



General Studies-2

Model Agriculture Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2018

With a view to integrate farmers with bulk purchasers including exporters, agro- industries etc. for better price realization through mitigation of market and price risks to the farmers and ensuring smooth agro raw material supply to the agro industries, Union Finance Minister in the budget for 2017-18 announced preparation of a "Model Contract Farming Act" and circulation of the same to the States for its adoption. Farmer's producer organizations (FPO's) have a major role in promoting Contract Farming and Services Contract. On behalf of farmers they can enter into agreement with the sponsor.

Salient features of Model Contract Farming Act, 2018 are:

- The Act lays special emphasis on protecting the interests of the farmers, considering them as weaker of the two parties entering into a contract.(i)
 - In addition to contract farming, services contracts all along the value chain including pre-production, production and post-production have been included.
 - "Registering and Agreement Recording Committee" or an "Officer" for the purpose at district/block/ taluka level for online registration of sponsor and recording of agreement provided.
 - Contracted produce is to be covered under crop / livestock insurance in operation.
 - Contract framing to be outside the ambit of APMC Act.
 - No permanent structure can be developed on farmers' land/premises
 - No right, title of interest of the land shall vest in the sponsor.
- Promotion of Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs) / Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) to mobilize small and marginal farmers has been provided
- Ensuring buying of entire pre-agreed quantity of one or more of agricultural produce, livestock or its product of contract farming producer as per contract.



- Contract Farming Facilitation Group (CFFG) for promoting contract farming and services at village / panchayat at level provided.
- Accessible and simple dispute settlement mechanism at the lowest level possible provided for quick disposal of disputes.
- It is a promotional and facilitative Act and not regulatory in its structure

General Studies-3

Know what you breathe

Worsening air quality in the last two decades has emerged as one of the major reasons for high numbers of premature deaths, says a new study conducted in 11 north Indian cities.

About the Report:

The findings titled 'Know what you breathe', released here on Tuesday, were researched by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi in collaboration with environmental NGO Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED). The report found annual mortality linked to air pollution to be in the range of 150-300 persons per 1 lakh population.

The study calculated the annual "mortality burden" through averages of recorded deaths caused due to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Acute Lower Respiratory Infection (ALRI), coronary disease, stroke, and lung cancer, in these cities. COPD was the largest cause of the deaths (at 29.7%) and lung cancer the lowest (0.6%).

The largest share in total burden was attributed to ALRI in Agra and Meerut, and to COPD in Allahabad, Gaya, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Patna, Muzaffarpur and Varanasi.

Not 'instant deaths'

The estimates should not be perceived as instant deaths, said the report, clarifying that they represent premature (earlier than the expected lifetime of the Indian population) deaths due to chronic exposure from pollution.



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However, "it isn't possible to validate these estimates, as cause-specific mortality data do not exist in India.

Premature mortality burden would reduce by 14%-28% annually with the achievement of Indian air quality standards in these cities, the report said.

Using satellite-based high-resolution PM2.5 database to generate particulate matter statistics for the past 17 years, the report concludes that the mean annual ambient fine particulate matter concentration was 75-120% higher than the Indian annual air quality standard in the 10 of the 11 cities.

'Anthropogenic sources'

The study has attributed residential (cooking, heating and lighting) sources as the largest contributors to annual ambient PM2.5 concentration (73.8%).

Asita project

Why in News?

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has asked DDA to expedite "Asita", its Yamuna River Front Development Project.

About Asita:

Asita, also known as Yamuna River Front Development (RFD) project, aims to restore, revive and rejuvenate the river's floodplains and make them accessible to the people of Delhi. "Asita" is another name of river Yamuna.

Key features of the project:

- A special focus of the project is on reviving the river's bio-diversity in the National Capital.



- River Front “walks”, a major component of the project, will enable people to develop a relationship with river Yamuna.
- The project envisages creating a green buffer area approx. 300mts wide along the river edge with species of riverine ecology. Besides, a wide belt of 150mts along the peripheral roads will be developed as greenways for public amenities that will include a continuous trail of pathways and cycle tracks.
- To revive the ecosystem of the floodplains, wetlands will be created to store the flood waters and also to improve the groundwater recharge which will eventually result in flourishing of biodiversity in the floodplains.
- An environmentally conscious approach for integration of the river into the urban fabric of the city has been adopted. A people-friendly bio-diversity zone will be created for people to interact freely with the river’s eco-system.

Status of Conservation of Select Aquatic Species Report

Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari released the report on “Status of Conservation of Select Aquatic Species” in river Ganga in New Delhi today.

He also inaugurated a day-long workshop organized by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) on the theme “Ganga and its Biodiversity: Developing a Road Map for Habitat and Species Conservation”.

A database of Ganga Praharis’, a self-motivated cadre, being created by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) was also launched by the Minister.

About Ganga Praharis:

The Ganga Praharis’, a self-motivated volunteer cadre from local communities have been trained and taken on board by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to make Clean Ganga Mission a mass movement.



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This cadre has been created to ensure the sustainability of efforts in conservation of the biodiversity in river Ganga.

So far, 427 Ganga Praharis across five main stem Ganga basin states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal have been involved in this project.

About the Report:

The first-of-its-kind report "Status of Conservation of Select Aquatic Species" which was released by the Minister present the status of select species of river Ganga and synthesize the information from available literature as well as from the data generated through the rapid biodiversity assessment of the river.

This would make valuable contribution for making a baseline for these species.

The Minister also released another publication "Ganga Biodiversity-At a Glance" which gives species with details, along with their depiction and maps.

These reports have been prepared by Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun as part of the "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation" project being sponsored by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under the aegis of the Namami Gange programme.

The project aims to develop a science-based aquatic species restoration plan for Ganga by involving multiple stakeholders.

During the rapid biodiversity assessment made under the project, species, such as Siebold's smooth scaled water snake (*Enhydris sieboldii*), were observed after a gap of 70 years in river Ganga.

The biodiversity assessment team also reported new nesting ground of Indian Skimmer (*Rhynchops albicollis*), a globally threatened bird, between Allahabad and Mirzapur, positive signs for the river's biodiversity.

An exhibition was also put up during the event on Biodiversity Conservation in river Ganga depicting the journey so far and road map ahead.



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