Draft 'National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing' Released

It has been prepared by committee under chairmanship of **Faiz Ahmed Kidwai.**

- It envisions building a **vibrant marketing ecosystem** in country wherein farmers of all categories find a market of their choice to **realize best price** for their produce.

Key Proposals of Draft

- **Establish Empowered Agricultural Marketing Reform Committee:** comprising **state agriculture ministers** to build consensus among states to move towards **unified national market for agriculture produce** through **single licensing /registration system & single fee.**
  - It may be **chaired by Agriculture Minister** of any state on **rotational basis** similar to **Empowered Committee on GST.**
- **Improve farmer-Market linkages:** Declare large number of need-based warehouses/cold storages as **sub-market yards;** expand & consolidate eNAM beyond APMC markets e.g., to sub-market yards.
- **Agricultural Produce Market Caommittee (APMCs) Reforms:** Encourage APMCs to improve their income by **notifying new agricultural produce, promoting food processing activities** etc. rather than exorbitantly imposing market fee & other fee/cess.
- **Other:**
  - Strengthen **Value Chain Centric Infrastructure using AI, blockchain technology etc with private sector participation**
  - Launch **Price Insurance Scheme** to insure the farmers' income for their assured income at the time of sowing itself.
  - **Promote Ease of Doing AgriTrade** by Digital **automation of mandi processes;** digital issuance of license/registration to traders, private market operators, etc.

> **Agriculture Marketing in India**
> - Agricultural marketing is a **State subject** under Entry 28 of List-II (State List) of **VII Schedule** under **article 246** of the Constitution.
> - **Challenges:** Fragmented and Inefficient Supply Chain, Market access, Poor Infrastructure, Complex Regulations etc.
> - **Initiatives Undertaken:** Formation & Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure, Gramin Agricultural Markets etc

Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024 introduced in the Lok Sabha

Bill's purpose is to **consolidate and amend laws governing coastal shipping (Uniformity in regulation),** promote coastal trade, connectivity and encourage domestic participation.

- Coastal shipping in India holds great potential owing to its vast **coastline (~ 7,500 km)** and proximity to i**mportant global shipping routes.**

Key Highlights of Bill

- **Prohibition of coasting trade:** Prohibition of trade in coastal water without license by vessels other than Indian vessels.
  - **Permitting Inland vessels** to engage in coastal trading.
- **National Coastal and Inland Shipping Strategic Plan:** For development, growth and promotion of coastal shipping.
- **National Database of Coastal Shipping:** To ensure transparency of procedures and aid in information sharing.
- **Licensing of chartered vessels:** Empower the **Director-General** to issue a license after taking into consideration certain factors including **citizenship of crew** and **building requirements of vessel.**
  - No license granted shall be suspended, revoked or modified, unless the license has been given a **reasonable opportunity** of being heard.
- **Other Provisions:** Provision for **compounding of certain offences and imposition of penalty by the principal officer;** and provision for empowering the Director-General to call for information in respect of certain matters.

> **About Coastal Shipping Industry in India:**
> - Referas to **movement of goods and passengers along coastlines** within territorial waters, extending up to 12 nautical miles from baseline.
> - **Regulation of Coastal Shipping:**
>   - **Directorate General of Shipping,** under Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, is primary regulatory authority.
>   - Coastal Regulation Zone regulations further influence activities in these coastal areas.
> - **India's cabotage policy:** restricts operation of foreign-flagged vessels for transporting goods within country's territorial waters.
> - **Tariffs and charges:** Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) regulates tariffs and charges for services provided by major ports involved in coastal shipping.

10 years of Ministry of Ayush

Ministry of Ayush was formed in **2014** with a vision of reviving profound knowledge of our ancient systems of medicine.

- Ministry of Ayush evolved from earlier **Department of Indian System of Medicine & Homoeopathy** created in 1995, it was renamed as **Department of Ayush** in 2003.
- Ayush is acronym of medical systems that are being practiced in India - **Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.**

Achievements of Ministry of Ayush

- **Expanding Ayush Infrastructure:** 3,844 **Ayush hospitals** along with 3 State-of-the-Art Satellite centers of **National Institutes of Ayush** (in Delhi, Goa & Ghaziabad) established.
- **Technology Integration:** Digital initiatives like **Ayush Grid, e-Sanjeevani telemedicine,** etc. has brought quality healthcare to remote regions.
- **Global Outreach: Donor Agreement between India & WHO,** Agreement on Ayurveda between India & Malaysia, Initiatives like **Ayush Visa,** furthering Ayush's vision of **global health and wellness.**
  - ⊕ **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre** in Jamnagar established to promote & integrate traditional medicine globally.
  - ⊕ UNGA declared **June 21st (Summer solstice)** as the **International Day of Yoga** in 2014.
- **Economic Impact:** Ayush market has grown, from **USD 2.85 billion in 2014 to USD 43.4 billion in 2023,** with **exports doubling** from USD 1.09 billion to USD 2.16 billion.

> **Challenges faced by Ayush**
> - **Lack of Scientific Validation,** quality of Education & Practitioners, **integration with Modern Medicine,** lack of awareness etc.
>
> **Initiatives Undertaken to Promote Ayush**
> - **National AYUSH Mission (2014):** Centrally Sponsored Scheme to promote AYUSH systems.
> - **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in Ayush Sector.
> - **National Commission for Indian System Of Medicine:** Established to ensure quality standards in Ayush education.
> - **AYURGYAN Scheme:** To enhance and develop capacity in the Ayush healthcare sector.

Union Environment Minister highlights issue of coastal erosion in India

India's extensive **7,500 kilometer coastline (nature's buffer between land and sea)** is now facing increased disruptions, impacting livelihood of millions.

Status of Coastal Erosion in India:

- According to a study by **National Centre for Coastal Research, (NCCR),** about **33.6% of coast is eroding,** 26.9% is accreting and 39.5% is in a stable state.
  - ⊕ **State wise analysis** suggests that more than **40% of erosion is noticed in four states/UT** i.e. West Bengal (63%), Pondicherry (57%), Kerala (45%) and Tamil Nadu (41%) coast.

About Coastal Erosion:

- It is **breaking down and carrying away of materials** by sea. Coast is eroded by destructive waves through four main processes i.e. **Hydraulic Action, Compression, Abrasion and Attrition.**
  - ⊕ Erosional landforms created include **Cliffs, Terraces, Caves, Stacks, Arch and Stumps.**

Causes of Coastal Erosion:

- **Natural Causes:** Rising sea levels, Mangrove depletion, Cyclonic activity, Action of waves, winds, tides, near shore currents, storms etc.
- **Anthropogenic causes:** Unregulated sand extraction and construction of ports etc., **Dredging of tidal entrances** and navigational channels, damming, Beach nourishment etc.

Possible Innovative Solutions for Curbing Coastal Erosion:

- **Community driven** conservation program and **Real-time erosion monitoring** using **artificial intelligence (AI).**
- **Adopting Nature Based approaches:** Climate-resilient sand nourishment, Mangrove reforestation.
- **Shoreline Management Plan** should consider local and regional drivers of erosion.

> **Initiatives Taken for Tackling Coastal Erosion**
> - **Shoreline Management Plan prepared by states** as per the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (CRZ), 2019
> - **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019** also provides for No Development Zones (NDZ) to protect India's coastline from encroachment and erosion
> - **K-SHORE project of World Bank**
> - **Coastal Management Information System (CMIS)**

Government decides to update the GDP base year from 2011-12 to 2022-23

26-member **Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (NAS)** under chairmanship of **Biswanath Goldar** has been formed to **identify new data sources** & **refine methodology for compiling NAS.**

- **Central Statistics Office** brings out NAS annually which includes GDP estimates from multiple approaches.

What is Base Year?

- Base year is a **benchmark** used for **GDP calculation.** It allows for **comparison** of economic growth over a period of time by **eliminating the effects of inflation.**

Need of Base Year Revision

- **Incorporating New Data Sources: Availability of high-frequency quality data** has improved since 2011-12 due to **digitization** & **various sectoral developments.**
  - Its incorporation will improve **precision** of GDP calculation.
- **Accommodating Structural Changes:** New base year will account for **shifts in consumption patterns, sectoral contributions,** & **inclusion of emerging sectors** seen in past decade.
  - Previous base year, 2011-12, established in January 2015 is considered outdated for current economic realities.
- **Others:** Accommodation of **Post-Pandemic economic** dynamics & adhering to **International standards** for global comparability.

Implications

- It may lead to **revised growth estimates;**
- A more accurate representation of India's economic activity aid **policy formulation** & improve **investor confidence etc.**

PRAGATI platform revolutionary in ensuring timely infrastructure development through Digital Governance: Oxford study

Highlighting PRAGATI's success in **fostering accountability and efficiency,** Report asserts that PRAGATI can be a model for **overcoming bureaucratic inertia in emerging economies.**

Impact of Platform highlighted by Report

- **Economic:** Addressing issues of **land acquisition** and **inter-miniterial coordination,** it enables expedited project execution, **reducing costs** related to **delays.**
  - Platform demonstrates how **targeted investments in infrastructure** and effective governance can help **address middle income trap.**
- **Social:** It **prioritizes** projects in **underdeveloped and remote** areas to reduce **regional disparities.**
- **Environmental:** Incorporating sustainability in planning, expediting clearances, promoting green technologies aids in reducing projects' **carbon footprint.** E.g. PRAGATI working in conjunction with **PARIVESH portal** for environmental clearances.
- **Positive Governance:** PRAGATI has helped achieve **administrative efficiency** and ensure **good governance.**
  - E.g. Successful implementation of **Bogibeel Rail and Road Bridge in Assam,** hitherto marred by delays.

About PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) Platform:

- **Genesis:** Launched in **2015** as a part of **Digital India Program.**
- **Implementing Agency:** Prime Minister's Office
- **Objectives:**
  - **Expedite Project Implementation:** With the aid of **technology** to ensure **real-time monitoring.** E.g. It leverages **video conferencing,** real-time data, drone feeds etc.
  - **Collaborative Approach:** Removing **administrative silos** by involvement of various government agencies.
  - **E-transparency and e-accountability:** With effective **grievance redressal.**

Also in News

Madhav National Park

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) approves Madhav National Park as the newest Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh.

- **NTCA** is a statutory body constituted under **WPA, 1972,** as amended in 2006 to **administer Project Tiger.**

About Madhav National Park

- **Location:** Situated in northern part of **Madhya Pradesh in Shivpuri District (Upper Vindhyan Hills).**
- **Background:** Park was **hunting ground of Mughal emperors and Maharaja of Gwaliora** and got the status of a National Park in 1958.
- **Fauna:** Antelopes (Nilgai, Chinkara), Deer (Chital, Sambar and Barking Deer), Leopard, Wolf, Jackal, Fox, Wild Dog, Wild Pig etc
- **Flora:** Represents **Northern Tropical dry deciduous mixed forest** as well as **Dry thorn forest.**
- **Other Feature:** Sakhya Sagar and Madhav Sagar are the two lakes in the park.
  - **Madikhera dam** is situated in the North Western part of the Park.

Air Quality Dashboard by ICIMOD

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has unveiled an **Air Quality Dashboard.**

About Air Quality Dashboard:

- It **combines ground sensor data** with satellite imagery to provide a comprehensive view of air pollution across local, sub-regional and regional scales.
- It is powered by the **Weather Research and Forecasting model coupled with Chemistry (WRF-Chem).**
- This model reveals the **alarming spread of PM2.5 plumes across the region,** including hotspots like Lahore, New Delhi and Kolkata.

About PM 2.5 & 10

- **PM10:** Particles that are **10 microns or less** in diameter.
- **PM 2.5:** Particles that are **2.5 microns or less** in diameter.

Harimau Shakti 2024

India- Malaysia Joint Military Exercise '**Harimau Shakti**' commenced in Malaysia.

About Harimau Shakti 2024

- It is annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Malaysia.
  - In 2023 it was conducted at Umroi Cantonment in Meghalaya, India.
- **Aim:** To enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in jungle terrain.

New Development Bank (NDB)

India has contributed nearly **$2 billion** to the **BRICS New Development Bank** (NDB) as per Ministry of Finance.

About NDB

- **Establishment:** NDB was officially launched in **2014** during **6th BRICS summit in Fortaleza,** Brazil by **Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa** (BRICS).
  - Its membership is open to members of United Nations.
- **Purpose:** Mobilizing resources for infrastructure & sustainable development projects in **emerging markets and developing countries** (EMDCs).
- **Capital:** Initial authorized capital is **$100 billion.**
  - The **initial subscribed capital is $50 billion,** with **equal contributions** from founding members.

Windfall Tax

Government abolishes **windfall tax on crude oil, ATF, petrol,** and **diesel** exports.

About Windfall Tax

- A windfall tax is a tax imposed by governments on certain **industries that experience significantly above-average profits** due to favorable economic conditions.
  - E.g., India imposed **windfall tax on domestic crude oil production** in July **2022,** following a **sharp rise in global crude oil prices.**
- These taxes are designed to capture a portion of these unexpected gains to **fund public projects, reduce deficits, or redistribute wealth.**

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated annually on 3rd December.

- It was proclaimed by a UN General Assembly **resolution 47/3 in 1992.**
- **Theme for 2024** is "Amplifying the leadership of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) for an inclusive and sustainable future".

About PwDs

- Term, **Persons with Disabilities** is **defined** in the **Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwDA).**
- About **16% (1 in 6 people)** of the **global** population and **2.21% (2.68 crore)** of the **Indian** population are **PwDs.** (Census 2011)

Initiatives in India:

- **Accessible India Campaign,**
- Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme **(DDRS),**
- Schemes For Implementation Of RPwDA 2016 **(SIPDA),**
- **PM-DAKSH** (Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi) Yojana

Kisan Pehchan Patra

Centre has advised states to adopt a '**camp-mode approach**' to facilitate inclusive, efficient, and rapid farmer registration.

About Kisan Pehchan Patra

- It is an **Aadhaar-linked unique digital identity** that is **linked dynamically to state's land records,** besides having information e.g. demographic, crops sown and ownership details.
- ID will form the **core** of the '**Farmers Registry',** one of the three registries under the '**Agri Stack'.**
  - Agri Stack is one of the components of the **Digital Agriculture Mission,** other being Krishi Decision Support System
  - Agristack Consists of **3 databases: Farmers' Registry, Geo-referenced Village Maps, and Crop Sown Registry.**

'Satan 2'

Russia is set to deploy the **RS-28 Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile,** known as '**Satan 2**'

About Satan 2

- It is a next-generation **intercontinental ballistic missile** (ICBM) considered **one of the most powerful nuclear weapons** globally.
- Equipped with **Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicles** (MIRVs), allowing it to **strike multiple targets simultaneously.**
- The missile also has a range of **10000- 18,000 km** and can carry a 10 ton payload.

Places in News — Syria (Capital: Damascus)

Recently, **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS),** a rebel militia, **seized Aleppo, the 2nd largest city of Syria.**

Political Features:

- It is located on **east coast of Mediterranean Sea** in southwestern Asia.
- **Boundaries:** Turkey (North), Iraq (East & southeast), Jordan (South), Israel and Lebanon (South West).
  - Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in **1967 Six-Day War.**
- **Important cities:** Damascus (along River Barada), Homs, Palmyra.

Geographical Features:

- **Climate:** Syria experiences a largely Mediterranean climate.
- **Mountain Ranges:** Anti-Lebanon (Separate Syria & Lebanon), Al-Ansariyyah etc.
- **Highest point:** Mount Hermon
- **Major Rivers:** Euphrates, Tigris, Orontes etc.

AHMEDABAD   BENGALURU   BHOPAL   CHANDIGARH   DELHI   GUWAHATI   HYDERABAD   JAIPUR   JODHPUR   LUCKNOW   PRAYAGRAJ   PUNE   RANCHI