



News Analysis (08 Oct, 2020)

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India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue

Why in News

India and Japan recently held **13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue** in which inter-alia both countries agreed to sign a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)** in the field of **cybersecurity** that will promote cooperation in key areas such as **5G network**, Critical Information Infrastructure, **Internet of Things (IoT)** and **Artificial Intelligence**.

Key Points

- **Cyber Security MoC**
 - It will enhance **cooperation in areas of mutual interest**, which include **capacity building** in the area of cyberspace, protection of **critical infrastructure**, sharing information on cybersecurity, developing joint mechanisms for practical cooperation to **mitigate cyber threats** etc.
 - **Significance:** It will attract stakeholders in the Indian 5G sector as it gets ready to open up for international operators.
 - This becomes even more important since it is possible that the **Chinese companies are not allowed to participate in the 5G** arena in India due to recent **Indo-China tensions**, increasing **cybersecurity threat due to Chinese cyber-attacks** and **hybrid data warfare** by China.
 - Japan is upgrading its cybersecurity as it has been repeatedly hit by **cyberattacks** this year.
 - Also, **Covid-19 pandemic** has made countries, companies and institutions dependent on digital technology more than ever before.

- The dialogue emphasized a strong partnership between the two countries in overcoming **challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic**.
 With Covid-19 and **trade tensions between China and the United States** are threatening supply chains, Japan has mooted the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) as a trilateral approach** to trade, with India and Australia as the key-partners.
- **The importance of the Indo-pacific region** was discussed.
 - Japan and India both have similarities in their respective Indo-Pacific visions, that are based on rule of law and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.
 - Both Japan and India need to counter the increasing Chinese aggression in the region.
 - India launched **the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** at the **East Asia Summit** in November 2019.
 - It focuses on seven central pillars conceived around Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology, Maritime Resources, Capacity Building and Resource Sharing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation, and Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.
- The issue of **abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea** was also raised on which India promised to extend support for closure.
 Abductions of Japanese citizens from Japan by agents of the North Korean government took place from **1977 to 1983**. Although only 17 Japanese are officially recognized by the Japanese government as having been abducted, there may have been hundreds of victims.

- **Other Recent Developments Between India and Japan**

- Recently, India and Japan signed a **logistics agreement** that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as **the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)**.
- In 2019, India and Japan held the first-ever ministerial-level **2+2 dialogue**. This dialogue involves the Defence and Foreign Ministers on both sides and is seen as an endorsement of the special strategic partnership between **India and Japan**.
- Both countries are also part of the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)**.
- Recently, it has been reported that the second Ministerial meeting of Quad countries will be held in Japan.
- A “**India-Japan Digital Partnership**” (I-JDP) was launched during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Japan in October 2018, furthering existing areas of cooperation as well as new initiatives within the scope of cooperation in S&T/ICT, focusing more on “**Digital ICT Technologies**”.
- **In 2014**, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to '**Special Strategic and Global Partnership**'.
- The **India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force in August 2011 covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues.
- India and Japan defence forces organize a series of **bilateral exercises namely, JIMEX, SHINYUU Maitri, and Dharma Guardian**. Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise with the USA**.

Way Forward

- India needs sophisticated technology from Japan, so more collaboration and cooperation can prove beneficial to both nations.
- There is a huge potential with respect to **Make in India**. Joint ventures could be created by merging Japanese digital technology with Indian raw materials and labour.
- Closer cooperation is the best measure to **combat China's** growing role in Asia and Indo-Pacific, in **physical as well as digital space**.

Source: TH

Ratification of 7 Persistent Organic Pollutants

Why in News

The **Union Cabinet** has approved the **ratification of seven chemicals listed under Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**.

The **Cabinet further delegated its powers** to ratify chemicals under the Stockholm Convention to Union Ministries of External Affairs (**MEA**) and Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MEFCC**) in respect of POPs for streamlining the procedure.

Key Points

- **Persistent Organic Pollutants: POPs** are identified chemical substances that are characterised by:
 - **Persistence in the environment.**
 - **Bio-accumulation** in the fatty acids in living organisms.
 - **Less soluble in water.**
 - Adverse **effect on human health/ environment.**
 - Exposure to POPs can lead to cancer, damage to central & peripheral nervous systems, diseases of the immune system, reproductive disorders and interference with normal infant and child development.
 - The property of **long-range environmental transport (LRET)** makes them spread widely in the atmosphere.

- **The Stockholm Convention:**

- It is a **global treaty** to protect **human health and the environment** from POPs.
- It was opened for signature in 2001 in Stockholm (Sweden) and became effective in **2004**.
- POPs are listed in various Annexes to the Stockholm Convention after thorough scientific research, deliberations and negotiations among member countries.
- **Objectives:**
 - Support the transition to safer alternatives.
 - Target additional POPs for action.
 - Cleanup old stockpiles and equipment containing POPs.
 - Work together for a POPs-free future.
- **India ratified the Stockholm Convention in 2006** as per **Article 25(4)**, which enabled it to keep itself in a default "opt-out" position such that amendments in various Annexes of the convention cannot be enforced on it unless an instrument of ratification/ acceptance/ approval or accession is explicitly deposited with UN depositary.
- The convention calls to **ban nine of the dirty dozen chemicals** (key POPs), limit the use of DDT to malaria control, and curtail inadvertent production of dioxins and furans. The convention **listed twelve distinct chemicals** in three categories:
 - **Eight pesticides** (aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene)
 - **Two industrial chemicals** (poly chlorinated biphenyls and hexachlorobenzene)
 - **Two unintended by-products of many industrial processes involving chlorine** such as waste incineration, chemical and pesticide manufacturing and pulp and paper bleaching (poly chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans, commonly referred to as dioxins and furans).

- **Recent Cabinet Decision:** The Union Cabinet has approved the ratification of seven chemicals listed **under Stockholm Convention**. These chemicals are regulated under the following domestic provision for POPs:

Regulation of Persistent Organic Pollutants Rules:

- Considering its commitment towards providing a safe environment and addressing human health risks, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** had notified the 'Regulation of Persistent Organic Pollutants Rules, in 2018 **under** the provisions of **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
 - The regulation inter alia prohibits the manufacture, trade, use, import and export of seven chemicals, namely:
 - Chlordecone,
 - Hexabromobiphenyl,
 - Hexabromodiphenyl ether and Hepta Bromodiphenyl Ether (Commercial octa-BDE),
 - Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and Pentabromodiphenyl ether (Commercial penta-BDE),
 - Pentachlorobenzene,
 - Hexabromocyclododecane, and
 - Hexachlorobutadiene.
- **Significance of Decision:**
 - The Cabinet's approval for ratification of POPs demonstrates **India's commitment to meet its international obligations** with regard to protection of environment and human health.
 - It also indicates the **resolve of the Government to take action on POPs** by implementing control measures, develop and implement action plans for unintentionally produced chemicals, develop inventories of the chemicals' stockpiles and review.
 - The ratification process would enable India to access the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** financial resources.

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Global Environment Facility

- GEF was established with the **Rio Earth Summit** of 1992.
- **Headquarter:** Washington, D.C., USA.
- The GEF is jointly managed by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the **World Bank**, and the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- The financial mechanism was established to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.

- It provides **funds to the developing countries and transition economies** for projects related to climate change, biodiversity, the ozone layer, etc.
- It is a **financial mechanism for 5 major international environmental conventions**:
 - The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC),
 - **The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity** (UNCBD),
 - The **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants** (POPs),
 - The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD), and
 - The **Minamata Convention on Mercury**.

Source: PIB

Supreme Court on Right to Protest

Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court** (SC) has upheld the right to peaceful protest against the law but also cleared that public ways and public spaces cannot be occupied and that too indefinitely.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - The ruling came after a **petition was filed in the SC** highlighting problems caused by the protests which led to the roadblock and traffic problems.

Sit-in protests against the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)**, **2019** were organised in the **Shaheen Bagh area of the capital** from **December 2019 to March 2020**.
 - The petition highlighted that the Delhi High Court (HC) should have intervened positively and not left the situation fluid and the administration too should have talked to the protesters.
 - Earlier, the petition was filed in **Delhi HC**, which **heard and disposed of the plea the same day without any specific direction**.
 - Despite a lapse of a considerable period of time, there was **neither any negotiations nor any action by the administration**.

- **Issues with the Protest and its Location:**
 - Protesters **did not fully realise the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic** and **continued large gatherings in a small place** and there was also a general **unwillingness to relocate** to another site.
 - The protest seemed typical of the many **digitally-fuelled “leaderless” dissent** seen in modern times.
 - The presence of various groups of protesters had resulted in **many influencers, acting possibly at cross-purposes with each other.**
- **Rulings:**
 - **On Assembly:**

The **court cannot accept the plea of the applicants** (who sought to intervene in the matter in defence of the protesters) that an **indeterminable number of people can assemble whenever they choose to protest.**
 - **On Role of Administration:**
 - Such kind of occupation of public ways, whether at the site in question or anywhere else for protests, is **not acceptable and the administration should take action to keep the areas clear** of encroachments or obstructions.
 - It highlighted that the State or UT administrations have the **entire responsibility to prevent encroachments** in public spaces and **should not wait for courts** to pass suitable orders.
 - **Reference:**
 - SC referred to its **2018 judgment** in the ***Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan vs Union of India and Another case***, which dealt with demonstrations at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar.
 - The judgment **tried to balance the interests of local residents with those of protesters** to hold demonstrations and directed the police to devise a proper mechanism for limited use of the area for peaceful protests and demonstrations and to lay down parameters for this.
 - **On technology Involvement:**
 - The verdict also **dwelt on the merits and demerits of technology impacting social movements.**
 - The ability to scale up quickly, using digital infrastructure, has empowered movements to embrace their **often-leaderless aspirations and evade usual restrictions of censorship.**
 - However, social media channels pose the **danger of creating highly polarised environments**, which often see **parallel conversations running with no constructive outcome** evident.

- **SC's Observations on Dissent:**

- SC **appreciated the existence of the right to peaceful protest against the legislation** and held that “**democracy and dissent go hand in hand**, but then the demonstrations expressing dissent have to be in designated places alone”.
- The **seeds of protest and dissent were sown deep during the Freedom struggle** but dissent against the **colonial rule cannot be equated with dissent in a self-ruled democracy**.
- The Constitution **guarantees the right** to protest and express dissent, **but with an obligation towards certain duties**.
 - **Article 19** confers upon citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression under **Article 19(1)(a)** and right to assemble peacefully without arms under **Article 19(1)(b)**.
 - These rights, in cohesion, enable every citizen to assemble peacefully and protest against action or inaction of the State.
- In a democracy, the rights of free speech and peaceful protest are “treasured” and must be **encouraged and respected**.

However, these rights are **also subject to reasonable restrictions** mentioned under **Article 19(2)**, imposed in the interest of sovereignty, integrity and public order with the help of police regulations.
- **Fundamental rights do not live in isolation**. The right of the protester has to be **balanced with the right of the commuter and has to co-exist** in mutual respect.

Source: TH

Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report: World Bank

Why in News

The **World Bank** in its **biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report** mentions that **Covid-19** can add around 27-40 million **new poor** in **Sub-Saharan Africa** and around 49-57 million in **South Asia** region.

The “new poor” will:

- Be more urban poor.
- Be more engaged in informal services and manufacturing and less in agriculture.
- Live in congested urban settings and work in the sectors most affected by lockdowns and mobility restrictions.

Key Points

- **Extreme Poverty Projection:** The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to push an additional **88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year**, with the total rising to as many as **150 million by 2021**, depending on the severity of the economic contraction.
 - **Percentage of Population:** The **pandemic and global recession** may cause over **1.4% of the world's population** to fall into extreme poverty.
 - **Extreme poverty:** It is defined as **living on less than \$1.90 a day**. The World Bank measures poverty lines of \$3.20 and \$5.50, and also a multidimensional spectrum that includes access to **education and basic infrastructure**.
 - **Increase in Rate of Poverty:** Global extreme poverty rate is projected to rise by around **1.3% to 9.2%** in 2020. If the pandemic would not have been there, the poverty rate was expected to drop to **7.9%** in 2020.
- **Regions of Incidence:** Many of the newly poor individuals will be **from countries that already have high poverty rates (Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia)**.
 - Around **82%** of the total poor will be in middle income countries (MICs).
 - **Flood Prone Areas:** About **132 million** of the global poor live in high flood risk regions. The focus on flooding in this report primarily reflects the fact that **floods are one of the most common** and severe hazards, especially in lower-income countries.
- **Reverse of Progress Made:** Current increasing poverty is reversal of the achievements made in two-and-a-half decades (1990-2015).
 - Extreme poverty rate **declined by 26%**. It dropped to 10% from nearly 36%.
 - During 2012-2017, the growth was inclusive and the incomes of the poorest 40% of the population grew.
 - The **average global shared prosperity** was 2.3% during the period.
- **Diminished Shared Prosperity:** Average global shared prosperity is estimated to stagnate or even contract over 2019-2021 due to the reduced growth in average incomes.

Shared prosperity is defined as the **growth in the income of the poorest 40% of a country's population**.
- **Reason: Global extreme poverty** is expected to rise for the **first time in 20 years** because of the **disruption** caused by **Covid-19**.

It is exacerbating the impact of conflict and **climate change**, which were already slowing down poverty reduction.

- **Proposed Strategy**

The World Bank recommends for a complementary two-track approach which involves short as well as long term strategy:

- **Short-run:**

- Without policy actions, the Covid-19 crisis may lead to an increase in income inequality, resulting in a world that is less inclusive.
 - Countries need to prepare for a different economy post-Covid, by allowing capital, labour, skills, and innovation to move into new businesses and sectors.

- **Long-run:**

Continuing to focus on foundational development problems, including conflict and climate change as the key areas.

Poverty in India

- **Poverty estimation** in India is carried out by **NITI Aayog**'s task force through the calculation of poverty line based on the data captured by the National Sample Survey Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).

Poverty line estimation in India is based on the **consumption expenditure** and not on the income levels.

- **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020:**

- India lifted as many as 270 million people out of multidimensional poverty between 2005-06 and 2015-16.
 - **Impact of Covid-19:** Covid-19 is having a profound impact on the development landscape.

The study finds that on average, poverty levels will be set back 3 to 10 years due to Covid-19.

- **Sustainable Development Goals:** The index emphasises on measuring and monitoring progress under the goals to reach '**zero poverty by 2030-Goal 1**' of the **SDGs**.

- **Recent Measures Taken:**

- The government enhanced its social safety programs including **direct benefit transfers such as cash transfers** under **PM Kisan scheme**, more liberal financing under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005** like advance disbursement, direct cash grants to construction workers and release of free and subsidized food grains under **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana** to about 800 million people to ensure food for all.
- The Government announced a special economic package of Rs 20 lakh crore (equivalent to 10% of India's GDP) under **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme** with the aim of making the country independent against the tough competition in the global supply chain and to help in empowering the poor, labourers, migrants who have been adversely affected by Covid.

Way Forward

- The challenge of poverty is enormous especially in the background of Covid-19. The need is to collaborate at both Global and Regional levels.
 - Collaboration in the form of sharing information on disease and cure.
 - Developmental and poverty eradication aid by the international financial organizations is of real meaning here.
- At national level, respective governments must ensure both short and long-run strategies proposed by the World Bank apart from existing efforts of national governments.

Source: DTE

Nobel Prize for Chemistry 2020

Why in News

Recently, **Emmanuelle Charpentier of France** and **Jennifer A Doudna of the USA** have been awarded the **2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry** for developing **CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors**, one of gene technology's sharpest tools.

- It is for the **first time a Nobel science prize has gone to a women-only team.**
- **Nobel Prize for Medicine/Physiology, 2020:** To Harvey J Alter and Charles M Rice from the USA and Michael Houghton from the UK for the discovery of the **Hepatitis C Virus.**

- **Nobel Prize in Physics 2020**: To three astrophysicists Roger Penrose from the UK, Reinhard Genzel from Germany, and Andrea Ghez from the USA for discoveries related to **blackholes**.

Key Points

- The **CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors** can be used to change the **deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)** of animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision.
 - The CRISPR/Cas9 tool has already **contributed to significant gains in crop resilience**, altering their genetic code to **better withstand drought and pests**.
 - This technology has had a **revolutionary impact on the life sciences** and **contributes to new cancer therapies**. It has the potential of curing inherited diseases.
- **Discovery:**
 - Charpentier, while studying the ***Streptococcus pyogenes***, a harmful bacterium, discovered a previously unknown molecule, **tracrRNA**.
 - TracrRNA was part of bacteria's ancient immune system, **CRISPR/Cas**, that **disarmed viruses by cleaving (cutting) their DNA**.

TracrRNA is programmed to **locate the particular problematic sequence on the DNA strand**, and a special protein called Cas9 (also known as genetic scissor) is used to **break and remove** the problematic sequence.
 - Both scientists collaborated and succeeded in **recreating the bacteria's genetic scissors in a test tube** and **simplifying** the scissors' molecular components making it easier to use.
 - In their **natural form**, the scissors **recognise DNA from viruses** but the duo **reprogrammed them so that they could be controlled and can cut any DNA molecule at a predetermined site**.

CRISPR Technology

- The CRISPR (short for **Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats**) technology for gene-editing was **first developed in 2012**.
- It makes **gene sequencing very easy, simple and extremely efficient** providing nearly endless possibilities.

Editing, or modifying, gene sequences is not new and has been happening for several decades now, particularly in the **field of agriculture, where several crops have been genetically modified to provide particular traits**.

- The technology **replicates a natural defence mechanism in *Streptococcus pyogenes*** that use a similar method to protect itself from virus attacks.
 - A DNA strand, when broken, has a **natural tendency to repair itself** but the **auto-repair mechanism can lead to the re-growth of a problematic sequence.**
 - Scientists **intervene during this auto-repair process** by supplying the desired sequence of genetic codes, which replaces the original sequence.
- **Concerns:**
 - **Ethical Concerns:** Ease of altering DNA will allow **more people to choose the characteristics of their progeny and this will hamper the natural process.**
 - In November 2018, a Chinese researcher claimed to have altered the genes of a human embryo that eventually resulted in the birth of twin baby girls. It was the first documented case of a '**designer babies**' being produced using gene-editing tools like CRISPR.
 - It was probably done **without any regulatory permission or oversight** which makes it even worse.
 - **Not Fully Accurate:** Few scientists have pointed out that CRISPR technology is **not 100% accurate**, and it is possible that some other genes could also get altered by mistake.
 - **Lack of Rules and Guidelines:** Doudna has been campaigning for the **development of international rules and guidelines** for the use of CRISPR technology and has also **advocated a general pause** on these kinds of applications till such time.

Source: DTE

Reforms in Exploration and Licensing Policy: Oil & Gas

Why in News

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the **Policy framework** on reforms in the exploration and licensing sector for enhancing domestic exploration and production of oil and gas.

Key Points

- **Objectives:**
 - Attract new **investment** in Exploration and Production (E&P) Sector.
 - Intensification of **exploration** activities in unexplored areas.
 - **Liberalizing** the policy in producing basins.

- **Four Focus Areas:**

- **Increasing Exploration Activities in Unexpected Areas:**

- Bidding out **uncommercialized basins** to contractors without them having to share revenue or production with the Government and only paying royalties/levies.
 - For **unallocated/unexplored areas**, the bidding to be based on a revenue-sharing basis but more weightage to work programme to be given.
 - Shorter exploration period and **fiscal incentives**.

- **Marketing and Pricing Freedom:**

- To incentivize enhanced gas production, marketing and pricing freedom to be granted for those new gas discoveries whose **Field Development Plan (FDP)** is yet to be approved.

FDP is the evaluation document of multiple development options for a field and selecting the best option based on assessing tradeoffs.

- **Fiscal incentive on additional gas production** from domestic fields over and above normal production.

- **Preparation of Enhanced Production Profile:**

- Public sector Undertakings like **Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL)** will prepare an enhanced production profile to enhance production from their existing fields.
 - For production enhancement, bringing new technology, and capital, No Objection Certificates (NOCs) will be allowed to **induct private sector partners**.

- **Promoting Ease of Doing Business:**

Measures like setting up coordination mechanism and simplification of approval, alternate dispute resolution mechanism etc. to be taken.

- **Background:**
 - **Domestic production of oil and gas was declining, import dependence was rising and investment in E&P activities was reducing.** Thus, policy reform in this sector was needed.
 - Earlier, the government between 2016 and 2019 had given pricing freedom for all fields except those given to state-owned ONGC and OIL on a nomination basis.
 - But, there were **restrictions on marketing** like a ban on affiliates of producers buying the fuel etc. This **restricted competition** kept **prices artificially low**.
 - The **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy or HELP** was approved in March 2016, aimed at increasing the transparency and decreasing the administrative discretion in granting hydrocarbon licenses. It replaced the **New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), 1997**.
 - Recently, India also launched its first gas exchange which has been named as the **Indian Gas Exchange (IGX)**.
- **Benefits:**
 - Development of support services.
 - Employment generation.
 - Transfer of advanced technology.
 - Reducing import dependence.
 - Improve **energy security** of the country.
 - Save the precious foreign exchange on imports.

Petroleum

- Crude petroleum occurs in **sedimentary rocks** of the tertiary period.
- It consists of **hydrocarbons of liquid and gaseous states** varying in chemical composition, colour and specific gravity.
- It is an essential source of energy for all internal combustion engines in automobiles, railways and aircraft.
- Its numerous by-products are processed in petrochemical industries such as fertiliser, synthetic rubber, synthetic fibre, medicines, vaseline, lubricants, wax, soap and cosmetics.
- Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Russia are some **major countries with the largest oil reserves**.
- Digboi, Naharkatiya and Moran in **Assam**, Ankleshwar, Kalol, Mehsana, Navagam, Kosamba and Lunej in **Gujarat**; Mumbai High in **Maharashtra** are important **oil-producing areas in India**.

Natural Gas

- Natural gas is found with petroleum deposits and is released when crude oil is brought to the surface. It can be used as a domestic and industrial fuel.
- **Russia, Norway, UK and the Netherlands** are the major producers of natural gas.
- In **India**, Jaisalmer, Krishna Godavari delta, Tripura and some areas offshore in Mumbai have natural gas resources.
- The **Gas Authority of India Limited** was set up in 1984 as a public sector undertaking to transport and market natural gas.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is a **Maharatna** Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of the Government of India.
- It was set up in 1995 and is under the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**.
- It is the **largest crude oil and natural gas company in India**, contributing around 70% to Indian domestic production.

Way Forward

- The production enhancement scheme for the nomination field of NOCs is likely to **augment production** by leveraging new technology, capital and management practices through private sector participation.
- It would bring **uniformity to the bidding process** across various contractual regimes and policies to avoid ambiguity and contribute towards **ease of doing business**.
- The move is in line with India's goal of becoming self-reliant as envisaged in the **Atmanibhar Bharat initiative**. It will help India develop into a **gas-based economy**.

Source: PIB

Indian Air Force Day

Why in News

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is celebrating **88th Air Force Day** on **8th October**.

Key Points

- **8th October:** On this day, the **Air Force in India was officially raised in 1932** as the **supporting force of the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom**.

- **History:**
 - **1933: First operational squadron.**
 - **1940s:** After participation in **World War II** (1939-45), the Air Force in India came to be **called the Royal Indian Air Force.**
 - **1950:** It became the **Indian Air Force** after the **republic** came into being.
- **Facts:**
 - India Air Force is the **fourth largest in the world** after the USA, China and Russia.
 - **Headquarters:** New Delhi
 - **Motto** of the IAF is '**Touch the Sky with Glory**' and it was **taken from the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.**
 - The **President of India** holds the rank of **Supreme Commander of the air force.**
 - The **Chief of Air Staff**, an air chief marshal is responsible for the operational command of the air force.
 - **Operations:**
 - After independence, IAF took part in **wars with Pakistan** and the **People's Republic of China.**
 - **Operation Meghdoot:** It was on **13th April in 1984** when the Indian Army along with the Indian Air Force and **paramilitary forces** launched the '**Operation Meghdoot**' to secure the control of the heights predominating the **Siachen glacier.**
 - IAF took part in **relief operations during natural calamities** such as Gujarat cyclone in 1998, the tsunami in 2004, etc.
 - IAF works with the **United Nations' peacekeeping missions.**
- **Celebrations:**
 - The day is being marked by the main event comprising a **parade and flypast at Hindon Air Force Base** (Ghaziabad) along with events at IAF establishments across the country.
 - This year, the **Tejas LCA**, **Mig-29 and 21** and **Sukhoi-30** along with newly inducted **Rafale jets** will be on show.
 - It will also have **helicopters** like **Chinook**, **Apache**, etc.

Source: IE
