

# Abhimanu

Weekly current affairs Series

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Week: III, July 2018

Abhimanu's IAS Study Group  
Chandigarh

## NATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

### Cabinet approves Fair and Remunerative Price payable by sugar mills

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for fixing the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane at Rs. 255/- per quintal (qt) for sugar season 2017-18.
- The approved FRP reflects an increase of 10.87% over the FRP of sugar season 2016-17.
- The FRP so approved shall be applicable for purchase of sugarcane from the farmers in the sugar season 2017-18 by the sugar mills. The move is a reflection of the Government's pro-farmer initiatives, keeping in mind the interest of sugarcane farmers and importance of the sugar industry.

#### Analysis:

- The sugar industry is an important agro-based industry that impacts the livelihood of about 50 million sugarcane farmers and around 5 lakh workers directly employed in sugar mills, apart from those employed in various ancillary activities including farm labour and transporters. This decision has been taken to provide appropriate price to the farmers for their cane.
- FRP of sugarcane has been determined on the basis of recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State Governments and other stake-holders.
- Recommended FRP has been arrived at by taking into account various factors such as cost of production, overall demand-supply situation, domestic and international prices, inter-crop price parity, terms of trade prices of primary by-products, and likely impact of FRP on general price level and resource use efficiency.
- During the last 3 years, in order to support the sugarcane farmers and to ensure that their dues are paid by the sugar mills, the Government of India introduced schemes such as SEFASU; Soft Loan, Incentive for Raw Sugar Export and Production Subsidy.
- Through these interventions, the funds made available to the mills were utilized for payment of the cane price arrears of the farmers. Direct credit into the farmers' bank accounts of their dues was also mandated.

### Cabinet approves Special Package for Irrigation Projects

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the implementation of Centrally Sponsored-Scheme for completion of 83 Minor Irrigation projects and 8 major/medium irrigation projects of Marathwada, Vidharbha and drought prone areas of the rest of Maharashtra.

#### About Project:

- The special package shall help in creation of additional potential of 3.77 L Hectares. In Marathwada, Vidharbha and drought prone areas of rest of Maharashtra.
- The projects included under special package are over and above the 26 major/ medium projects of Maharashtra having ultimate potential of 8.501 Ha being funded under PMKSY-AIBP, which are planned to be completed by December,2019.
- Progress of the projects would be monitored by State as well as Central Water Commission.
- The overall balance cost of the projects as on 01.04.2018 is estimated to be Rs. 13,651.61 crore.

#### Analysis:

- Completion of these projects will ensure assured source of water to the farmers in the command area of these projects. This will increase yield of their crops and thereby increase the income of the farmers.
- On completion of the projects, the utilization of irrigation potential of about 3.77 lakh ha will transform the agriculture scenario of the region resulting in generation of substantially more employment opportunities through increase in cropping intensity, change in cropping pattern, agro processing and other ancillary activities.
- Moreover, implementation of scheme will generate employment of approximately 341 lakh man-days for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers.
- Maharashtra has experienced hydrological and agricultural drought during the years 2012 to 2016. The situation has been worst in Vidharbha and Marathawada region with unfortunate incidence of suicides by farmers been reported there. Also Drought Prone Areas (DPA) in rest of Maharashtra have experienced distress in the recent years. These projects are ongoing, yet, they are languishing due to fund constraints as informed by the State Government. The completion of balance works of these projects will help in creation of additional 3.77 lakh hectare of irrigation potential and assured source of water to the farmers in the command area of these projects. This will increase yield of their crops and thereby increase the income of the farmers.

## NATIONAL POLITY

### India to have national database for gun holders

- Union Home Ministry is planning to create National Database of Arms Licenses system from April 2019.
- The decision has been taken by exercising powers under Section 44 of the Arms Act, 1959 (54 of 1959) by amending the Arms Rules, 2016. These rules will be called the Arms (Second Amendment) Rules, 2018.

#### **About National Database of Arms Licences:**

- Every licensing and renewing authority will have to enter the data in the National Database of Arms Licenses system, which will generate a UIN, and with effect from April 1, 2019, any arms license without UIN shall be considered invalid.
- The decision has been taken by exercising powers under Section 44 of the Arms Act, 1959 (54 of 1959) by amending the Arms Rules, 2016. These rules will be called the Arms (Second Amendment) Rules, 2018.
- Additionally, any existing licensee holding multiple licenses shall on or before April 1 make an application for grant of a single license in respect of all firearms held by him or her under his or her UIN to the concerned licensing authority.
- Where the applicant applying for a license for restricted category of arms or ammunition is also a holder of a license for permissible category, or where the applicant applying for permissible category of arms or ammunition is also a holder of a license for restricted category, the licensing authority concerned shall issue a new license for restricted or permissible category of arms or ammunition under the existing UIN of the licensee, the notification said.
- Separate license books will be generated in case of each license, separately for restricted and permissible categories of arms and ammunition with an overall ceiling of three firearms under a single UIN.
- These amendments will eliminate the possibilities of issuing arms license to persons whose antecedents are not bona fide.
- Under Section 3 of the Arms Act, it is essential to obtain an arms possession license issued by a competent licensing authority, by any person for acquisition, possession or carrying any firearms or ammunition.

## Oil ministry supports petcoke import ban

- The ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEF&CC) has informed the Supreme Court that it was undertaking a study on the ban on petroleum coke (petcoke) before it decided on imposing a ban of its import.
- Court was hearing a plea seeking ban on import of petcoke --an industrial fuel and an alternative to coal-- which causes several times more air pollution than coal.
- In October last year, the Supreme Court had upheld the ban on use of petcoke in New Delhi and neighbouring states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, after the air pollution level in the national capital reached hazardous level due to increased smog.
- The ban on use of petcoke was relaxed, in December 2017, for cement manufacturing, lime industries and on furnace oil for power generation after the MoEF submitted that the use of petcoke in cement manufacturing plants was minuscule and it was used for non-fuel purposes. Similarly, the use of furnace oil in electricity generation plants was low in cement manufacturing units.

### About Petcoke:

- This petcoke contains 7-8 per cent sulphur in it, which means more than 1.5 million tonne sulphur is going in the environment through the chimneys of various factories.
- Many foreign countries have already banned the use of petcoke as fuel as it emits sulphur in high quantity.
- Petroleum coke, also called pet coke or petcoke, is a solid carbon material that resembles coal; it is a product of oil refining.

### What are the health risks of petroleum coke?

- Health activists are particularly concerned about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller (referred to as PM10) because those are the particles that generally pass through the throat and nose and enter the lungs. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects
- Petroleum coke is 90% elemental carbon and 3% to 6% elemental sulfur; the rest is elemental hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. There are also trace amounts of metals and organic compounds. While trace amounts of toxic materials have been measured in petroleum coke, studies on rats show that petroleum coke itself has a low level of toxicity and that there is no evidence of carcinogenicity.

## India's Parliament rejects no confidence against motion

- Lok Sabha has rejected no confidence motion against the Council of Minister by figure of 325 to 126.

### What is a no-confidence motion?

- Neither a confidence motion nor a no-confidence motion is mentioned in the Constitution. But Article 75 spells it out that "the council of ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People". this implies that the majority of Lok Sabha members must support the prime minister and his cabinet.
- A no-confidence motion is an attempt, usually by an Opposition party, to get the government of the day to prove its majority on the floor of the House.
- The motion can only be moved by a member in the Lok Sabha, and, once moved, offers MPs an opportunity to discuss the government's performance, before voting on whether the ruling party has the "confidence" of the House.
- A no-confidence motion is slightly different from a motion of confidence, or trust vote, which is moved by the government, as an ordinary motion under Rule 184. A government can prove its majority by moving a confidence motion as a counter to the opposition parties.
- Once the notice is received and considered to be in order, the Speaker reads out the motion. If more than 50 members of Parliament are in favour of it, the Speaker will allot a date and time to discuss the motion. The Speaker has to put forth every question necessary that will help the House in determining its decision and may also allot a time limit for speeches.

- The Prime Minister and Council of Ministers can only hold office if they have the confidence of the Lok Sabha. If they fail to do so, then they are obliged to resign. The Prime Minister may also suggest dissolving the House before the vote on either a confidence or a no-confidence motion

#### **Previous no-confidence motions**

- So far, 26 no-confidence motions have been moved in Lok Sabha since Independence.
- Acharya Kripalani moved the first no confidence motion in August 1963, immediately after the India-China war.
- Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister faced the most number of no-confidence motions-15.
- Lal Bahadur Shastri and Narasimha Rao both faced it thrice. Morarji Desai twice and Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi, Atal BihariVajpayee faced once each.

## **Samagra Shiksha Scheme**

- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has announced 'Padhe Bharat- Badhe Bharat' an initiative to promote reading culture among students. The initiative has been launched under 'Samagra Shiksha'.

#### **About Samagra Shiksha scheme:**

- The Union Budget, 2018-19, has proposed to treat school education holistically without segmentation from pre-nursery to Class 12.
- Samagra Shiksha - an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12 has been, therefore, prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes. It subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- This sector-wide development programme/scheme would also help harmonise the implementation mechanisms and transaction costs at all levels, particularly in using state, district and sub-district level systems and resources, besides envisaging one comprehensive strategic plan for development of school education at the district level.
- The shift in the focus is from project objectives to improving systems level performance and schooling outcomes which will be the emphasis of the combined Scheme along-with incentivizing States towards improving quality of education
- The scheme envisages the 'school' as a continuum from pre-school, primary, upper primary, secondary to Senior Secondary levels. The vision of the Scheme is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for Education.
- The fund sharing pattern for the scheme between Centre and States is at present in the ratio of 90:10 for the 8 North-Eastern States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura and 3 Himalayan States viz. Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and 60:40 for all other States and Union Territories with Legislature. It is 100% centrally sponsored for Union Territories without Legislature. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes received in October, 2015.

#### **Objectives:**

- Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students
- Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education
- Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;
- Ensuring minimum standards in schooling provisions;
- Promoting Vocationalisation of education;
- Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009;
- and Strengthening and up-gradation of SCERTs/State Institutes of Education and DIET as a nodal agencies for teacher training.

#### **Outcomes:**

- The main outcomes of the Scheme are envisaged as Universal Access, Equity and Quality, promoting Vocationalisation of Education and strengthening of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

## Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013

- The Rajya Sabha has passed the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013. The Bill seeks to amend the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- About Bill
- The Act covers the offence of giving a bribe to a public servant under abetment. The Bill makes specific provisions related to giving a bribe to a public servant, and giving a bribe by a commercial organisation.
- The Bill redefines criminal misconduct to only cover misappropriation of property and possession of disproportionate assets.
- The Bill modifies the definitions and penalties for offences related to taking a bribe, being a habitual offender and abetting an offence.
- Powers and procedures for the attachment and forfeiture of property of public servants accused of corruption have been introduced in the Bill.
- The Act requires prior sanction to prosecute serving public officials. The Bill extends this protection to former officials.

### Key Issues and Analysis

- The Bill makes giving a bribe a specific offence. There are diverging views on whether bribe giving under all circumstances must be penalised. Some have argued that a coerced bribe giver must be distinguished from a collusive bribe giver.
- The Bill has deleted the provision that protects a bribe giver from prosecution, for any statement made by him during a corruption trial. This may deter bribe givers from appearing as witnesses in court.
- The Bill has replaced the definition of criminal misconduct. It now requires that the intention to acquire assets disproportionate to income also be proved, in addition to possession of such assets. Thus, the threshold to establish the offence of possession of disproportionate assets has been increased by the Bill.
- By redefining the offence of criminal misconduct, the Bill does not cover circumstances where the public official: (i) uses illegal means, (ii) abuses his position, or (iii) disregards public interest and obtains a valuable thing or reward for himself or another person.
- Under the Act, the guilt of the person is presumed for the offences of taking a bribe, being a habitual offender or abetting an offence. The Bill amends this provision to only cover the offence of taking a bribe.

## Lok Sabha approves bill to bring back fugitive economic offenders

- The Bill allows for a person to be declared as a fugitive economic offender (FEO) if: (i) an arrest warrant has been issued against him for any specified offences where the value involved is over Rs 100 crore, and (ii) he has left the country and refuses to return to face prosecution.
- To declare a person an FEO, an application will be filed in a Special Court (designated under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002) containing details of the properties to be confiscated, and any information about the person's whereabouts. The Special Court will require the person to appear at a specified place at least six weeks from issue of notice. Proceedings will be terminated if the person appears.
- The Bill allows authorities to provisionally attach properties of an accused, while the application is pending before the Special Court.
- Upon declaration as an FEO, properties of a person may be confiscated and vested in the central government, free of encumbrances (rights and claims in the property). Further, the FEO or any company associated with him may be barred from filing or defending civil claims.

### Key Issues and Analysis

- Under the Bill, any court or tribunal may bar an FEO or an associated company from filing or defending civil claims before it. Barring these persons from filing or defending civil claims may violate Article 21 of the Constitution i.e. the right to life. Article 21 has been interpreted to include the right to access justice.
- Under the Bill, an FEO's property may be confiscated and vested in the central government. The Bill allows the Special Court to exempt properties where certain persons may have an interest in such property (e.g., secured creditors). However, it does not specify whether the central government will share sale proceeds with any other claimants who do not have such an interest (e.g., unsecured creditors).
- The Bill does not require the authorities to obtain a search warrant or ensure the presence of witnesses before a search. This differs from other laws, such as the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, which contain such safeguards. These safeguards protect against harassment and planting of evidence.
- The Bill provides for confiscation of property upon a person being declared an FEO. This differs from other laws, such as CrPC, 1973, where confiscation is final two years after proclamation as absconder.

## **Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan**

- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is running "Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan" in five main stem Ganga basin states – Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

### **About Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan:**

- The drive was launched on the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month, and the week upto 15th July was observed as 'ShubharambhSaptah'.
- State Forest Departments of these states have been made the nodal agencies for the smooth and effective execution of the campaign.
- Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) have been designated as the district level Nodal Officers and Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF) at the State level for organizing the events.
- This campaign is significant as it aims to bring greater awareness among people and other stakeholders regarding the importance of afforestation for the task of Ganga Rejuvenation.
- A number of schools, colleges and departments have been requested to "Adopt a Plant" for turning this campaign into a people's movement. Various seminars, workshops, lectures, drawing and painting competitions etc. are being organised.

### **Analysis:**

- Forests cause higher rainfall and raise water level in the rivers. Through their foliage, craggy bark and abundant leaf litter, trees and forests decrease the speed of water dispersion and favour slow but greater infiltration of rainwater to ensure smooth functioning of the hydrological cycle.
- Moreover, presence of healthy forest cover along the river provides self-cleaning ability to the river.
- Thus, afforestation and augmentation of existing forest along the Ganga holds the promise to strengthen the riparian ecosystem thereby contributing to the overarching cause of Ganga Rejuvenation.

## **Women have the right to enter, pray in Sabarimala temple**

- Supreme Court observed that banning women aged between 10 and 50 from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala runs afoul of their constitutional rights.
- Hearing a batch of petitions challenging the age-old prohibition on women in the menstruating age group in the famed hill shrine, the apex court said women's right to worship is a constitutional one and it does not depend on laws.

### **Observations made by the Court:**

- In a public place of worship, a woman can enter, where a man can go. What applies to a man, applies to a woman.
- Women and their physiological phenomena are creations of God. If not God, of nature. Why should this (menstruation) be a reason for exclusion for employment or worship or anything?

- Article 25 (1) mandates freedom of conscience and right to practise religion. "All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion". This means right to pray is a constitutional right.
- Also, the Constitution upholds the ideals of liberty of thought, expression, belief and faith, be it for man or woman.
- Therefore, the discrimination is a violation of the rights to equality and gender justice.

## WCD Ministry to propose enhanced punishment for sexual assault on male children

- The Law Ministry has cleared the proposal to amend the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, for enhancing punishment in cases of sexual assault against young boys.
- The ministry seeks to amend section 3 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, under which a child marriage is only voidable at the option of the contracting parties.
- The move is being seen to bring in a gender-neutral law while dealing with cases of sexual assaults.

### About POSCO Act:

- It has been drafted to strengthen the legal provisions for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation. It provides protection to all children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.
- This Act is monitored and implemented by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR).
- This Act includes males, females and transgenders as well.
- It gives the formal definition of a child i.e. any person below the age of 18 years.
- The reporting, recording of evidence, investigation and trial of offences should be done in a child friendly manner. The trial of cases should be done in camera.
- Recording the statement of the child at his/her residence or at a place of his/her choice, preferably by a woman police officer not below the rank of sub inspector.
- No child should be detained in the police station in the night for any reason.
- Translators should be provided to them to overcome the language barrier. A special educator or any person familiar with the manner of communication of the child should be provided if the child is disabled.
- **Analysis:**
- Child sexual abuse is gender neutral. Boys who are sexually abused as children spend a lifetime of silence because of the stigma and shame attached to male survivors speaking out. It is a serious problem and needs to be addressed," she had
- In 2007, the ministry had sampled 12,447 children in families, schools, at work and living on the street.
- It had found that more than half had faced sexual abuse, and 53 per cent of victims were boys.

## Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017

- Lok Sabha has passed The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017 to abolish the 'no detention policy' in schools.

### Highlights of the Bill:

- The Bill amends the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The Act was having provision of no detention policy i.e. no child can be held back in any class until completion of elementary school (classes 1-8).



- The Bill amends provision related to no detention policy in the parent Act to empower central or state government to allow schools to hold back child in class 5, class 8, or in both classes. It mandates conducting, regular examination in class 5 and class 8 at end of every academic year.
- In case, child fails class 5, class 8 examinations, he will be given additional instruction and opportunity for a re-examination (within two months from the declaration of the result). If child fails again in re-examination, he may be held back in class 5, class 8, or in both classes.
- The Bill empowers Union and State governments to decide whether to not hold back child in any class till completion of elementary education. Further, Union or State governments will decide manner and conditions subject to which child may be held back.

#### **Analysis:**

- There are differing views on whether children should be detained for failing examinations in elementary school. Some argue that automatic promotion reduces incentive for children to learn and for teachers to teach. Others argue that detaining a child leads to drop outs and does not focus on the systemic factors that affect learning such as quality of teachers, schools, and assessment.
- Provisions of the Bill regarding assessment and detention are at variance with what most states have demanded. In this context, the question is whether these decisions should be taken by Parliament or left to state legislatures.
- It is unclear as to who will conduct the examination (which may lead to detention): centre, state, or the school.
- The TSR Subramanian committee for formulation of the National Policy on Education has also suggested that 'no detention' policy should be discontinued after Class V. It had recommended restoration of detention provision, remedial coaching and two extra chances to each student such to move to a higher class.
- A sub-committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education also studied the issue closely and recommended a provisional detention clause at Classes V and VIII. In 2013, a parliamentary panel had also asked the ministry to 'rethink' on its "policy of automatic promotion up to Class VIII".

## **Cabinet relaxes NELP, pre-NELP pact rules**

- Union Cabinet approved the policy framework to streamline production sharing contracts signed in the pre-New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) and NELP periods.
- Key decisions under the framework include increasing the exploration period granted for blocks in the northeast and easing the sharing of royalties with the developers of the blocks.

#### **About New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP):**

- The main objective was to attract significant risk capital from Indian and Foreign companies, state of part technologies, new geological concepts and best management practices to explore oil and gas resources in the country to meet rising demands of oil and gas.
- This policy, NELP was approved in 1997 and it became effective in February, 1999 Since then licenses for exploration are being awarded only through a competitive bidding system and National Oil Companies (NOCs) are required to compete on an equal footing with Indian and foreign companies to secure Petroleum Exploration Licences (PELs).
- Nine rounds of bids have so far been concluded under NELP, in which production sharing contracts for 254 exploration blocks have been signed.
- In 2016, this policy was replaced by new policy i.e, Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP).

#### **The salient features of NELP are as under:**

- 100% FDI is allowed under NELP
- No mandatory state participation through ONGC/OIL or any carried interest of the Government.
- Blocks to be awarded through open international competitive bidding.
- ONGC and OIL to compete for obtaining the petroleum exploration licenses on a competitive basis instead of the existing system of granting them PELs on nomination basis.
- ONGC and OIL to get the same fiscal and contract terms as private companies.

- Freedom to the contractors for marketing of crude oil and gas in the domestic market.
- Royalty at the rate of 12.5% for the onland areas and 10% for offshore areas.
- Royalty to be charged at half the prevailing rate for deep water areas beyond 400 m bathymetry for the first 7 years after commencement of commercial production.
- Cess to be exempted for production from blocks offered under NELP.
- Companies to be exempted from payments of import duty on goods imported for petroleum operations.
- No signature, discovery or production bonuses.
- A Model Production Sharing Contract (MPSC) which is reviewed for every NELP round.
- Contracts to be governed in accordance with applicable Indian Laws.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### India, US to enhance cooperation in aviation security, counter-terror

- India and the United States resolved to enhance bilateral cooperation in areas, including counter-terrorism, immigration and aviation security, at the Homeland Security Dialogue.
- The talks focused on issues relating to security cooperation, customs and immigration, aviation security and capacity building.
- The two countries are in the process of firming up a list of terror fugitives and have agreed on the names of individuals for the global entry programme (GEP) under the Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6 (HSPD-6) Agreement.
- The HSPD-6 pact allows sharing of terror-related information, while the GEP exempts prominent citizens from immigration checks.

#### About Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 6

- Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 6 concerns the use of information about individuals known or suspected to engage in terrorist activities.
- The new policy of the United States is to develop, integrate, and maintain thorough, accurate, and current information about individuals known or appropriately suspected to be or have been engaged in conduct constituting, in preparation for, in aid of, or related to terrorism.
- The directive also states that information shall be used to support federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, foreign-government, and private-sector screening processes, and diplomatic, military, intelligence, law enforcement, immigration, visa, and protective processes.
- HSPD-6 database include name of the terror suspect , Nationality, Date of Birth, Photos , Finger prints and passport number.

### BRICS Regional Aviation Partnership

- The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) amongst BRICS Nations on the Regional Aviation Partnership Cooperation viz. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- The objective is that BRICS countries would benefit from the establishing of an institutional framework to cooperate in the field of civil aviation.

#### Among the areas of cooperation, following areas have been identified:

- Public Policies and best practices in regional services.

- Regional Airports.
- Airport infrastructure management and air navigation services.
- Technical cooperation between regulatory agencies.
- Environment Sustainability; including deliberation of global initiatives.
- Qualification and Training.
- Other fields as mutually determined.

#### **About BRICS**

- The acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper, "The World Needs Better Economic BRICs" on the basis of econometric analyses projecting that the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China would individually and collectively occupy far greater economic space and would be amongst the world's largest economies in the next 50 years or so.
- As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the Leaders of Russia, India and China in St. Petersburg on the margins of G8 Outreach Summit in 2006. The grouping was formalized during the 1st meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of UNGA in New York in 2006. The 1st BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on 16 June 2009.
- It was agreed to expand BRIC into BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa at the BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in September 2010. Accordingly, South Africa attended the 3rd BRICS Summit in Sanya, China on 14 April 2011.

## **SCIENCE AFFAIRS**

### **ISRO is planning to mine Moon**

- India is set to launch a lunar rover in October to look for signs of water and a nuclear fuel called helium-3 in the moon's crust.
- A lot of countries and companies are keen on exploiting helium-3, which scientists hope could be used in a kind of nuclear fusion that doesn't create radioactive waste. If this pans out, the isotope could provide safer nuclear energy over the coming centuries.
- Helium-3 is already produced on Earth, and is used for things like detecting illicit radioactive materials at ports, but it's rare and very expensive. The moon has a lot more of it.
- So far, China has been the only country this century to put a rover on the moon, partly in order to scout out helium-3 deposits. Now India is following suit.
- Private enterprise is also involved in the new space race, with Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin company intending to build a moon colony.

#### **Why Helium- 3?**

- The isotope of Helium, which is abundant on the moon, could theoretically meet global energy demands for three to five centuries.
- This kind of energy is also expected to be worth trillions of dollars (one expert estimated Helium-3's value at about five billion US dollars a ton).
- There are approximately 1 million metric tons of Helium-3 embedded in the moon, although only about a quarter of that can realistically be brought to Earth.

- Since the isotope is not radioactive, it could be used in fusion reactors for nuclear energy without dangerous nuclear by-products.

## About Chandrayaan-2:

- Chandrayaan-2, India's second mission to the Moon is a totally indigenous mission comprising of an Orbiter, Lander and Rover. After reaching the 100 km lunar orbit, the Lander housing the Rover will separate from the Orbiter. After a controlled descent, the Lander will soft land on the lunar surface at a specified site and deploy a Rover.
- The mission will carry a six-wheeled Rover which will move around the landing site in semi-autonomous mode as decided by the ground commands. The instruments on the rover will observe the lunar surface and send back data, which will be useful for analysis of the lunar soil.
- The Chandrayaan-2 weighing around 3290 kg and would orbit around the moon and perform the objectives of remote sensing the moon. The payloads will collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.

## QUICK FACTS

- 8th India-Oman Joint Commission Meeting held in: **Muscat**
- Nelson Mandela Day is observed on : **18 July**
- 2nd National Tourism Conclave organised in : **Rajasthan**
- 7th Annual General Body Meeting of Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD) was held in : **New Delhi**
- Sangita Kalanidhi award of the Music Academy : **Aruna Sairam**
- Winner of Men's Singles Wimbledon : **Novak Djokovic**
- Winner of First Athletic Cup: **USA**