



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 17-June-2019

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Fifth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog Concludes

Context:

The fifth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog was held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Rashtrapati Bhawan today. .

Significance:

- The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog as a platform to inspire cooperative federalism, stressing the need to collectively combat poverty, unemployment, drought, pollution, pockets of under-development and all such factors that constrain India's progress. He emphasized that the goal is to realize the potential of this great country, to create a New India by 2022 and a USD five trillion economy by 2024.

On the Agenda before the Fifth Council Meeting were the following items:

1. Rain-Water Harvesting
2. Drought Situation and Relief Measures
3. Aspirational Districts Programme – Achievements And Challenges
4. Transforming Agriculture: Need For Structural Reforms With Special Emphasis On:
 1. Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act
 2. Essential Commodities Act (ECA)
5. Security Related Issues with Specific Focus On LWE Districts

About the Governing Council of NITI Aayog

- The Governing Council of NITI Aayog comprises the Prime Minister of India, Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with Legislatures and Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and four Union Ministers as ex-officio members and three Union Ministers as Special Invitees.
- It is the premier body tasked with evolving a shared vision of national development priorities, sectors and strategies with the active involvement of States in shaping the development narrative.



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Earlier Meetings:

- The First Meeting was held on 8 February 2015, at which the Prime Minister laid down the key mandates of NITI Aayog such as fostering cooperative federalism and addressing national issues through active participation of the States.
- The Second Meeting of the Governing Council took place on 15 July 2015 and the Third Meeting was held on 23 April 2017, which laid down milestones in shaping the country's development agenda through strategy and vision documents.
- The Fourth meeting of the Governing Council was held on 17 June 2018 and included reviewing measures taken for doubling farmers' income and progress made under flagship schemes such as the Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan and Mission Indradhanush.

Mandate of Aayog:

- The NITI Aayog has been mandated with fostering cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation.
- It seeks to design and assist the implementation of strategic, long-term policy frameworks and programme initiatives, and also monitor their progress and efficacy.
- The Governing Council, which embodies these objectives of cooperative federalism, presents a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues in order to accelerate the implementation of the national development agenda, in the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat.

Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting

Why in News?

The Intersessional meeting of Kimberley Process (KP) is being hosted by India from 17th to 21st June, 2019 in Mumbai.

India and the KPCS:

- India is one of the founder members of Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and is the Chair of Kimberley Process for the year 2019 with Russian Federation as Vice Chair.



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- India had earlier chaired KPCS in the year 2008.
- At present, KPCS has 55 members representing 82 countries including EU with 28 members.
- The Kimberley Process is chaired, on a rotating basis, by participating countries. KP Vice-Chair is generally elected by KP Plenary each year, who becomes the Chair in the next year.
- Since 2003, India has been actively participating in the KPCS process and is a member of all Working Groups of KP (except for Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production, WGAAP).
- Department of Commerce is the nodal Department and Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) is designated as the KPCS Importing and Exporting Authority in India.
- GJEPC is responsible for issuing KP Certificates and is also the custodian of KP Certificates received in the country.

What is KP?

- The Kimberley Process is a joint initiative involving Government, international diamond industry and civil society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds.
- Conflict Diamonds means rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments.
- It is also described in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions.

Background:

- In 1998, certain rebel movements in Africa (Sierra Leone, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia) were selling, among other things, illegally obtained diamonds – known as Conflict Diamonds – to fund their wars against legitimate governments.
- With a view to find ways to stop trade in Conflict Diamonds, world's diamond industry, United Nations, Governments and leading NGOs came together and in November 2002 at Interlaken, Switzerland, where the final draft of the Kimberley Process measures was ratified by more than fifty countries.
- The KPCS came into effect from 1st January, 2003 and evolved into an effective mechanism for stopping the trade in Conflict Diamonds.

Functioning of KPCS

In accordance with the KP core document, the work of the Kimberley Process is carried out through the following six Working Groups and Committees:-



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- **Working Group on Monitoring (WGM)** - Assigned the task of carrying out a review of the working of the scheme in each participant country through review visit/review missions and gives its recommendations.
- **Working Group on Statistics (WGS)** - Collects data in respect of export, import and production of rough diamonds in the participant countries.
- **Working Group on Diamond Experts (WGDE)** - Solves technical problems in the implementation of the KPCS like proposing changes to the 'Harmonised System Codes' for rough diamonds to World Customs Organisation and harmonisation of valuation methodologies.
- **Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production (WGAAP)** - To promote more effective internal controls on the production and trade of alluvial diamonds.
- **Committee on Participation and Chairmanship (CPC)** - Assists the Chair of the Kimberley Process in handling the admission of new participants and advises if a participant fail to comply with minimum requirements. It also reviews and assesses candidates for the position of Vice-Chair and presents its recommendation/findings at the plenary meeting. The participant selected as Vice-Chair becomes Chair the following year.
- **Committee on Rules and Procedure (CRP)** - KP rules and procedure are devised and modified by the Committee.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna

Why in News?

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar chaired a meeting with Agriculture Ministers of all States/UTs via Video Conference today and discussed the implementation of three key schemes of Government of India namely Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna (PM-Kisan), Pension Scheme for Small and Marginal Farmers and Kisan Credit Card Campaign.



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About the Schemes:

- The PM-Kisan Yojna is an income support scheme for farmers. It is a 100% central sector scheme which will give farmers Rs. 6000/- per year in 3 equal instalments.
- From 01.04.2019, the scheme has been extended to cover all farmers, the total beneficiaries will be 14.5 crores.
- The pension scheme for small and marginal farmers will provide a social security net for all such farmers.
- Under this scheme a minimum fixed pension of Rs 3000 per month will be provided to the eligible small and marginal farmers subject to certain exclusion causes on attaining the age of 60 years.
- The scheme aims to cover around 5 crore beneficiaries in the first three years. It will be a voluntary and contributory pension scheme with entry age of 18 to 40 years.
- The beneficiary can opt to become member of the scheme by subscribing to a pension fund.
- The beneficiary would be required to contribute Rs. 100 per month at median entry age of 29 years.
- The Central government shall also contribute to the Pension Fund in equal amount. Contribution shall be made to a Pension Fund managed by the LIC which will be responsible for the pension pay out. Under the scheme farmers can also opt to allow contribution to be made directly from the benefits drawn from the PM-KISAN scheme.
- There will be an online grievance redressal system for complete transparency
- The Kisan Credit Card was introduced in 1998, presently there are 6.92 crore live KCCs against 14.5 crore operational landholdings.

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Financial Action Task Force:

Why in News?



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The Paris-headquartered FATF has asked Pakistan to explain whether it has launched any investigation into the \$7 million allocated to maintain schools, madrasas, clinics and ambulances originally operated by terror groups like LeT, JeM, and LeT fronts Jamat-ud-Dawah and Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation.

JuD and FIF are founded by terror mastermind Hafiz Saeed.

Grey'-listed

- In June 2018, Pakistan was placed in the 'Grey' list and given a 27-point action plan by FATF.
- This plan was reviewed at the last plenary in October 2018 and for the second time in February this year, when the country was again put into the 'Grey' list after India submitted new information about Pakistan-based terrorist groups.
- The FATF continuing Pakistan in the 'Grey' list means its downgrading by IMF, World Bank, ADB, EU and also a reduction in risk rating by Moody's, S&P and Fitch. This will add to the financial problems of Pakistan, which is seeking aid from all possible international avenues.

About FATF:

- The **Financial Action Task Force (on Money Laundering) (FATF)**, also known by its [French](#) name, ***Groupe d'action financière (GAFI)***, is an [intergovernmental organization](#) founded in 1989 on the initiative of the [G7](#) to develop policies to combat [money laundering](#).
- In 2001 its mandate expanded to include [terrorism financing](#).
- It monitors progress in implementing the FATF Recommendations through "peer reviews" ("mutual evaluations") of member countries. The FATF Secretariat is housed at the [OECD](#) headquarters in [Paris](#).

Members of FATF

- As of 2018 there are 36 Member countries of FATF and policies drafted by FATF are highly regarded and treated as law.



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- Starting with its own members, the FATF monitors countries' progress in implementing the FATF Recommendations; reviews money laundering and terrorist financing techniques and counter-measures; and, promotes the adoption and implementation of the FATF Recommendations globally.
- Countries are subjected to evaluation by FATF to see that they are upholding laws and regulations enforced by FATF.

International Pulsar Timing Array

Why in News?

The city-based National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) is all set to host the five-day annual International Pulsar Timing Array (IPTA) meet from June 17 to 21.

The meet is a collaboration of radio astronomers from a dozen countries across the globe.

- The IPTA is a collaboration of radio astronomers from a dozen countries across the globe.
- It uses more than 12 radio telescopes all over the world with an aim to detect ultra-low frequency gravitational waves.
- More than 40 expert international astronomers and 30 international students are expected to participate in the event, besides several Indian participants.
- "The upgrade of the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune and the Ooty Radio Telescope (ORT) has helped us meet the parameters for being a full member of the IPTA.
- The current status of the quest for ultra-low frequency Gravitational Waves and the roadmap for future technical and scientific challenges is to be the main focus of the meeting.



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Significance of Waves:

- These waves are wrinkles in space-time produced by two massive black holes, each revolving around the other.
- Such black holes, which weigh billion times more than our Sun, are found in the centres of colliding galaxies.
- These waves affect radio pulses from 10km size stars called radio pulsars by changing ever so slightly the period of radio pulsation of these stars.
- Measuring these periods to a precision of 10 seconds of a nano-second may help the IPTA experiment to discover Gravitational Waves with a period of about a billionth of a second.