

INTERNATIONAL**Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya**

The first Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was held in Nairobi, capital of Kenya. It was organized by Kenya and cohosted by Japan and Canada. The theme of this conference was ‘The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.’

This conference was held on momentum of UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris and UN Ocean Conference 2017 ‘Call to Action. Over 17,000 plus participants from some 184 countries had participated in the conference. India was represented Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari. Other parties who participated in this conference are World Wildlife Fund, WWF; International Maritime Organization, IMO; International Seabed Authority, ISA; World Bank; AFRIEXIMBANK; Ocean Foundation etc.

Over 4,000 participants from around the world will meet from November 26 to 28, 2018 at the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference to learn how to build a blue economy that:

1. Harnesses the potential of our oceans, seas, lakes and rivers to improve the lives of all, particularly people in developing states, women, youth and Indigenous peoples
2. Leverages the latest innovations, scientific advances and best practices to build prosperity while conserving our waters for future generations

Blue Economy is economic benefit and value that is realized from Earth’s coastal and marine environment. Sustainable Blue Economy is marine-based economy that provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations, restores, protects and maintains diversity, productivity and resilience of marine ecosystems. It is also based on clean technologies, renewable energy, and circular material flows.

Blue Economy is very crucial for India’s economic development. India has strategic location in Indian Ocean region (IOR), and on this basis, it endorses growth of Blue Economy in sustainable, inclusive and people centred manner through framework of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

India is also developing its maritime infrastructure as well as its inland waterways and coastal shipping through launch of the ambitious “Sagarmala Programme” which aims to revolutionize maritime logistics and port led developments in country. India’s national vision about this sector is clearly articulated in term “SAGAR”- Security and Growth for All in IOR which was coined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

NATIONAL**Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti by Central Govt.**

Central government has launched Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti in order to nurture and encourage Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for self reliance in defence production. IPR has been emerged as a key ingredient of an ecosystem which stimulates innovation. This mission aims to facilitate filing of at-least 1,000 new IPR applications.

Ministry of Defence (MoD) announces to train approx. 10,000 persons of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and Ordnance Factories (OFs) on IPR in the FY 2018-19. Moreover, an IP Facilitation Cell was also established in the month of April 2018.

The Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) is given the responsibility of coordinating and implementing the programme. The end objective of this mission is to inculcate IP culture in Indian defence manufacturing ecosystem.

As a part of the ongoing initiatives to enhance self-reliance in defence, the Dept. of Defense Production has instituted a new framework namely Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti. This mission aims to provide a boost to the IPR culture in indigenous defence industry. Raksha Mantri has launched this mission for the following reasons:-

To Provide –

1. IP awareness & training
2. Counselling & advisory for IP identification, registration & protection
3. IPR filing & related services

To Create –

1. Support system to DPSUS & Ordnance factories
2. A panel of IP attorney’s and consultants
3. IP news tracker for latest information updates

Under IP awareness drive, 23 officers have been trained as “Master Trainers” at RGNIPM, Nagpur. Moreover, 5283 personnel have been trained till 18 October 2018. Indian defense minister has launched Mission Gyan Shakti in an event organized in New Delhi. This event showcased inventions and innovations achieved by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and Ordnance Factories (OFs). This has resulted in successful filing of Intellectual Property Right (IPR) applications

Background

IPR has emerged as key ingredient of an ecosystem which stimulates innovation and ingenuity. India has always been knowledge hub since ancient times, but due to lack of awareness on modern legal framework for protection of IP rights, nation’s knowledge and creativity have often not been utilised to its full potential. Spreading awareness about IPR will help in promoting culture of innovation and creation of Intellectual Property. Defence Ministry has established IP Facilitation Cell in April 2018 to achieve ambitious targets of training 10,000 personnel of OFB and DPSUs on IPR and facilitate filing of at least 1,000 new IPR applications.

Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018

The Union Cabinet has approved the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 for regulation and standardisation of education and services by allied and healthcare professionals.

Highlights of the Bill:

It provides for the Establishment of a Central and corresponding State Allied and Healthcare Councils; 15 major professional categories including 53 professions in Allied and Healthcare streams.

The Bill provides for Structure, Constitution, Composition and Functions of the Central Council and State Councils, e.g. Framing policies and standards, Regulation of professional conduct, Creation and maintenance of live Registers, provisions for common entry and exit examinations, etc.

The Central Council will comprise 47 members, of which 14 members shall be ex-officio representing diverse and related roles and functions and remaining 33 shall be non-ex-officio members who mainly represent the 15 professional categories.

The State Councils are also envisioned to mirror the Central Council, comprising 7 ex-officio and 21 non-ex officio members and Chairperson to be elected from amongst the non-ex officio members.

Professional Advisory Bodies under Central and State Councils will examine issues independently and provide recommendations relating to specific recognised categories.

The Bill will also have an overriding effect on any other existing law for any of the covered professions.

The State Council will undertake recognition of allied and healthcare institutions.

Offences and Penalties clause have been included in the Bill to check mal-practices.

The Bill also empowers the Central and State Governments to make rules.

Central Govt. also has the power to issue directions to the Council, to make regulations and to add or amend the schedule.

Major Impact, including employment generation potential:

Bring all existing allied and healthcare professionals on board during the first few of years from the date of establishment of the Council.

Opportunity to create qualified, highly skilled and competent jobs in healthcare by enabling professionalism of the allied and healthcare workforce.

High quality, multi-disciplinary care in line with the vision of Ayushman Bharat, moving away from a ‘doctor led’ model to a ‘care accessible and team based’ model.

Opportunity to cater to the global demand (shortage) of healthcare workforce which is projected to be about 15 million by the year 2030, as per the WHO Global Workforce, 2030 report.

Number of beneficiaries:

It is estimated that the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 will directly benefit around 8-9 Lakh existing Allied and Healthcare related professionals in the country and several other graduating professionals joining workforce annually and contributing to the health system. However, since this Bill is directed to strengthen the healthcare delivery system at large, it may be said that the entire population of the country and the health sector as a whole will be benefited by this Bill.

Need for this legislation:

Allied and Healthcare Professionals (A&HPs) constitute an important element of the health human resource network, and the skilled and efficient Allied and Healthcare Professionals (A&HPs) can reduce the cost of care and dramatically improve the accessibility to quality driven healthcare services.

Though such professionals have existed in the Indian healthcare system for many decades, a considerable gap in the allied and healthcare space is because of a lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework and absence of standards for education and training of A&HPs. The Bill thus seeks to establish a robust regulatory framework which will play the role of a standard-setter and regulator for Allied and Healthcare professions.

Government launches PAISA Portal under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission

Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched 'PAiSA' – Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access during National Workshop on Municipal Finance and Urban Planning held in New Delhi.

It is centralised electronic platform for quicker processing of loans under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). It aims to connect directly with beneficiaries and ensure there is greater efficiency in the delivery of services. It has been designed and developed by Allahabad Bank, the nodal bank under the scheme. All 35 States and Union Territories (UTs) & all scheduled commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks are expected to be on board the PAiSA portal the year end.

Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)

1. It is Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. Its objective is to uplift urban poor folks by enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities through skill development.
2. Its intended beneficiaries are urban poor (street vendors, slum dwellers, homeless, rag pickers); unemployed and differently abled. It provides for employment through Skill Training and Placement through City Livelihood Centers to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households.
3. It also provides social mobilization and institution development through formation of Self-Help Groups (SHG) for training members and hand holding, an initial support of 10, 000 is given for each group.
4. It also provides subsidy to urban poor i.e. interest subsidy of 5% – 7% for setting up individual micro-enterprises with loan of up to 2 lakhs and for group enterprises with loan limit of up to Rs.10 lakhs.
5. It fully funds cost of construction of shelters for urban homeless. It also provides for development of vendor markets and also promotion of skills for vendors through setting up infrastructure and special projects for rag picker and differently abled etc.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

As per the latest data released by the Centre for Digital Financial Inclusion (CDFI) that uses technology for financial inclusion, the government has transferred over Rs 1,600 crore to eligible mothers under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana through direct benefit transfer so far. Rs 16,04,66,63,000 has been transferred through direct benefit transfer to 48.5 lakh women.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

Under - nutrition continues to adversely affect majority of women in India. In India, every third woman is undernourished and every second woman is anaemic. An undernourished mother almost inevitably gives birth to a low birth weight baby. When poor nutrition starts in - utero, it extends throughout the life cycle since the changes are largely irreversible. Owing to economic and social distress many women continue to work to earn a living for their family right up to the last days of their pregnancy. Furthermore, they resume working soon after childbirth, even though their bodies might not permit it, thus preventing their bodies from fully recovering on one hand, and also impeding their ability to exclusively breastfeed their young infant in the first six months.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a Maternity Benefit Programme that is implemented in all the districts of the country in accordance with the provision of the National Food Security Act, 2013.

Benefits under PMMVY

Cash incentive of Rs 5000 in three instalments i.e. first instalment of Rs 1000/ - on early registration of pregnancy at the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) / approved Health facility as may be identified by the respective administering State / UT, second instalment of Rs 2000/ - after six months of pregnancy on receiving at least one ante-natal check-up (ANC) and third instalment of Rs 2000/ - after child birth is

registered and the child has received the first cycle of BCG, OPV, DPT and Hepatitis - B, or its equivalent/substitute.

The eligible beneficiaries would receive the incentive given under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) for Institutional delivery and the incentive received under JSY would be accounted towards maternity benefits so that on an average a woman gets Rs 6000 / - .

Need for special attention

Under-nutrition continues to adversely affect majority of women in India. In India, every third woman is undernourished and every second woman is anaemic. An undernourished mother almost inevitably gives birth to a low birth weight baby. When poor nutrition starts in-utero, it extends throughout the life cycle since the changes are largely irreversible.

Owing to economic and social distress many women continue to work to earn a living for their family right up to the last days of their pregnancy. Furthermore, they resume working soon after childbirth, even though their bodies might not permit it, thus preventing their bodies from fully recovering on one hand, and also impeding their ability to exclusively breastfeed their young infant in the first six months.

ZSI report on Andaman & Nicobar Islands fauna

Andaman & Nicobar Islands are home to tenth of India's fauna species and hosts 1,067 endemic faunal species found nowhere else. It was revealed by Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) publication titled Faunal Diversity of Biogeographic Zones: Islands of India. This publication for the first time has come up with database of all faunal species found on the island. It has database of species found in particular category of animals and also highlights most vulnerable among them.

Key highlights of the report:

The documentation proves that the islands, comprising only 0.25% of India's geographical area, are home to more than 10% of the country's fauna species. It has 11,009 species.

Endemic species: The Narcondam hornbill, its habitat restricted to a lone island; the Nicobar megapode, a bird that builds nests on the ground; the Nicobar treeshrew, a small mole-like mammal; the Long-tailed Nicobar macaque, and the Andaman day gecko, are among the 1,067 endemic faunal species found only on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and nowhere else.

Among birds, endemism is quite high, with 36 among 344 species of birds found only on the islands. Many of these bird species are placed in the IUCN Red List of threatened species under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA).

Endemic reptiles: Eight species of amphibians and 23 species of reptiles are endemic to the islands, and thus are at high risk of being threatened.

Marine faunal diversity: Includes coral reefs and its associated fauna. In all, 555 species of scleractinian corals (hard or stony corals) are found in the island ecosystem, all which are placed under Schedule I of the WPA. Similarly, all species of gorgonian (sea fans) and calcareous sponge are listed under different schedules of the WPA.

Concerns: The publication cautions that tourism, illegal construction and mining are posing a threat to the islands' biodiversity, which is already vulnerable to volatile climatic factors. Some of the species in A&N Islands are restricted to a very small area and thus more vulnerable to any anthropogenic threat. Any stress can have a long-lasting impact on the islands' biodiversity, devastating the population size of any endemic fauna, followed by extinction within a limited span of time.

Vulnerable species: Of the ten species of marine fauna found on the islands, the dugong/sea cow, and the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, are both classified as Vulnerable under the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species. Among the 46 terrestrial mammalian species found, three species have been categorised as Critically Endangered — Andaman shrew (*Crociodura andamanensis*), Jenkin's shrew (*C. jenkinsi*) and Nicobar shrew (*C. nicobarica*). Five species are listed as Endangered, nine species as Vulnerable, and one species as Near Threatened, according to the IUCN.

Background:

The total area of the A&N Islands, which comprises of 572 islands, islets and rocky outcrops, is about 8,249 sq. km. The population of the islands, which includes six particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) — Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens — is not more than 4 lakh.

What's made the location more vulnerable?

In a recent development, the Government of India relaxed the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) norms for some foreign nationalities notified under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963, to visit 29 of its inhabited islands, till December 31, 2022. This has triggered further concerns of increased anthropogenic

pressures over the islands' ecosystem. Some of the islands removed from the RAP list have no habitation except PVTG like Sentinelese in case of North Sentinel Island.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)

It is India's apex organization on animal taxonomy. Its objective is to promote survey, exploration, research and documentation on various aspects of animal taxonomy in Indian subcontinent. It also seeks advancement of knowledge on animal taxonomy. It was established in 1916 and headquartered in Kolkata. It has been declared as designated repository for National Zoological Collection as per section 39 of the National Biodiversity Act, 2002.

BILATERAL

First-ever India Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue held at St. Petersburg

The first-ever India Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue was held at St. Petersburg in Russia. Indian side was led by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and Russian delegation headed by Economic Development Minister Maxim Oreshkin.

The two-day forum provided participants platform to discuss development of bilateral ties in trade, investment, technology and industry. It was aimed to bring together key business figures from both countries. Transport, agriculture and agro-processing, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), digital transformation and frontier technologies and industrial cooperation were some of the key areas of focus of the forum.

Indo-Russian Strategic Economic Dialogue

It was created by PM Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin in their informal summit (held at Sochi in May 2018) to give big push to economic partnership between both countries that has started to gain momentum since 2017. It aims to focus on macro picture of economic partnership and also explore partnership and joint ventures in services and IT sectors. It seeks to put in place mechanism for partnership between resource-rich Russian regions and Indian states. In effort to boost bilateral trade to \$30 billion by 2025, both countries have agreed to give high priority to removal of obstacles to trade in order to improve upon 21.5% growth in two-way trade recorded last year. India has already launched Strategic Economic Dialogue with China.

MISCELLANEOUS

RIMES terms Titli cyclone 'rarest of rare'

The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for Africa and Asia has termed 'Titli', the severe cyclonic storm that devastated Odisha in October, as 'rarest cyclone'.

More than 200 years of cyclone track history in the Odisha coast reveals that the Titli cyclone is the rarest of rare in terms of its characteristics such as recurvature after landfall and retaining its destructive potential after landfall and recurvature away from the coastal areas for more than two days.

Earlier, India Meteorological Department had called the formation of Titli as a 'rarest of rare' occurrence. The severe cyclone had changed its path after landfall.

Due to its rare features, forecast information lacked actionable early warning information such as no indication of occurrence of secondary hazards, including landslides far away from the coasts especially in interior districts of Odisha. Due to this, Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) had faced challenges in anticipating and managing Titli's impact due to lack of impact-based actionable early warning information and prior experience. By learning lessons from Titli cyclone, measures can be evolved to minimise impacts in both coastal and non-coastal regions more effectively in future.

Suggestion

RIMES has recommended that detailed risk assessment has to be carried out for Odisha to understand the risks in light of the Titli devastation. At present, State government actions linked to cyclone-risk management are heavily focused on coastal areas where cyclones cross at their peak intensities. Therefore, coastal areas now have been largely well managed through evacuations and other protocols, leading to zero casualties in these areas.

Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES)

It is intergovernmental body registered under United Nations. It is owned and managed by 45 collaborating countries in Asia Pacific and Africa Region. India is chairman of the body. It was established in 2009 and was registered with UN in July 2009. It operates from its regional early warning centre located at campus of

Asian Institute of Technology in Pathumthani, Thailand. It has evolved from efforts of countries in Africa and Asia in aftermath of 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Scientists mull stratospheric barrier to curb warming

Spraying sun-dimming chemicals high above the earth to slow global warming could be “remarkably inexpensive”, costing about \$2.25 billion a year over a 15-year period, according to a study by U.S. scientists.

Some researchers say the geo-engineering technique known as stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI) could limit rising temperatures that are causing climate change.

As yet unproven and hypothetical, it would involve the use of huge hoses, cannons or specially designed aircraft to spray large quantities of sulphate particles into the upper layer of the atmosphere to act as a reflective barrier against sunlight.

Total costs to launch a hypothetical SAI effort 15 years from now would be \$3.5 billion, scientists at Harvard University said in a report published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, adding that average annual operating costs would be about \$2.25 billion a year over 15 years.

Discounting other methods of deployment because of cost and feasibility, the research assumes a special aircraft can be designed to fly at an altitude of about 20 km and carry a load of 25 tonnes.

15-year wait

After direct input from several aerospace and engine companies, the scientists said they have developed a design that could be suitable and could be ready to be deployed in 15 years, aiming to cut the rate of temperature change in half.

The scientists emphasised that this is merely a hypothetical scenario. “We make no judgment about the desirability of SAI. We simply show that a hypothetical deployment programme commencing 15 years hence, while both highly uncertain and ambitious, would indeed be technically possible from an engineering perspective. It would also be remarkably inexpensive,” the report said.

There are some risks. Scientists have said SAI could cause droughts or extreme weather in other parts of the world, harm crop yields as well as potential public health and governance issues.

It also does not address the issue of rising carbon dioxide emissions, the main greenhouse gas blamed for global warming.

Quadricycles

The ministry of road transport and highways has approved the sale of quadricycles for personal use.

Quadricycle – a vehicle of the size of a 3-wheeler but with 4 tyres and fully covered like a car. It has an engine like that of a 3-wheeler.

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways notified the insertion of ‘Quadricycle’ as a ‘non transport’ vehicle under the Motor Vehicles Act 1988.

Quadricycles were only allowed for transport usage under the Act, but now has been made usable for non-transport also (Personal use).

Intention behind this move: The main aim is to give another mobility option, especially to the middle class who want to upgrade from two-wheelers. Besides, a person cannot carry family members in a three-wheeler, therefore, quadricycles are being allowed in the private category. The move will help them to upgrade to four-wheelers and move around with family.

Advantage: It is cheap and safe mode of transport for last mile connectivity.

Exceptions: Quadricycles will not be allowed for transporting cargo or luggage.

Impact on the auto- industry:

Quadricycles will pose a serious challenge to entry level cars. With the centre giving a go-ahead on the sale of quadricycles for personal use, top auto makers will have to revamp their strategy on entry-level cars, given quadricycles are expected to be far cheaper.