



## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED ON 05 FEB 2019

### GS-2

#### **Water Quality of River Ganga**

##### **Why in news?**

Under Namami Gange Programme, a total of 136 sewerage infrastructure projects have been sanctioned and 36 projects have been completed so far; remaining projects are under various stages of implementation.

##### **About the Programme:**

- The Government has launched Namami Gange Programme covering short term, medium term and long term activities.
- Under short term activities, certain entry level activities which cover development of ghats crematoria & river surface cleaning activities etc have been taken up.
- Under medium term activities, existing Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) are being upgraded and new STPs & ETPs are being established.
- Beside, rural sanitation has been taken up in the villages on the banks of river Ganga.
- The long term action plan involves restoration of wholesomeness of river Ganga and maintaining the ecological & geological integrity of river.
- The Central Government approved the Namami Gange Program in May, 2015 as a five year program till 2020.
- However, efforts are being made to achieve substantial progress much before the target date.

#### **Draft National River Ganga Bill, 2018**

##### **What is it?**

Draft of "The National River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Bill 2018" provides for the constitution of Ganga Protection Corps as an armed forces of the union.



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### **Salient Provisions:**

- The Ganga Protection Corps is proposed to be empowered to arrest or caused to be arrested for offence under the Act, and to take the person to the nearest police station.
- The Court would take cognizance of the offence on the basis of the complaint filed by the officers who are authorized under the proposed Act.
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- The draft Act contemplates certain provisions conferring powers to the "National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga" [National Ganga Council].
- It will arrange to carry out or caused to be carried out impact assessment of certain projects and activities which affect or are likely to affect the flow of water in river Ganga, such as building barrages, deforestation on hill slopes, hydroelectric projects etc.

### **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**

#### **Why in News?**

The Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is organising a meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Cluster Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) on 5-6 February 2019 in New Delhi.

#### **About IORA:**

- Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organisation and has many disaster-prone countries among its 22 members and nine dialogue partners.
- The IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.



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- It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.
- The Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at [Ebene](#), [Mauritius.c](#)

DRM is one of its priority areas and its Action Plan (2017-2021) has specific goals to improve resilience in IORA countries.

### **Objective of Meeting:**

- The two-day meeting will feature interactive sessions and will focus on development of a draft Work Plan for DRM in IORA.
- It will also deliberate on the need for establishing a DRM Core Group to take forward the agreed objectives under the Work Plan.
- It would strengthen cooperation in disaster response interventions, including deployment of response teams and mobilization of relief material to affected countries. Deliberations at the meeting would also aid information exchange, establishment of disaster database(s) and sharing of best practices.

## **GS-3**

### **Gems and Jewellery Domestic Council**

#### **What is it?**

An Ad-hoc National Committee of Domestic Council for Gems and Jewellery consisting 14 Members representing various associations of Gems and Jewellery Sector has been constituted to draft Memorandum and Article of Association and other Rules/Bye-laws of the Domestic Council.



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### **Aims of Council:**

- The Government is supporting the process of setting up of Domestic Council for Gems and Jewellery, to encourage and boost domestic gems and jewellery sector.
- It is envisaged that the domestic industry would be benefited from such a representative body which would be the forum for highlighting the issues and concerns of the industry that require redressal through policy measures.
- Further, with a view to strengthen the Gems & Jewellery industry in the country, the Government has taken a number of steps:
- establishment of Special Notified Zone (SNZ); setting up of Common Facility Centres for gem and jewellery sector; announcement of separate ITC HS Code for lab-grown diamonds; and providing financial assistance for participation in international fairs, organizing buyer-seller meets, creation of export related infrastructure, etc. under various schemes of the Department of Commerce to boost the industry.

### **Report of Shekatkar Committee**

#### **Context:**

The Committee of Experts (CoE) constituted by the Ministry of Defence under the chairmanship of Lt. Gen (Retd) DB Shekatkar to recommend measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces, submitted its report in December 2016.

#### **Salient Recommendations:**

The Report was taken up by the Ministry of Defence to frame key action points and roadmap for implementation.

Measures as recommended by the Committee and taken up for implementation include:

- Optimization of Signals Establishments to include Radio Monitoring Companies, Corps Air Support Signal Regiments, Air Formation Signal



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Regiments, Composite Signal Regiments and merger of Corps Operating and Engineering Signal Regiments.

- Restructuring of repair echelons in the Army to include Base Workshops, Advance Base Workshops and Static / Station Workshops in the field Army.
- Redeployment of Ordnance echelons to include Vehicle Depots, Ordnance Depots and Central Ordnance Depots apart from streamlining inventory control mechanisms.
- Better utilization of Supply and Transportation echelons and Animal Transport units.
- Closure of Military Farms and Army Postal Establishments in peace locations.
- Enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army.
- Improving the efficiency of the National Cadet Corps.

### **Action Required:**

A total of 99 recommendations were forwarded for implementation to concerned agencies / stake holders. Full details of the Report and its recommendations are not being placed in the public domain as the Report covers operational aspects of the armed forces, disclosure of which is not in the interest of national security.

### **Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme**

#### **Why was it needed?**

In order to facilitate import of capital goods for producing quality goods and services and enhance India's manufacturing competitiveness, the Central Government has been implementing a Scheme called the Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme under the Foreign Trade Policy for manufacturer exporters with or without supporting manufacturer(s), merchant exporters tied to supporting manufacturer(s) and service providers.



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### **About the Scheme:**

- Under the Scheme, EPCG Authorizations are issued with actual user condition and import validity of 24 months to import capital goods (except those specified in negative list) for pre-production, production and post-production at zero customs duty.
- These are subject to fulfilment of specific Export Obligation equivalent to 6 times of duties, taxes and cess saved on capital goods, to be fulfilled in 6 years from date of issue of Authorization.
- In addition, the Authorization holder is required to fulfil Average Export Obligation achieved by him in the preceding three licensing years for the same and similar products.
- However, if minimum 75% of specific Export Obligation and 100% of Average Export Obligation is fulfilled within half the original export obligation period, remaining export obligation can be condoned.
- Further, in case of indigenous sourcing of capital goods and for exports of Green Technology products, specific EO is only 75%.
- For Units located in North East Region and Jammu & Kashmir, specific EO is only 25%. Presently, capital goods imported for physical exports are also exempt from IGST and Compensation Cess up to 31.03.2019.

### **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**

#### **Why in news?**

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched by the Government on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. The initial target under PMUY was 5 crore LPG connections, which was subsequently enhanced to 8 crore. As on 28.01.2019, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have released more than 6.23 crore LPG connections under the Scheme across the country.

#### **About the Yojana:**

The main features of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) Scheme are as under :-





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(i) LPG connection is released in the name of an adult woman of the poor family, subject to the condition that no LPG connection exists in the name of any family member of the family, including the applicant.

(ii) Under PMUY, cash assistance upto Rs 1600/- is provided for releasing deposit free LPG connection.

(iii) The beneficiary bears the cost of Hot Plate and purchase of first refill. The beneficiary has an option to take the Hot Plate or the first refill or both on loan basis, from Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) at zero interest rate.

### **Issues faced:**

- As per report of OMCs, the number of cases of established irregularities in providing gas connections to poor households under PMUY is few. OMCs take punitive action as per the extant Marketing Discipline Guidelines and the Distributorship Agreement against LPG distributors in established cases of irregularities.

## **Promoting Intellectual Property Rights in Defence**

### **Context:**

Several Ordnance Factories and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) have been carrying out innovative research on the development of certain materials, components / sub-assemblies / assemblies leading to performance upgradation of the existing system / platforms.

- A need was felt to create a structured mechanism to facilitate and encourage innovative activities with a primary objective to "Boost Intellectual Property culture" which would enhance the Intellectual Capital that is vital for encouraging in-house Research & Development in such organizations.
- With this objective in view, an Intellectual Property Rights Facilitation (IPF) Cell has been established under the Department of Defence Production on 4th April, 2018 to promote self-reliance in Intellectual Property Rights in Defence Sector.

### **Details of Initiative:**



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As part of this initiative, Department of Defence Production has launched the "Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti" on 27th November, 2018 to encourage Defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Ordnance Factory Board to boost "IPR culture" in their respective organization to promote self-reliance in defence sector.

### **Benefits:**

- The innovative research undertaken by Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Ordnance Factory Board is helping in indigenization of existing system / platform to bring down import contents thereby resulting in cost savings.

### **Challenges:**

The challenges faced by the Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Ordnance Factory Board in pursuing Intellectual Property Rights in defence sector include:

- lack of awareness and availability of trained manpower ;
- the need to collectively appraise the challenges ahead with private sector, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and end users.

The Intellectual Property Rights Facilitation Cell and Mission RakshaGyan Shakti have been created to address such challenges being faced by Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Ordnance Factory Board.