.
 - bring their voice together on global issues.
- deepen their ties in various areas.

The progress of the activities can be divided into four tracks;

- ✓ Political Coordination
- ✓ Sector Cooperation, through 14 Working Groups (ex: agriculture, culture etc.)
- ✓ IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (**IBSA Fund**) - Each country currently contributes US\$1million per year to the Fund.
- ✓ People-to-People fora (Involvement of other actors beyond the Executive. Ex: Academic Forum, Business Council etc.

Issues with IBSA;

1. Elevation of **G20** as a platform for discussion on global economic issues.
2. Most importantly, the rise of **BRICS** which has IBSA plus Russia and China. BRICS seems to be a body of action as is evident from its declarations, occasional anti-West agenda and formation of a BRICS bank.
3. Despite having joint exercises like IBSAMAR and few areas where the interests of its members can potentially clash, still IBSA remains mostly a passive organization but needs to be revived.

2. UNSC Election

India and Maldives

The Ministry of External Affairs maintained a studied silence on whether India voted against the Maldives. India's relation with the Maldives has nosedived in recent months with Delhi expressing dissatisfaction on the law and order situation as well as on the imposition of a state of emergency by the Abdullah Yameen government. Earlier in the week, a prominent member of Mr. Yameen's party was not allowed to enter India and was sent back from the airport in Chennai. In comparison, India's ties with Indonesia have witnessed an upswing with the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the country.

The UN General Assembly elected **South Africa, Indonesia, Dominican Republic, Germany and Belgium** as non-permanent members of the powerful Security Council for a two-year term, beginning 1 January, 2019. **Maldives and Indonesia** had contested for a seat in the UNSC, but in the plenary Indonesia won the seat after securing 144 votes against 46 for the Maldives.

United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. **It has 15 members**, including five permanent ones. The five permanent members, each with the power of veto, are **China, France, Russia, the UK and the US**. The 10 non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms each. The five non-permanent members were elected according to the following pattern: Two seats for the **Group of African states** and the **Group of Asia-Pacific states**, one for the **Group of Latin American** and Caribbean states, and two seats for Western European and other states.

3. Global Peace Index

The Global Peace Index (GPI) published by Australia-based **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)** is an attempt to measure the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness. The GPI ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their levels of peacefulness. The Index was first launched in May 2007. The GPI measures global peace using three broad themes:

- The level of societal safety and security,
- The extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict and
- The degree of militarization

Both external factors such as military expenditures, wars and internal factors such as the levels of violence and crime within the country are considered.

GPI-2018;

6. India's rank has marginally improved in "global peacefulness", at a time when there is an overall decline of global peace owing to the escalation of violence in West Asia and North Africa.
7. India's GPI rank was 137 out of 163 countries in 2017, when the year 2016 was assessed. In 2018, when the year 2017 is assessed, India's rank **moved up to 136**.
8. **Iceland** continues to remain the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.
9. **Syria** remained the least peaceful country in the world, a position that it had held for the past five years.
10. The best performer of South Asia, Bhutan, has slipped from 13 to 19, while Bangladesh' peace index deteriorated sharply. Bangladesh moved from 84 to 93.

Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), is a global think tank headquartered in **Sydney, Australia**. The IEP is chaired by technology entrepreneur **Steve Killelea** founder of Integrated Research. Its major works are: GPI, Global peace **report**, **Global Terrorism Index**, **The Economic value of peace report**, **Positive peace** etc.

11. Global level of **peace has deteriorated by 0.27%** last year, marking the fourth successive year of deteriorations.

4. Geo-Intelligence Asia – 2018

The Eleventh edition of Geo-Intelligence Asia 2018 took place at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. The seminar brought together the military, security officials including BSF and Police Forces, Government and industry together to examine the latest technology solutions and on the critical role of geospatial technology in military and security applications. It is organised by **Geospatial Media and Communication with Directorate General of Information System** as Knowledge Partners and **Military Survey** as Co-organisers. The sessions during seminar covered crucial subjects including **GIS and logistics, enhanced situational awareness for combat, cyber security, smart cantonments, and LIDAR**. They also discussed latest advancements in Geospatial technologies.

Theme: '**Geospatial, A Force Multiplier for Defence and Industrial Security**'.

Objectives

- To discuss how technology will advance and transform future defence and public safety capability and method
- Build a common understanding of the need for Geospatial technology
- To arrive at some preliminary conclusions about the capabilities to pursue

Targeted Audience

- Border Controls
- Civil Defence Department
- Consultants
- Customs Officials
- Defence Forces - Army, Navy, Air Force

- Defence System Integrators
- Disaster Management Authorities
- Fire Services
- Geospatial Technology Providers
- Police Force

Geospatial intelligence

- Geospatial intelligence is a critical foundation for many aspects of **defence and internal security**. It offers the **capability of monitoring, predicting and countering threats**, while helping strategize and support various field operations.
- It facilitates **multi-source information sharing** and integration across agencies and organizations by providing a common framework on which other information is based.
- The **use of big data**, advanced geospatial analytics software and sophisticated imaging technologies from (very) high-resolution remote sensing satellites, UAVs and other sensors, enables seamless flow of information in pre-, real-time and post-combat operations.
- Real-time views and insights of impacted regions are key to improving emergency response times, especially in vulnerable areas such as a country's border.
- Geospatial data is invaluable to the border security operations, to deliver accurate situational awareness information, enabling quick and secure decision-making, while mitigating risks, and increasing national security.

5. MoU between India and Oman on Cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The Union Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India represented by the Indian Space Research Organization (**ISRO**) and **Oman represented by the Ministry of Transport and Communications on Cooperation** in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Details:

- This MoU shall enable various areas of cooperation such as, **space science, technology and applications including remote sensing of the earth; satellite based navigation; Space science and planetary exploration**; use of spacecraft and space systems and ground system; and application of space technology.
- The MoU would lead to set up a Joint Working Group, drawing members from DOS/ISRO, and the Ministry of Transport and Communication (MTC), which will further work out the plan of action including the time-frame and the means of implementing this MoU.
- It will provide impetus to explore newer research activities and application possibilities in the field of remote sensing of the earth; satellite navigation; space science and exploration of outer space.

Cooperation with the Sultanate of Oman through this MoU would lead to develop a joint activity in the field of application of space technologies.

Indian Economy

1. Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan

The **Ministry of Agriculture and farmers' welfare** has launched the Krishi kalyan Abhiyaan so as to aid, assist and advice farmers on how to improve their farming techniques and raise their incomes. It will be undertaken in **25 Villages with more than 1000 population** each in Aspirational Districts identified in **consultation with Ministry of Rural Development as per directions of NITI Ayog**. In districts where number of villages (with more than 1000 population) is less than 25, all villages will be covered. The overall coordination and implementation in the 25 villages of a district is being done by **Krishi Vigyan Kendra** of that district. An Action Plan of the Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan comprises of the various activities which promote best practices and add to the agriculture income of the farmers. They are;

- Issuing **Soil Health Cards** to all the farmers.
- 100 percent coverage of bovine **vaccination** for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in each village.
- 100 percent coverage of Sheep and Goat for the eradication of Peste des Petits ruminants (**PPR**).
- Distribution of **Mini Kits** of pulses and oilseeds to all.
- Distribution of **Horticulture/Agro Forestry/Bamboo** plant at the rate of Rs. 5 per family in specific areas.
- Making 100 **NADAP Pits** in each village.
- **Artificial insemination** saturation.

(360 tips: VANiSH Mini)

In addition, demonstration programmes on Micro Irrigation and Integrated Cropping Practice will also take place so as to familiarize farmers with the latest techniques and how they can be incorporated at the grass root level.

2. Methanol Economy

NITI Aayog is working on a roadmap for full-scale implementation of methanol economy in the country in near future, which would not only curb pollution, but reduce India's dependence on oil imports as well. On the World Environment Day, the government think-tank said it had already drawn out a comprehensive **plan to replace 20 per cent of crude imports** using methanol alone, adding that adopting methanol in such a scale would bring down pollution in the country by more than 40 per cent.

12. Methanol is a scalable and **sustainable fuel**, that can be produced from a variety of feed stocks like **Natural Gas, Coal (Indian High Ash Coal), Bio-mass, Municipal Solid waste and most importantly from CO₂**.
13. It can also replace diesel in Railways, Marine Sector, Gensets, Power Generation and Methanol based reformers could be an ideal **complement to Hybrid and Electric Mobility**.
14. Methanol burns **efficiently** in all internal combustion engines, produces **no particulate matter**, no soot, almost nil SOX and NOX emissions (near zero pollution).
15. The gaseous version of Methanol – DME can be blended with LPG and can be excellent substitute for diesel in large buses and trucks.
16. India by adopting Methanol can have its own indigenous fuel at the cost of approximately Rs. 19 per litre at least **30% cheaper** than any available fuel.
17. Power Modules of Mobile Towers (about 750000) in India can fully be replaced by Methanol Reformer / Fuel Cell based platforms in the next two years.
18. Diesel industrial Gensets, Gas Turbines running on Naphtha, LFOI (Light Fuel Oil) and other dirty fuels can also be fully replaced. Industrial boilers which are running on diesel will also be replaced with Methanol.
19. The belched out CO₂ (greenhouse gas emission) both from using Methanol and while producing Methanol can be tapped back to produce Methanol (**CO₂ sequestration cycle**).
20. Methanol Economy, if adopted by India can be one of the best ways to **mitigate the Environmental hazards** of a growing economy.

3. Panel to study SEZ policy in India

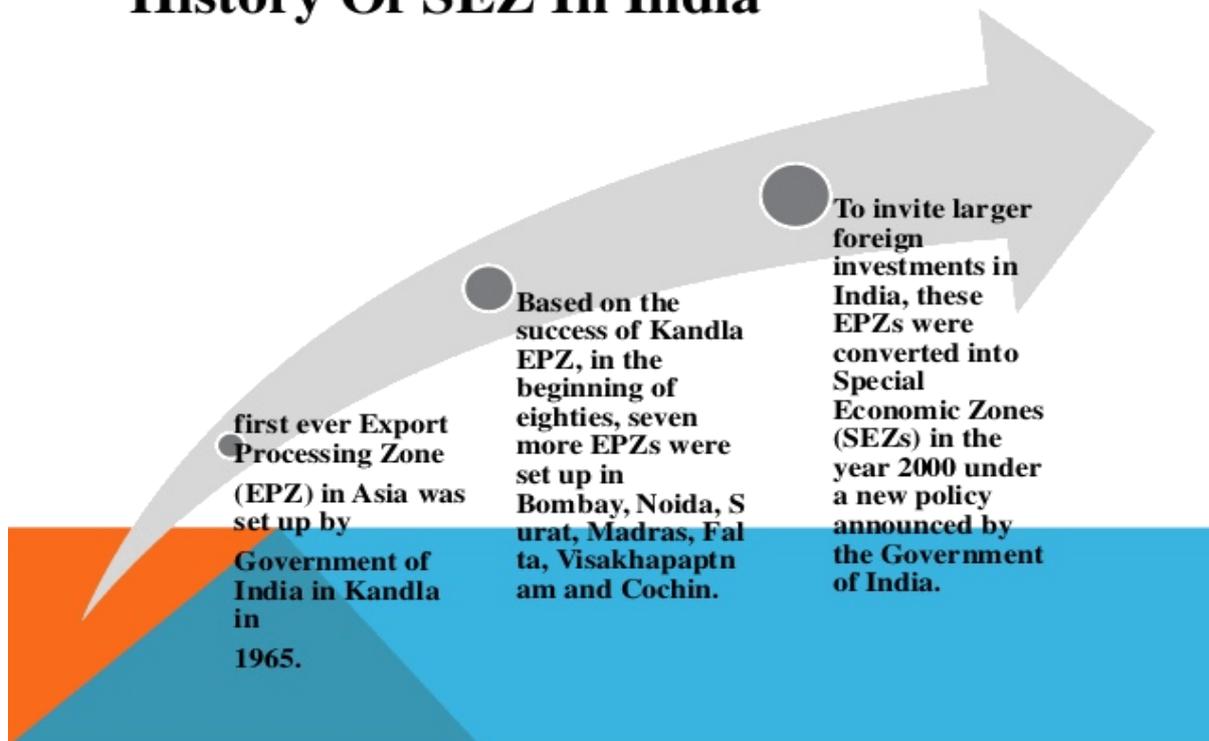
The Union Ministry of Commerce had appointed a seven-member panel of industrialists headed by **Baba Kalyani** to suggest key policy reforms to improve the performance of SEZs and export oriented units (EOUs) across India. The panel will look into various export subsidy programs of India since it has **been challenged by Unites States at WTO**. The group will evaluate;

- Suggest measures to cater to the needs of exporters in the present economic scenario
- Make the SEZ policy WTO compatible
- Suggest course correction in SEZ policy
- Make comparative analysis of the SEZ scheme and dovetail the SEZ policy with other similar schemes

Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is a specifically delineated duty-free enclave and shall be **deemed to be foreign territory** for the purposes of trade operations and duties and tariffs. In order words, SEZ is a geographical region that has economic laws different from a country's typical economic laws. Usually the goal is to increase foreign investments. SEZs have been established in several countries, including China, India, Jordan, Poland, Kazakhstan, Philippines and Russia. **The Special Economic Zone Act, 2005** came into force with effect from 2006.

History Of SEZ In India



The SEZ Rules provide for:

- Simplified procedures for development, operation, and maintenance of the Special Economic Zones and for setting up units and conducting business in SEZs.
- Single window clearance for setting up of an SEZ.
- Single window clearance for setting up a unit in a Special Economic Zone;
- Single Window clearance on matters relating to Central as well as State Governments;
- Simplified compliance procedures and documentation with an emphasis on self-certification



4. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018

President Ram Nath Kovind has assented to the promulgation of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 on June 6, 2018. This ordinance brings some specific changes affecting mainly real estate and financial sectors. The notable changes are;

- Homebuyers will now be recognized as **financial creditors**. The recognition would give them due representation in the **Committee of Creditors**, and would also enable them to initiate corporate insolvency resolution process under Section 7 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016 against errant developer.
- The Ordinance is also expected to benefit Micro, Small and Medium Sector Enterprises (MSMEs). Now, the promoters of MSMEs are allowed to bid for their companies as long as they are not wilful defaulters and don't attract any other related disqualification.
- The Ordinance lays down a stricter procedure for an applicant to withdraw a case after its admission under IBC, 2016. Such withdrawal would now be permissible only with the approval of the Committee of Creditors with 90 percent of the voting share. Further, such withdrawal will only be permissible before publication of notice inviting Expressions of Interest (EoI).
- With a view to encouraging resolution as opposed to liquidation, the voting threshold has been brought down to **66 percent from 75 percent** for all major decisions.
- Provides for a mechanism to allow participation of security holders, deposit holders and all other classes of financial creditors that exceed a certain number, in meetings of the Committee of Creditors, through authorized representation.
- The Ordinance now exempts pure play financial entities from being disqualified on account of an NPA.
- It provides for a minimum one-year grace period for the successful resolution applicant to fulfil various statutory obligations required under different laws.
- Terms and conditions of interim finance have been "liberalized" to facilitate financing of the corporate debtor during CIRP period.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) is the bankruptcy law of India which seeks to consolidate the existing framework by creating a single law for insolvency and bankruptcy.

Features:

Insolvency Resolution : The Code outlines separate insolvency resolution processes for individuals, companies and partnership firms.

Insolvency regulator: The Code establishes the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, to oversee the insolvency proceedings in the country and regulate the entities registered under it.

Insolvency professionals: The insolvency process will be managed by licensed professionals. These professionals will also control the assets of the debtor during the insolvency process.

Bankruptcy and Insolvency Adjudicator: The Code proposes two separate tribunals to oversee the process of insolvency resolution. The National Company Law Tribunal for Companies and Limited Liability Partnership firms; and the Debt Recovery Tribunal for individuals and partnerships.

5. Public credit registry

The **Reserve Bank of India** made a strong case for setting up a public credit registry in India to address the twin balance sheet problem of the banking sector and the corporate sector. **An Implementation Task Force (ITF)** is being constituted by the Reserve Bank of India to help design undertake logistics for the next steps in the setting up of the PCR. Its decision is based on the report of the task force it had appointed, led by **Y.M Deosthalee**.

Y.M Deosthalee committee recommendations:

- The public credit registry should be set up by RBI and in due course, the central bank may consider moving the registry to a separate non-profit entity.
- It has envisaged it as a registry of all credit contracts, duly verified by reporting institutions, for all lending in India and any lending by an Indian financial institution to “an Indian natural or legal person.
- Registry should also capture data such as external commercial borrowings, market borrowings, and all contingent liabilities to provide a holistic picture about the borrower’s indebtedness.
- The registry should capture both positive and negative information for all loans and borrowers be able to access their own history.
- The data will be available to stakeholders like banks strictly on a need-to-know basis and privacy of data will be protected.
- It has placed the onus of data quality on the reporting entities and suggested action against the institutions in case of any violations in rules.
- proposed linkages with other defaulter databases like the wilful defaulter’s list and that maintained by **Export Credit Guarantee Corp. of India** as well as with other information databases like goods and services tax network data and utility and insurance payments data

The setting up of the PCR is significant as the financial information about borrowers exists at present in silos and often impacts the time taken to get a loan as well as the quantum of loan sanctioned.

21. It will help banks distinguish between a bad and a good borrower and accordingly offer attractive interest rates to good borrowers and higher interest rates to bad borrowers.
22. It can also go a long way in addressing the bad loans problem facing the banking system, as corporate borrowers will be unable to lend from multiple banks without disclosing their existing debt.
23. It will address information asymmetry, improve access to credit and strengthen the credit culture among consumers.
24. It will help improve India's rankings in the World Bank's ease of doing business index.

Security and Science and Technology

1. Operation NISTAR

Indian Naval Ship **Sunayana** successfully evacuated 38 Indian Nationals from **Socotra** during a swift Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Operation (HADR), code named **Operation NISTAR**. The Indian Nationals were stranded for nearly ten days after severe Cyclonic Storm - **Mekunu** devastated the area around Socotra Island



Socotra

Socotra is located between the Guardafui Channel and the Arabian Sea. It is the largest of four islands of the Socotra archipelago which is officially a part of Yemen. The island is very isolated, home to a high number of endemic species; up to a third of its plant life is endemic. It has been described as "**the most alien-looking place on Earth**".

Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Operation (HADR)

One of the defining characteristics of navies in the postmodern era is their involvement in irregular security missions. From anti-piracy to anti-trafficking, counter-terrorism and migration control, the scope of unconventional security tasks undertaken by maritime forces in recent years has expanded significantly. The most prominent of these tasks has been humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), aimed at helping populations in coastal areas survive natural calamities. The Indian Navy's humanitarian mission is likely to remain a key factor in India's projection of diplomatic soft power and a potent symbol of New Delhi's neighbourhood-first policy. Some of the HADR missions undertaken by the Indian Navy are:

1. **Tsunami 2004-** The Indian Navy launched a massive HADR effort to help not only its own states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar (**Operation Madad** and **Sea Waves**) but also, Sri Lanka (**Operation Rainbow**), Maldives (**Operation Castor**), and Indonesia (**Operation Gambhir**)
2. **Operation Sukoon Lebanon 2006-** To evacuate Indian, Sri Lankan and Nepalese nationals from war torn Lebanon.
3. **Myanmar, Cyclone Nargis 2008**
4. **Operation Safe Homecoming Libya- 2011**
5. **Typhoon Haiyan Philippines- 2013**
6. **Indian assistance to Malaysia for Flight MH370**

2. Agni-5 missile successfully tested

The indigenously developed long range ballistic missile Agni 5 is successfully flight tested from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island (**Wheeler Island**). It has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Program**

Specifications:

- Nuclear capable
- Surface-to-surface missile
- It can carry nuclear warhead weighing 1.5 tonnes
- Range: over **5000** km
- Propulsion: **three-stage** solid fuelled missile with composite motor casing in the second and third stage.
- New indigenously-developed technologies-high accuracy **Ring Laser Gyro based Inertial Navigation System (RINS)**, and the most modern and accurate **Micro Navigation System (MINS)** which improves the accuracy of the missile.
- Higher reliability, longer shelf life, less maintenance and enhanced mobility.

Once the Agni-V is inducted, India will join the super-exclusive club of countries with intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) (missiles with a range of over 5,000-5,500km)

alongside the **US, Russia, China, France and the UK**. Agni-V is capable of striking even the northernmost parts of China

Integrated guided missile development programme

The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) was conceived by renowned scientist Dr A P J Abdul Kalam to enable India attain self-sufficiency in the field of missile technology

- Short- range surface-to- surface ballistic missile **Prithvi**
- Intermediate-range surface-to- surface ballistic missile **Agni**
- Short- range low level surface- to air -missile **Trishul**
- Medium-range surface-to-air missile **Akash**
- Third generation anti-tank missile **Nag**
(360 Tips: Remember as **PATAN**)

The Agni which was initially conceived as a technology demonstrator project in the form of a re-entry vehicle was later upgraded to a ballistic missile with different ranges. DRDO on Jan 2008, formally announced successful completion of IGMDP.

Environment.

1. Blue Flag Beach

The **Chandrabhaga beach** on the Konark coast of Odisha will be the first in Asia to get the Blue Flag certification. The tag given to environment-friendly and clean beaches, equipped with amenities of international standards for tourists. Twelve more beaches in the country are being developed by the **Society for Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM)**, an **Environment Ministry's** body working for the management of coastal areas, in accordance with the Blue Flag standards.

About Blue flag tag;

The **Blue Flag** is a certification by the **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)** that a **beach, marina or sustainable boating tourism operator** meets its stringent standards. According to the Blue Flag standards, a beach must strictly comply with 33 environment and tourist-related conditions. The initiative began in Paris, and quickly spread through Europe, and even to South Africa. Asia remained untouched, until now.

Criteria;

- Environmental education and information
- Environmental management
- Safety and service
- Water quality

Implications:

- The Blue Flag certification is an attempt to promote **sustainable tourism**
- As a tourist at a Blue Flag beach, you can expect important **information** relating to coastal zone ecosystems, and sensitive natural areas in the coastal zone displayed at the beach. Information about the bathing water quality, as well as the Blue Flag programme, will be displayed as well.
- There will be a strict **code of conduct**, for the beach area. The laws governing beach use will be easily available to you on request.
- The beaches will be **clean** and well-maintained. Waste disposal bins will be available in adequate numbers and will be regularly emptied and cleaned. There will also be adequate recycling facilities, on or near the beach. Expect good sanitary facilities, with controlled sewage disposal.
- Unauthorised camping, driving or dumping will not be allowed. There will be a sustainable means of **transportation**, promoted around the beach area.
- For your **safety**, there will be an adequate number of lifeguards and life-saving equipment at the beach. There will also be first aid, and a steady supply of drinking water will be made available.
- All Blue Flag beaches will have a **map**, that will show the different facilities available, and there will be adequate facilities in place, to prevent conflicts and accidents.

About FEE:

- Formed: 1981
- Headquarters: **Copenhagen**, Denmark
- The **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)** is a non-governmental, **non-profit organisation** promoting sustainable development through environmental education.
- It is an international umbrella organisation with one national member organisation per country representing FEE on the national level and in charge of implementing FEE programmes nationally.
- FEE is active through five programmes; Blue Flag, Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE), Learning about Forests (LEAF) and Green Key.
- FEE established the **Global Forest Fund** to offset CO2 emissions from travel. This non-profit fund invests 90% of its income directly into tree planting and other CO2 compensation efforts that are combined with environmental education activities.

2. 5 June -World Environment Day

World Environment Day is a UN Environment-led global event, the single largest celebration of our environment each year, which takes place on June 5 and is celebrated by thousands of communities worldwide.

Facts:

- Founded at: **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** held in Stockholm, Sweden -1972.
- First time: 5th June 1974.
- Theme of 1974: "Only One Earth"
- Host nation 2018: **India**
- Theme of 2018: "**Beat Plastic Pollution**"

India on action:

- Pledged to **eliminate all single-use plastic** in the country by 2022.
- Commitment to join UN Environment's **Clean Seas campaign**, which seeks to turn the tide on marine litter.
- Partnership between UN Environment and the Indian Board of Control to 'green cricket' across the country.
- A pledge to make **100 national monuments litter-free**.
- Launched a joint World Environment Day Report: "**Single-use Plastics: A roadmap for Sustainability**" in collaboration with UN Environment.

3. Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY)

The World Bank has approved India's Rs 6,000 crore central scheme ABHY/ **National Groundwater Management Improvement Program** aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country **through community participation** over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23. The priority areas identified under the scheme fall in **Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**. These states represent about **25% of the total number of over-exploited**, critical and semi-critical blocks in terms of ground water availability in India. Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit **nearly 8,350 'Gram Panchayats'** in 78 districts in these states. The activities under the program are mapped to the two results areas. Activities under Results Area 1 will focus on:

- Introducing **bottom- up planning** of groundwater interventions through community- led Water Security Plan.
- Improving government spending through the **planning process**.
- Implementing **participatory** groundwater management, including both supply and demand side measures.

Results Area 2 focuses on

- Building **institutional capacity** at all levels, including improving **groundwater information** and making it publicly accessible.
- Strengthening the results- based culture for groundwater management within the Government of India by improving output and outcome Monitoring and Evaluation.

Expected outcomes:

- ✓ **Better understanding** of the ground water regime.
- ✓ **Focused and integrated** community based approach for addressing issues related to ground water depletion.
- ✓ **Sustainable** ground water management through convergence of on-going and new schemes.
- ✓ **Adoption** of efficient water use practices to reduce ground water use for irrigation.
- ✓ **Augmentation** of ground water resources in targeted areas.

Ground water situation in India

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) is regulating ground water development in 23 States/UTs. Groundwater supply is 80% to 95% of rural drinking water, 60% to 70% of water used in agriculture, and 50% of urban drinking water. India's groundwater resources are under threat from overexploitation. Pollution from mining, industry, and agriculture together with naturally occurring contaminants (especially arsenic and fluoride) is degrading groundwater quality.

4. Uranium contamination

Scientists have found widespread uranium contamination in groundwater from aquifers across 16 states in India, much above the WHO provisional standard for the country. The WHO has set a provisional safe drinking water standard of **30 micrograms of uranium per litre for India**, a level that is consistent with US Environmental Protection Agency standards. However, uranium is not yet included in the list of contaminants monitored under the Bureau of Indian Standards' Drinking Water Specifications. **Rajasthan and Gujarat are on the top of the list.**

Causes for contamination:

1-The occurrence of uranium in these groundwater sources depends on several factors;

- Amount of uranium contained in an aquifer's rocks
- Water-rock interactions that cause the uranium to be extracted from those rocks
- Oxidation conditions that enhance the extracted uranium's solubility in water
- The interaction of the extracted uranium with other chemicals in the groundwater, such as bicarbonate, which can further enhance its solubility.

In many parts of India, these factors co-occur and result in high uranium concentrations in the groundwater

2-While the **primary source of uranium is geogenic** (naturally occurring), anthropogenic (human caused) factors such as **groundwater table decline and nitrate** pollution may further enhance uranium mobilisation

3-Many of India's aquifers are composed of clay, silt and gravel carried down from the Himalayas by streams or uranium-rich granitic rocks. When **over pumping of these aquifers' groundwater** occurs and their water levels decline, it induces conditions that enhance uranium enrichment in the shallow groundwater that remains.

4-**Over-exploitation of groundwater** for irrigation also have exacerbated the problem.

Remediation technology for the uranium contaminated environment

- **Physical methods-** For small areas of water contaminated by uranium, **coagulation, precipitation, evaporation, extraction, and membrane separation** technologies are used to eliminate most Uranium from the water.
- **Chemical methods-** FeS₂ and MnO₂ as a zero-valent iron material to remove Uranium from water.
- **Biological methods**

- Application of **microbiological methods** in repairing uranium pollution.
Ex: Pseudomonas MGF-48 bacterium has been found to accumulate uranium with high efficiency.
- Application of **phytoremediation methods** in repairing uranium pollution.
Ex: The roots of sunflower, Indian mustard and other plants will absorb a large number of U, and some plants will transport U to their aerial parts.

MAINSURE 2018

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TEST SERIES

Limited seats. Intake of Just 30 students.
First Come First Serve Basis

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