



News Analysis (26 Nov, 2020)

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Agreements Between India-Bahrain

Why in News

Recently, **India and Bahrain** have agreed to **further strengthen their historic ties, including in areas of defence and maritime security.**

Bahrain is a member of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** and signed the **Abraham Accord** with Israel and the UAE, which was mediated by the USA.



Key Points

- The **bilateral issues**, as well as **regional and global matters of mutual interest**, included areas of defence and maritime security, space technology, trade and investment, infrastructure, IT, FinTech, health, hydrocarbon and renewable energy.

- Both sides affirmed to further **strengthen their Covid-19 related cooperation.**
 - Bahrain **appreciated the assistance provided by India during the pandemic** through the supply of medicines, medical equipment and medical professionals.
 - They expressed satisfaction on the **operationalisation of the Air Bubble** arrangement between the two countries.

Air bubbles (travel corridors or **travel bubbles**) are systems established between two countries that perceive each other to be safe and allow carriers of both the countries to fly passengers either way without any restrictions.

- India **renewed invitation to Bahrain** for visiting India for the **3rd India-Bahrain High Joint Commission** meeting to be held in the upcoming months.
- In **2019**, India launched a **USD 4.2 million redevelopment project of the Sri Krishna temple** in the Bahraini capital, **Manama**.
 - The **200-year old temple** stands as a testimony for the enduring India-Bahrain friendship.
- India also conveyed **condolences on the demise of late Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa**, who significantly **contributed to the strengthening of India-Bahrain relations** and to the welfare of the Indian community in Bahrain.

India-Bahrain Relations

- **Historical Ties:**
 - Their history goes back to **about 5,000 years ago**, to the period of **Dilmun Civilization in Bahrain** to the era of **Indus valley civilization in India**.
 - Ancient Bahraini traders are believed to have carried out a flourishing trade of **Bahraini pearls with Indian spices**.
- **Bilateral Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs):**
 - **Extradition** Treaty (January 2004)
 - MoU on cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (May 2012)
 - MoU on the establishment of a Joint High Commission (February 2014)
 - MOU on Water Resources Development and Management (February 2015)
 - Agreement on cooperation in combating international terrorism, transnational organised crime and trafficking in illicit drugs, narcotics and psychotropic substances and precursors chemicals (December 2015)
 - MoU for cooperation in the fields of Renewable Energy and Healthcare and Agreement on Exemption from Short Stay Visa for Holders of Diplomatic and Special/Official Passport (July 2018)
 - MoU on cooperation in the exploration and uses of **Outer Space** for Peaceful Purposes (March 2019)

- **Trade and Economic Relations:**
 - Total bilateral trade stands at **USD 1282.96 million in 2018-19** and **USD 753.60 million in 2019-20** (April-Dec).
 - **Indian Exports to Bahrain:** Mineral fuels and oils, inorganic chemicals, organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals of rare earth, cereals, nuts, fruits, articles of apparel and clothing accessories etc.
 - **Indian Imports from Bahrain:** Crude oils, mineral fuels and their bituminous substance, distillation, aluminium, fertilizers, ores/slugs/ashes of aluminium, iron and copper, pulp, etc.
 - **Indian investment in Bahrain:**
 - India's total capital investment into Bahrain between January 2003 and March 2018 has been estimated at **approximately USD 1.69 billion**.
 - **Financial services** have the highest investment value (40% of total projects), followed by the **real estate and hospitality sector**.
- **Indian Expatriate Community:**
 - **Approximately 3,50,000 Indians are living in Bahrain currently** and around 70% are in the category of unskilled labour.
 - In addition to the predominant blue-collar labour force, there is a sizable number of other professionals who play a **vital role in Bahrain's socio-economic development**.
 - In **November 2015**, Bahrain launched '**Little India in Bahrain**' project to acknowledge and mark the contribution of the Indian community to the history and progress of Bahrain.

Source: IE

Reservation in Super-speciality Medical Courses: SC

Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court** (SC) has reserved its order on the **state governments providing a 50% in-service reservation** for admissions to **super-speciality medical courses** (Doctorate of Medicine/DM and Master of Chirurgiae/M. Ch.) in government colleges for the academic year 2020-21.

Key Points

- In **August 2020**, the **SC** allowed states to **grant the benefit of reservation of seats to in-service doctors** in the **National Eligibility cum Entrance Test** (NEET) postgraduate (PG) degree courses.

- The judgment held that the **state has the legislative competence and authority** to provide for a separate source of entry for in-service candidates seeking admission to PG/diploma courses in the exercise of powers under **Entry 25, List III**.
Entry 25 of List-III: Education, including technical education, medical education and universities, subject to the provisions of entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of List I; vocational and technical training of labour.
The Constitution provides for a **three-fold distribution of legislative subjects** between the Union and the states, which are **List-I** (the Union List), **List-II** (the State List) and **List-III** (the Concurrent List), described in the **seventh schedule**.
- **In November 2020, Tamil Nadu government** allowed counselling and filling of 50% of the super-speciality seats in the government medical colleges with in-service candidates in the state.
 - The seats would be filled with candidates who have cleared **NEET-Super Speciality Courses (SS)** and the **selection committee of the Directorate of Medical Education** would prepare the merit list and conduct counselling.
The state government argued that there was an **acute need for super-speciality qualified doctors** both in the medical academia and in practice.
 - After 50% of seats in DM/M. Ch. courses in government medical colleges are allocated to in-service candidates, the rest will be surrendered to the **Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)**.
DGHS is a repository of technical knowledge concerning public health, medical education and health care. It is an **attached organisation of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- Doctors, including PG holders qualified in NEET 2020, **challenged the decision saying that there is no concept of any reservation for admission to super-speciality medical courses**.
They referred to the verdict in *Dr Preeti Srivastava & Anr. versus State of Madhya Pradesh & Ors, 1999* which held that “**merit, and merit alone, is the basis for admission at the super-speciality level**”.
- Their appeal argued that the State order was contrary to the **Postgraduate Medical Education (Amendment) Regulations of 2019**, which mandated that the **DGHS** should be in charge of the admission process.
The regulations **empower DGHS to conduct the counselling for all super-speciality courses in medical educational institutions** of the Central and state governments, deemed universities, medical educational institutions established by municipal bodies, trusts, etc.

Source: TH

Protest Against Bru Resettlement

Why in News

Recently, parts of north **Tripura** have witnessed violent protests over the **proposed resettlement of Bru tribals**.

Key Points

- **Background:**

- **Bru or Reang** is a community **indigenous to Northeast India**, living mostly in **Tripura, Mizoram and Assam**. In Tripura, they are recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group**.
- In Mizoram, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state.
- In 1997, following **ethnic clashes**, nearly **37,000 Brus** fled **Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram** and were accommodated in **relief camps in Tripura**.
- Since then, **5,000** have **returned to Mizoram** in eight phases of repatriation, while **32,000** still live in six relief camps in **North Tripura**.
- In January 2020, a **quadrilateral agreement** was signed by the Centre, the two state governments and Bru representatives to allow the **remaining 32,000 to permanently settle in Tripura**.

- **2020 Agreement:**

- After the agreement was made in January 2020, the state has planned **12 resettlement spots across six districts with 300 families each**.
- The Centre has announced a **special development project with funding of Rs. 600 crore**.

Each resettled family will get an estimated 0.03 acres of land for building a home, **Rs. 1.5 lakh as housing assistance**, and **Rs. 4 lakh as a one-time cash** benefit for sustenance, a **monthly allowance of Rs. 5,000** and **free rations for two years** from the date of resettlement.

- **Reason for the Protest:**

- The 2020 agreement led to protests from **Bengali and Mizo** groups in Tripura. They claim that settling thousands of migrants permanently in Kanchanpur sub-division of North Tripura district would lead to **demographic imbalance, exert pressure on local resources and potentially lead to law and order problems**.
- They alleged that 650 **Bengali families** from around Kanchanpur and 81 **Mizo families** from Jampui Hill range, who **fled due to “atrocities” by Brus**, were **yet to be resettled** two decades on.

- **Conditions of the Brus:**

- They are in fear and uncertainty as they suffer an **economic blockade** due to these protests.
- They haven't received foodgrains as per their **relief package** this month and if the protest continues, their **condition will deteriorate** further.

Source:IE

Subdued Northeast Monsoon

Why in News

Rainfall over the southern peninsular region has been deficient so far, indicating that the northeast monsoon has remained subdued this year.

Key Points

- **Pattern of Rainfall in India:** India receives rainfall during **two seasons**:
 - About **75% of the country's annual rainfall** is received from the **Southwest monsoon** between **June and September**.
 - The **Northeast monsoon** occurs during **October to December**, and is a **comparatively small-scale monsoon**, which is confined to the **Southern peninsula**. It is called the **winter monsoon**.
- **Northeast Monsoon and Rainfall:**
 - After the **complete withdrawal of the Southwest monsoon** from the country takes place by **mid-October**, the **wind pattern rapidly changes** from the **south-westerly to the north-easterly direction**.
 - The period after the Southwest monsoon season, from October to December, is the **peak time for cyclonic activity in the North Indian Ocean region** covering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal.
 - The winds associated with the formation of low pressure systems, depressions, or cyclones **influence this monsoon**, and therefore, the rainfall.
- **Regions associated with Northeast Monsoon:**
 - The rainfall associated with the Northeast monsoon is important for **Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, north interior Karnataka, Mahe and Lakshadweep**.
 - Tamil Nadu records about **48% of its annual rainfall** during these months, making it the key factor for **undertaking agricultural activities and reservoir management** in the state.
 - Some South Asian countries such as **Maldives, Sri Lanka and Myanmar**, too, record rainfall during October to December.

- **Reasons for deficient rainfall this Northeast monsoon:**
 - **Prevailing La Niña conditions in the Pacific Ocean:**
 - La Niña conditions **enhance the rainfall associated with the Southwest monsoon**, but has a **negative impact** on rainfall associated with the **Northeast monsoon**.
 - La Niña (Spanish for 'little girl') refers to the **large-scale cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean**, coupled with changes in the tropical atmospheric circulation, namely winds, pressure and rainfall.
 - It usually **has the opposite impacts on weather and climate as El Niño**, which is the warm phase of the so-called **El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**.
 - **El Niño** (Spanish for 'little boy') is the **abnormal surface warming observed along the eastern and central regions of the Pacific Ocean** (region between Peru and Papua New Guinea).
 - La Nina and El Nino are **large-scale ocean phenomena** which influence the global weather winds, temperature and rainfall.
 - They have the **ability to trigger extreme weather events** like droughts, floods, hot and cold conditions, globally.
 - Each cycle can last anywhere **between 9 to 12 months, at times extendable to 18 months** and re-occur after **every three to five years**.
 - **Inter Tropical Convective Zone (ITCZ):**
 - The current position of the ITCZ has also contributed to the poor rainfall during the ongoing monsoon season.
 - The ITCZ is a **low-pressure belt**, whose northward and southward movements along the equator determine the precipitation in the tropics.
 - Currently, the **ITCZ is located to the north of its normal position**.

Other Important Atmospheric Circulation

Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO): The MJO can be defined as an eastward moving 'pulse' of clouds, rainfall, winds and pressure near the equator that typically recurs every 30 to 60 days.

Source: IE

Cyclone Nivar

Why in News

Recently, the **tropical cyclone Nivar** has made landfall along the **Tamil Nadu-Puducherry** coast.

Landfall refers to the phenomenon of a cyclone's outer wall moving over the coastline and beyond.

Key Points

- **Tropical Cyclone:**
 - A tropical cyclone is an intense circular storm that **originates over warm tropical oceans** and is **characterized by** low atmospheric pressure, high winds, and heavy rain.
 - A characteristic feature of tropical cyclones is the **eye**, a central region of clear skies, warm temperatures, and low atmospheric pressure.
 - Storms of this type are called **hurricanes in the North Atlantic** and eastern Pacific and **typhoons in SouthEast Asia** and China. They are called **tropical cyclones** in the **southwest Pacific and Indian Ocean region** and **Willy-willies in north-western Australia**.
 - Storms **rotate anticlockwise** in the **northern hemisphere** and clockwise in the southern hemisphere.
- **Cyclone Nivar:**
 - It is the **fourth cyclone** that has taken shape in the North Indian Ocean region this year. The first three cyclones were **Cyclone Gati** (made landfall in Somalia in November), **Cyclone Amphan** (eastern India witnessed it in May), and **Cyclone Nisarga** (in Maharashtra).
 - Nivar will be the **second cyclone to hit Tamil Nadu in two years** after **Cyclone Gaja** in 2018.
 - The storm has been **named Cyclone Nivar**, based on the **guidelines of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**. Nivara has been **selected from the list of names given by Iran**.
 - According to WMO guidelines, countries in every region are supposed to give names for cyclones.
 - The North Indian Ocean Region covers tropical cyclones formed over Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.
 - The **13 members**, which come under the region, are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen.
 - A **total of 169 cyclones were named** by these countries for this year, with **13 names from each country**.
 - It has weakened from a very severe cyclonic storm to a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 km per hour.



Cyclone Category	Wind Speed in Km/h	Damage Capacity	Type of Disturbances	Wind Speed in Km/h
01	120-150	Minimal	Low Pressure	Less than 31
02	150-180	Moderate	Depression	31-49
03	180-210	Extensive	Deep Depression	49-61
04	210-250	Extreme	Cyclonic Storm	61-88
05	250 +	Catastrophic	Severe Cyclonic Storm	88-117
			Very Severe Cyclone	118-221
			Super Cyclone	More than 221

Government Steps:

- The **Tamil Nadu government** has announced a **public holiday** under the **Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881**, in 16 districts, including Chennai, considering the impact of Cyclone Nivar.
- **Fishing activities** have been **restricted and residents evacuated** in coastal areas hit by the cyclone. The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** has deployed its teams in the affected regions.

Source:IE

Scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Cluster: PMKSY

Why in News

Recently, the Union Minister of Food Processing Industries has attended the **Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC) meeting** to consider the proposals received under the **Scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Cluster (APC)** of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)**.

Key Points

- IMAC approved **7 proposals with a total project cost of Rs. 234.68 crore** including grants-in-aid of Rs. 60.87 crore in **Meghalaya, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.**
- These projects will **leverage private investment** of Rs. 173.81 crore and are **expected to generate employment** for 7750 persons.
- **Scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Cluster:**
 - It was **approved in May 2017** under the PMKSY, to **incentivise the setting up of APCs in the country.**
 - **Aims:** To develop modern infrastructure and common facilities to encourage a group of entrepreneurs to set up **food processing** units based on cluster approach by linking groups of producers/farmers to the processors and markets.
 - These clusters will **help in reducing the wastage of the surplus produce** and **add value to the horticultural/agricultural produce** which will result in **an increase of income of the farmers** and **create employment** at the local level.
 - Under the scheme, each APC has **two basic components:**
 - **Basic Enabling Infrastructure** like roads, water supply, power supply, drainage, etc.
 - **Core Infrastructure/Common Facilities** like warehouses, cold storages, tetra pack, sorting, grading, etc.
 - **Requirements for Setup:**
 - At least 5 food processing units with a minimum investment of Rs. 25 crore and at least 10 acres of land is required for at least 50 years.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana

- In **2016**, the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** introduced an umbrella **Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters (SAMPADA)**, which was proposed to be implemented with an allocation of **Rs. 6,000 crores** for the period of **2016-20.**
- In **2017**, it was renamed as the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY).**
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme.**
- **Objectives:**
 - To supplement agriculture.
 - To create processing and preservation capacities.
 - To modernise and expand existing food processing units with a view to increasing the level of processing.
 - To add value leading to the reduction of wastage.

- **Seven component schemes under PMKSY:**
 - **Mega Food Parks.**
 - Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure.
 - Infrastructure for APC.
 - Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages.
 - Creation/Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities.
 - Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure.
 - Human Resources and Institutions.
- Under PMKSY, **capital subsidy** in the form of **grants-in-aid** ranging from 35% to 75% of the eligible project cost **subject to a maximum specified limit** is provided to investors under the various schemes for **undertaking infrastructure, logistic projects and setting up of food processing units** in the country.

Source: PIB

Sea Guardian Drones from US

Why in News

Recently, **two American MQ9B Sea Guardian unarmed drones** have been inducted by the Indian Navy.

The drones **would be on lease with India for one year.**

Key Points

- **MQ9B Sea Guardian:**



- It is the **maritime variant** of the **Predator MQ9 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).**
- It has a maximum **endurance** of **40 hours** and a maximum flying **altitude** of **40,000** feet.
- It has a **3600 maritime surveillance radar** and an optional multimode **maritime surface search radar.**
- It can be **used in operations** such as Anti-Surface Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief, Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement (Drug Trafficking, Illegal Immigration and Piracy), etc.

- **Procurement:**
 - The Navy has for the **first time inducted two surveillance drones** through a **lease agreement** with an American firm, using the **emergency powers granted by the Centre to the Armed forces amid the China standoff**.
Under the emergency power, the government has granted **emergency funds up to Rs. 500 crore** per procurement project to the three armed services to **buy ammunition and weapons** in view of the escalating border standoff with China.
 - Drones were procured under the option for leasing military platforms introduced in the **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**.
- **Significance:**
 - The drones are meant for carrying out **surveillance in the Indian Ocean Region and can be deployed on the China border** if asked for and if needed.
 - Already the Navy's **P8I Poseidon aircraft** have been deployed in Ladakh.
 - The **P-8I aircraft** is a variant of the **P-8A Poseidon aircraft** that have been developed by Boeing company.
 - Boeing's P-8A Poseidon is designed for long-range Anti-Submarine warfare (ASW), Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.
 - As part of its force **restructuring to offset budgetary constraints**, the Navy is looking to induce more unmanned solutions in future.
 - **Till the time the government approves buying the drones**, which has to get the **Defence Acquisition Council's nod**, leasing is a more economic and viable option.
The Defence Acquisition Council is the **highest decision-making body** in the Defence Ministry for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.

Source:TH

PRAGATI Meeting

Why in News

Recently, the **Prime Minister (PM) has chaired the 33rd PRAGATI meeting**.

Interaction through PRAGATI **is held once every month on Fourth Wednesday**, known as **PRAGATI Day**.

Key Points

- **Highlights of the Meeting:**
 - The PM **asked states to develop a state-specific export strategy**, and **reviewed development projects** worth Rs. 1.41 lakh crore spread across 10 states and union territories.
 - Grievances related to **Covid-19** and to the **PM Awas Yojana (Gramin)** were also taken up.
- **PRAGATI:**
 - Launched in **2015**, PRAGATI is the multimodal platform for **Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation** involving **central and state** governments.
 - It has been **designed by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)** team with the help of the **National Informatics Center (NIC)**.
 - It **enables the PM to discuss the issues** with the concerned central and state officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground-level situation.
 - It is a **three-tier system** (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States).
 - **Objective:**
 - Grievance Redressal
 - Programme Implementation
 - Project Monitoring
 - The PRAGATI platform uniquely **bundles three latest technologies:** Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.
 - **Significance:**
 - It **promotes cooperative federalism** as it brings together the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.
 - It is a robust system for bringing **e-transparency and e-accountability** with real-time presence and exchange among the key stakeholders.
 - It is an innovative project in **e-governance and good governance**.
 - **Concerns:** The direct interaction of the PM with the state secretaries without involving the political executives of the states is **undermining the state political executive**.
 - It is also said that this is leading to a **concentration of power in the extra-constitutional office of PMO**.

Source: IE
