News Analysis (25 Feb, 2019)

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Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

Launched in 2015, it is a flagship program of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) implements it with the help of training partners.

- It aims to mobilize youth to take up skill training with the aim of increasing productivity and aligning the training and certification to the needs of the country.
- Owing to the success of PMKVY 1.0 wherein more than 19 lakh students were trained as against the target of 24 lakh, the scheme was relaunched as PMKVY 2.0 (2016-2020) with an allocated budget of Rs. 12000 Crores that aims to train 10 million youth by the year 2020.

Key Components

- **Short Term Training:** Training as per **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)** is provided to those who are either school/college dropouts or unemployed.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** An individual with a certain set of skills or with prior learning experience is assessed and certified under RPL with grade according to the NSQF.
- **Special Projects:** This component ensures training in special areas and premises of government bodies and corporate. It aims to encourage training in vulnerable and marginalized groups of society.
- **Training Partners (TPs)** are mandated to organize Kaushal and Rozgar Melas every six months, thus providing placement assistance to certified ones.

Analysis

- Out of 4.06 million candidates that got enrolled between its relaunch and 24 January 2019, 3.73 million completed the course.
- **Certification Stats:** Candidates who score at least 50% of total marks are provided

with certification. Nearly, 30% of those who enrolled between the above mentioned period have not been certified yet. This shows that even skill training is not enough for such people. This point towards the lack of proper basic education at schools and colleges.

- **Placement Stats:** Tracking of placements is mandatory under PMKVY. Till 26 October 2018, 1.94 lakh candidates got a certificate and out of them, only 55% got employed across different sectors. This shows the low employability level under PMKVY.

Way Forward

- The government needs to ensure high-quality secondary education at the secondary level to prepare the youth for skills provided under the scheme. It should also promote vocational education in schools.
- Training Partners need to be made accountable for training and the number of placement opportunities that are provided under the scheme.
- Participation from more and more industries should be sought for placement of the candidates trained under the scheme.
- Around one million youth enter the workforce every month; it is necessary to increase the number of people that go under training under the scheme.

Draft e-Commerce Policy

The Department For Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has released the **draft National e-Commerce Policy** for public comments.

> The National e-Commerce Policy lays down strategies to address issues pertinent to the sector-**Consumer protection, data privacy, and maintenance of a level playing field.**

Need for policy

- In 2014, the **average monthly data consumption** in India was only 0.26 GB per person, which **increased to over 4GB at the end of 2017.**
- Greater internet usage means the generation of more data and therefore, the greater requirement to prioritize privacy, consumer protection and regulate the flow of data for leveraging it to benefit the domestic economy.
- A regulatory environment is necessary to ensure that there is genuine competition in the market, which encourages entrepreneurship and innovation.
- To address a few challenges arising out of e-Commerce of law and order, revenue-base erosion, privacy, anti-competitive behavior, consumer protection, etc without harming the of growth in the e-Commerce sector.

Key Issues Addressed

- **Data**
  - **Individual Right:** An Individual owns the right to his data. Therefore, data of an individual is must be used with his/ her express consent.
  - **Indian Control Over Data:** There should be a restriction on cross-border data flow. The policy bats for data localization and states that the data generated within India must be stored within India.
  - If a business entity that collects or processes any sensitive data in India and stores it abroad, should not share data with business entities outside India, for any purpose, even with customer consent.
  - A request from Indian authorities to have access to all such data stored abroad shall be complied with immediately
  - All e-Commerce websites, apps available for download in India should have a registered business entity here. Non-compliant e-Commerce app/website to be denied access here.
- **Infrastructure development**
  - It stressed on **developing physical infrastructure for a robust digital economy** and suggested steps for developing the capacity for data storage in India.
  - Incentives will be provided to companies for establishing data localization location facilities like data centers, server farms within India.
  - **Firms to get 3 years to comply with local data storage requirements** and data storage facilities should be given 'infrastructure status'.
  - Domestic alternatives to foreign-based clouds and email facilities should be promoted through budgetary support.
- **e-Commerce marketplaces**
  - The policy mentions that foreign direct investment (FDI) is allowed only in the marketplace model, not in inventory based model.
  - This is in line with the e-Commerce guidelines given by the government in December.
  - The policy also takes into account the **interests of domestic manufacturers and Micro, Small and medium enterprises** and seeks to create a level playing field for them in online retail.
  - To **curbs on Chinese e-commerce exports** the Gifting route (where goods are shipped as gifts), often used by Chinese apps, websites should be banned for all parcels except life-saving drugs.
  - To **prevent fake products,** Seller details should be made available on the website for all products and sellers must provide an undertaking to the platform about the genuineness of products.
- **Stimulating the domestic digital economy**
  - There is a need to **formulate domestic industrial standards for smart**

  devices and IoT devices to meet the goals of the country like consumer protection.
-   ○ **Online custom clearance** will eliminate the need for manual processes and will help in ease of doing business.
-   ○ Continued focus on **Digital India initiatives by the Government** will help in the development of the e-Commerce sector.
- **Export promotion**
  - ○ **e-Commerce startups may get 'infant industry'** status raising the limit for courier shipments from Rs 25,000 to boost e-Commerce export.
  - ○ To promote export it is necessary to lower the cost of transport, reducing paperwork, reducing delays at ports and airports etc.
  - ○ **Integrating Customs, RBI and India Post to improve tracking of imports through e-Commerce.**

Important Fact For Prelims (25th February 2019)

Chabahar Port

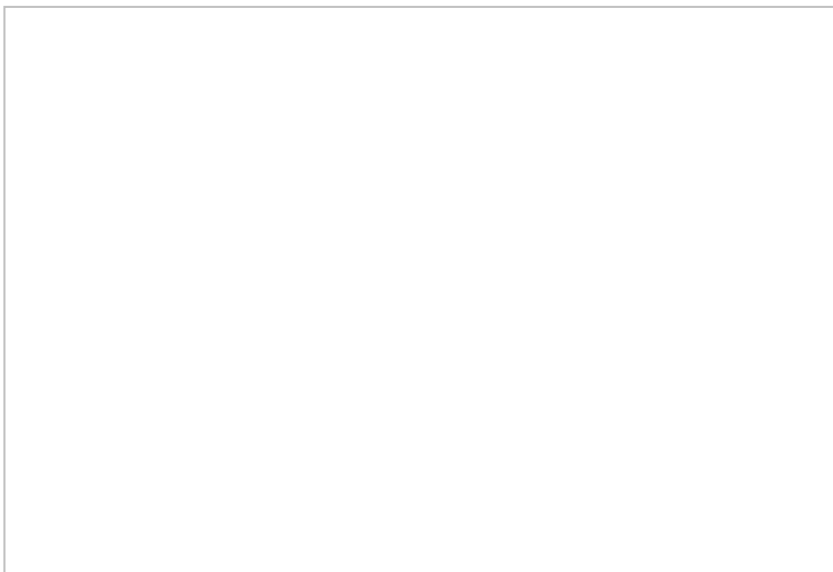- Afghanistan, for the first time, has begun exports to India through **Iran's Chabahar port.**

- The delivery of the cargos will be carried out under the **International Road Transports' TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers)** convention.
- The port is crucial for India's connectivity to Afghanistan apart from an air corridor that becomes operationalized in 2017.
- For India, Chabahar provides **access to Central Asia** and **International North-South Transport Corridor** that connects Mumbai to Moscow.
- The port is also **important for landlocked Afghanistan** which is keen to get connect itself with international markets.
- The bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan jumped by 40% in 2018-19 and has crossed USD 1 billion, with imports from Afghanistan accounting or USD 740 Million.

- Afghanistan has a huge trade surplus with India, the only country with which Afghanistan has a trade surplus.

Bandipur National Park

- Recently, **NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (NASA-FIRMS)** has detected 32 fire incidents in Himavad Gopalaswamy Betta range of Bandipur National Park.
- Bandipur National Park is located between where the **Deccan Plateau meets the Western Ghats in Karnataka.**
- It is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve with the adjoining Nagarhole National Park, Mudumalai National Park, and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
- It has a variety of biomes including dry deciduous forests moist deciduous forests and shrublands.
- The park is flanked by the Kabini river in the north and the Moyar river in the south. The Nugu river runs through the park.

NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS)

NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) distributes Near-Real-Time (NRT) active fire data within 3 hours of satellite overpass from NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) and NASA's Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS).

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

- The Prime-minister launched **PM-KISAN** scheme from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.

- Under PM-KISAN, vulnerable landholding farmer families, **having cultivable land up-to 2 hectares,** will be provided **direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year.**
- This income support will be **transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers**, in three equal **installments of Rs. 2,000 each.**
- This programme is under the aegis of **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** and aims to **address farm sector distress,** caused by lower sales realization on bumper production of food-grains, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton and horticulture crops.
- State Government and UT Administration will identify the farmer families which are eligible for support as per scheme guidelines.
- This programme will entail an **annual expenditure of Rs.75,000 crore which will be funded by the Government of India.** Around 12 crore small and marginal farmer families are expected to benefit from this.