

**“My past has not defined me, destroyed me, deterred me, or defeated me; it has only strengthened me.” Steve Maraboli**

**INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL****PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC) WILL DECIDE TO INCREASE CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION AT VIENNA**

The world is waiting to see whether the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will decide to increase crude oil production at its meeting to be held in Vienna.

With OPEC accounting for around 40% of global production, any decision will have a wide-ranging impact on energy markets.

The meeting is also significant as it comes in the backdrop of a supply cut by OPEC and Russia, which triggered a rally in global crude oil prices.

Prices have fallen since then. Also, there are growing fears of a trade war escalation, which may impact global growth.

Retail prices of petrol and diesel in India track global prices of these fuels, not crude, but they are broadly linked to crude oil price trends.

**Crude oil prices impact India’s oil import bill and trade deficit.** Lower oil prices had dramatically improved India’s terms of trade in 2015-16.

A rally in global oil prices had pushed up the average cost of the Indian basket of crude.

The government has so far refused to roll back its decision to link domestic and international fuel prices and has said that it is working toward a ‘long-term solution’.

India’s energy needs are mainly met through imports, and **OPEC accounts for around 83% of the country’s total crude oil imports.**

Oil minister who is scheduled to participate in the 7th OPEC seminar has maintained that India is a price-sensitive customer and will seek reasonable rates as its energy demand grows.

He has also said market fundamentals do not support such high prices.

There have been both internal and external pressures on the grouping.

There has been a rally in oil prices due to factors such as US President Donald Trump pulling his country out of the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, and Opec and Russia cutting supplies.

In addition, Venezuela’s oil output has collapsed to the lowest since the 1950s and geopolitical tensions have also played a part.

**Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):**

OPEC is an intergovernmental organization of 14 nations

The 14 countries accounted for an estimated 44 percent of global oil production and 73 percent of the world’s “proven” oil reserves

OPEC’s stated mission is “to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry.

The OPEC Conference is the supreme authority of the organization and consists of delegations normally headed by the oil ministers of member countries.

The Conference ordinarily meets at the Vienna headquarters, at least twice a year and in additional extraordinary sessions when necessary.

**NATIONAL****NATIONAL HEALTH RESOURCE REPOSITORY (NHRR)**

The Union ministry of health and family welfare has launched the first ever registry in the country registry of authentic, standardized and updated geo-spatial data of all public and private healthcare.

**Objective:** “to create a reliable, unified registry of country’s healthcare resources showing the distribution pattern of health

facilities and services between cities and rural areas”

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is the project technology partner for providing data security.

It will now be possible to provide comprehensive data on all private and public health establishments and other resources, including Railways, Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), defence and petroleum healthcare establishments.

Under the Collection of Statistics Act 2008, more than 20 lakh healthcare establishments such as hospitals, doctors, clinics, diagnostic labs, pharmacies and nursing homes would be enumerated under this census, which will capture data on more than 1,400 variables.

The Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) has looped in key stakeholders, including leading associations, allied ministries, and several private healthcare service providers.

This resource repository shall enable advanced research towards ongoing and forthcoming healthcare challenges arising from other determinants of health such as disease and the environment.

Approximately 4,000 trained professionals are working with dedication to approach every healthcare establishment to collect information.

It shall also enhance the coordination between central and state government for optimization of health resources, making ‘live’ and realistic state project implementation plans (PIPs) and improving accessibility of data at all levels, including state heads of departments, and thus decentralize the decision making at district and state level.

Additionally, it shall generate real-world intelligence to identify gaps in health and service ratios, and ensure judicious health resource allocation and management.

It shall identify key areas of improvement by upgrading existing health facilities or establishing new health facilities keeping in

view the population density, geographic nature, health condition, distance,” he said.

The NHRR project aims to strengthen evidence-based decision making and develop a platform for citizens and provider-centric services by creating a robust, standardised and secured Information Technology (IT)-enabled repository of India’s healthcare resources.

National Health Profile (NHP)-2018

The health minister also released the National Health Profile (NHP)-2018, prepared by CBHI.

The National Health Profile covers demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators, along with comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health.

#### **CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION (CWC), COLLABORATED WITH GOOGLE FOR FLOOD FORECASTING**

Central Water Commission (CWC), India’s apex technical organization in the field of Water Resources, has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Google for flood forecasting. This initiative is likely to help crisis management agencies to deal extreme hydrological events in a better manner.

CWC and Google will share technical expertise in the fields of artificial intelligence, machine learning, geospatial mapping and analysis of hydrological observation data to collaborate on:

- Improving flood prediction systems, which will help provide location-targeted, actionable flood warnings.
- High priority research project utilizing Google Earth Engine to help visualize and improve flood management.
- A cultural project to build online exhibitions on the Rivers of India.

The collaborative arrangement is likely to result in saving of crore of rupees which otherwise would have to be spent by the government on acquiring high resolution DEM, high end computational resources and developing dissemination platforms widely used by the masses.

This would enable the Government as well as disaster management organisations to identify well in advance the locations and population, which are at risk from floods and require warnings and information.

This collaborative initiative is expected to be a milestone in flood management and in mitigating the flood losses.

#### **Central Water Commission:**

Central Water Commission is a premier Technical Organization of India in the field of Water Resources and is presently functioning as an attached office of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India.

The Commission is entrusted with the general responsibilities of initiating, coordinating and furthering in consultation of the State Governments concerned, schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country, for purpose of Flood Control, Irrigation, Navigation, Drinking Water Supply and Water Power Development. It also undertakes the investigations, construction and execution of any such schemes as required.

#### **NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY**

The center government is planning to setup National Testing Agency.

The National Testing Agency will provide training to paper setters to frame better question papers and provide model answers. Presently, there is no system for paper-setter training in country.

The creation of National Testing Agency was approved by the Union Cabinet in November 2017.

It get a one tie grant of 25 cr. with a aim to make it financially self-sustainable.

**Mandate of the National Testing Agency:**

To put in place a robust system for the conduct of examinations.

The National Testing Agency will overtake the conduction of all competitive examination from Central Board of Secondary Education except the 10th and 12th board examinations.

National Testing Agency will conduct the following competitive exams:

Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for admission to engineering colleges like the IITs and NITs

National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to all medical colleges in the country, except AIIMS and JIPMER, Pondicherry.

#### **NATIONAL INFORMATICS CENTRE (NIC) TO SET UP DATA CENTRE IN BHOPAL**

The Centre will set up the country's biggest data centre in Bhopal with a capacity to host five lakh virtual servers. It will be set up by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

This will be the fifth National Data Centre after the ones at Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune.

#### **NIC:**

NIC, under the Department of Information Technology of the Government of India, is a premier Science and Technology Organization, at the forefront of the active promotion and implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions in the government. The NIC is a part of the Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Department of Electronics & Information Technology.

With the increased expectations from citizens for online services and the number of e-Governance Projects being launched by the Government, the Data Centre requirements are growing exponentially. There is a need to set up strategic infrastructure that facilitates high availability, quick scalability, efficient management & optimized utilization of resources.

To fulfil this requirement, NIC has set up state-of-the-art National Data Centres to provide services to the Government at all levels. These Data Centres combine round-the-clock operations and management of systems with onsite skilled personnel. The National Data

Centres host Government websites, services and apps.

**RBI CHANGED THE DEFINITION OF CLOSED RELATIVE FOR OUT FLOW OF FUNDS**

Concerned over funds sent abroad under the 'maintenance of close relative' category of the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has narrowed the definition of relatives to check the flow of funds.

RBI has aligned the definition of 'relative' with the definition given in Companies Act, 2013 instead of Companies Act, 1956. Hence, funds under the 'maintenance of close relative' category can be sent only to immediate relatives such as parents, spouses, children and their spouses.

**Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS):**

Under LRS, all resident individuals can freely remit \$250,000 overseas every financial year for a permissible set of current or capital account transactions.

Remittances are permitted for overseas education, travel, medical treatment and purchase of shares and property, apart from maintenance of relatives living abroad, gifting and donations. Individuals can also open, maintain and hold foreign currency accounts with overseas banks for carrying out transactions.

However, the rules do not allow remittances for trading on the foreign exchange markets, margin or margin calls to overseas exchanges and counterparties and the purchase of Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds issued by Indian companies abroad. Sending money to certain countries and entities is also barred. Under LRS, people can't send money to countries identified as 'non cooperative' by the Financial Action Task Force. Remittances are also prohibited to entities identified as posing terrorist risks.

**ELECTION FOR VC OF RAJYA SABHA**

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu has set in motion the process of election of Deputy Chairman of the Upper House.

**Process of election**

Under the procedure prescribed, any member may give notice in writing addressed to the Secretary-General, before noon on the day before the election date, of a motion that another member may be chosen as Deputy Chairman

This notice shall be accompanied by a statement by the member whose name is proposed in the notice that he is willing to serve as Deputy Chairman if elected

The motions which have been moved and duly seconded will be put one by one in the order in which they have been moved and decided if necessary by division.

**AADHAAR-SEEDED IDENTIFICATION NUMBER FOR WORKERS IN THE UNORGANIZED SECTOR**

The Centre has started work to create a national database and Aadhaar-seeded identification number system to facilitate welfare delivery to 40 crore workers in the unorganized sector.

This comes ten years after passing a law that envisaged a portable smart ID card for unorganized sector workers.

The Union Ministry of Labour has called for tenders to design, develop and run the new **UWIN — Unorganized Workers Identification Number — Platform.**

The "single unified sanitized database" will assign a ten-digit UWIN to every worker and include details of both nuclear and extended families of unorganized workers.

The Centre will create and maintain the platform and it is up to the states to identify and register unorganized workers.

The Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 will be used as the base for the platform, and other worker databases — from the states as well as other Central ministries such as Textiles and Health — will also be incorporated into UWIN.

The Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008 had first mandated that every worker be registered and issued a smart ID card.

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