



News Analysis (03 Sep, 2019)

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Express Governance Awards

Recently, a total of 16 district magistrates have been honoured with **The Indian Express Excellence in Governance Awards** for their pioneering work across a wide range of categories.

Some of the **unique initiatives** are:

Category : Left Wing Extremism District

- District : East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh)
- Initiative : **Digital Connectivity** through **FSOC**.
 - **Google's X FSOC or Free Space Optical Communication (FSOC)** has enabled the remote tribal villages located in the hills to get connected with the outside world.
 - It provides services like mobile connectivity, internet, and wireless landline connectivity to the villages.
 - The initiative has made facilities like **telemedicine, public grievances redressal, online education** etc. accessible for remote villages.
 - Availability of connectivity will help to eradicate **Left Wing Extremism**.

Free Space Optical Communication (FSOC)

- FSOC is an **optical communication technology that uses light** to wirelessly transmit data to telecommunication and internet applications.
- FSOC links use **beams of light** to deliver high-speed, high-capacity connectivity over long distances but without the cable.
- FSOC boxes can simply be placed kilometres apart on roofs or towers, with the signal beamed directly between the boxes to easily traverse common obstacles like rivers, roads and railways.

Category : Women Development

- District : Jhabua (Madhya Pradesh)
- Initiative : **Sathidar Abhiyan**
 - It is an initiative for **empowerment of women** and children through **eradication of social evils**.
 - The campaign intends to bring an end to the reserve **dowry system** by social leaders aware of the adversities.
 - It is not easy to end the practice in a go, so administration **capped the dowry amount to Rs 50,000 or less initially** as against the conventional Rs 2, 3 lakhs.
 - Eventually, administration succeeded to eliminate dowry system completely in targeted villages.

Category : Child Development

- District : Nagpur (Maharashtra)
- Initiative : **Jivhala**
 - The initiative aims for Creating Awareness About Child Rights And Prevention of **Sexual Harassment** in Tribal Ashram schools.
 - It provides training and orientation through video and reading material to students which made children open about these sensitive issues.
 - The initiative helped to empower children and also sensitized the school administration about their responsibilities.

Category : Inclusive Innovation

- District : Valsad (Gujarat)
- Initiative : **E-Megh**
 - The initiative provides **Early Flood Warning System**.
 - It also provides effective and efficient real-time data
 - It enhances the co-ordination between the officials and the beneficiaries by using Communication tools like Auto-generated calls & SMS to the authorities.
 - It also comes up with the flood maps to co-relate threats to various towns and villages.

Category : Skill Development

- District- East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh)
- Initiative : **Kaushal Godavari (KG)**
 - The initiative focuses on **Skill Development** and Entrepreneurship Promotion.
 - The district administration arranged facilities for skill development, skill enhancement and job placement.

- Job placements under the programme aided private companies which have hired 16,000 youths from tribal area till now.

Category : Border Districts

- District- Cachar (Assam)
- Initiative : **Debo Na Nebo Na**
 - It is an **Anti-Corruption Movement** along with **Mobile Phone Application** by the District Administration
 - **“Debo Na, Nebo Na”** means **“Won’t Give, Won’t Take”**
 - Complaints can be lodged through forms dropped in drop-boxes kept outside every government office, phone calls or directly through the app.
 - The motive behind the project is to ensure that there is no absence of facilities to communicate about a corrupt practice .

Source: IE

US-China Move to WTO

Recently, China has lodged a complaint at the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** over raised import duties by the US.

- The US has recently imposed 15% tariffs on a variety of Chinese goods. In retaliation China imposed new duties on US crude oil, escalating the **trade war** between the two. Around \$300 billion of Chinese exports are expected to get affected by this move of the US.
- The latest tariff actions violate the consensus reached by the leaders of China and the United States in a **meeting in Osaka.**

At WTO

- This is the **third legal suit filed by China** at WTO challenging US **protectionism policy** against Chinese exports.
- The US defended its move by claiming that it is penalizing China’s distortive technology-transfer policies.
 - Also, these measures were necessary to **protect public morals-** a clause that was used in the past to argue for trade restrictions over **gambling, animal rights, and public broadcasting.**
 - The Intellectual property (IPR) rules are not covered under WTO.
- Under WTO rules, the US has 60 days to try to settle the latest dispute with China. Then China could ask the WTO to adjudicate.

Way Forward

- China's decision to **fight fire with fire** without WTO's approval just escalates the trade tensions between the two nations.
- If the United States is found to have broken the rules, China with WTO's approval can retaliate against the trade sanctions.
- Even though it is a lengthy and time-consuming process, the settlement of disputes through international conventions and rules is the need of the hour.

Source: Mint

Food Wastage and its Impact

According to the report "**Reducing Food Loss and Waste**" by the **World Resources Institute (WRI)**, uneaten food is impacting the economy and the environment negatively.

Key Findings

- **Defined Food Loss and Wastage:**
 - **Food loss** refers to food that spills, spoils, incurs an abnormal reduction in quality such as bruising or wilting, or otherwise gets lost before it reaches the consumer. It is the unintended result of an agricultural process or technical limitation in storage, infrastructure, packaging, or marketing.
 - **Food waste** refers to food that is of good quality and fit for human consumption but that does not get consumed because it is discarded—either before or after it spoils. It is the result of negligence or a conscious decision to throw food away.
- **Impact of Uneaten Food:**
 - Nearly one-third of the food that is produced each year goes uneaten, **costing the global economy over \$940 billion.**
 - Uneaten food is responsible for **emitting about 8% of planet-warming greenhouse gases** into the atmosphere.
- **Place of Food Loss and Wastage:**
 - Most of the food loss happens "**near the farm**" predominantly in lower-income countries.
 - Most of the food waste happens "**near the plate**" predominantly in higher-income countries.
- **Share of Food Group Lost or Wasted:**
 - Roots and tubers are the food group that face the maximum wastage, at over 62% in the year 2007. Fruits and vegetables follow, with over 41% in the year 2007.
 - By weight, fruits and vegetables make up the largest share of total annual food

loss and waste.

- **Solution:**
 - Developing national strategies for food loss and waste reduction.
 - Creating national **public-private partnerships** to deal with food losses and wastage.
 - Tackling food loss and waste across the entire supply chain.
 - **Shifting consumer social norms** so that wasting food is seen as unacceptable.

World Resources Institute

- WRI is a global research organization that spans more than 60 countries, with **international offices in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States.**
- It was **established in 1982.** Headquartered in Washington, US.
- It aspires to create a world where the actions of government, business, and communities combine to eliminate poverty and sustain the natural environment for all people.

Source: IE

WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

Recently, India has hosted the 72nd Session of the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** Regional Committee for South-East Asia.

Highlights of the Conference

- India's disease burden is shifting from **communicable to non-communicable diseases**, i.e. diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, are rising rapidly.
- Some **recent steps that** were taken by the government in health care:
 - The government is observing the entire month of September as **“Poshan Maah”** (Nutrition Month) to sensitize the public towards healthy eating, It intends to address the twin issues of malnutrition and problem of obesity in some sections of the population, and intensifying the campaign towards a **‘Malnutrition-Free India’**.
 - Since, the unsafe food and poor diet create a vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition (particularly affecting infants, young children, elderly and sick).
 - To curb this, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** has adopted a **“Food Systems approach”** to ensure our citizens have access to safe and healthy food.
 - Food Systems approach judiciously combines the regulatory and capacity-

- building measures with consumer empowerment initiatives.
- Citizens are being sensitized through a **people's movement called 'Eat Right India'** which has a tagline: Sahi Bhojan. Behtar Jeevan' – 'Right diet leads to better quality life'.
- Recently, the Prime Minister of India launched the '**Fit India Movement**'. on the occasion of National Sports day,
 - This, along with Eat Right India campaign, will help India to fight lifestyle diseases like hypertension, obesity and diabetes effectively,
- **Ayushman Bharat** is **India's road to Universal Health Care**.
- India also plans to increase full immunization coverage to 90% people through intensification of campaigns under **Mission Indradhanush**.
- These initiatives depict India's commitment to preventive and promotive healthcare as an important pillar of **its health policy, i.e. Universal Health for all**.

Source: PIB

Package For Power Stations

The Power Ministry is keeping a check on possible **misuse of the rescue package** for stressed coal-fired power stations.

- The package was announced earlier in March 2019, wherein **coal linkages of power plants** (with aggregate capacity of 40,000 MW), that cancels **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** because of payment default by discoms, **were to be valid for two years**.
 - This was done to allow generation companies adequate time to look for alternative PPAs.
 - After the two-year period, the coal linkage will be cancelled in case the generator is not able to secure a long- or medium-term PPA within that period.
- **Distribution company (Discom) dues** is one of the biggest issues in the country.
 - To deal with the same, from 1st August, 2019, the government has made it mandatory for state distribution companies (discoms) to offer **letters of credit (LC)** as part of the payment security mechanisms in power purchase agreements (PPAs). **A letter of credit** is a document that guarantees the buyer's payment to the sellers.
 - National, Regional and State Load Dispatch Centres are directed to dispatch power only after they are told by the Discoms that a LC for the desired quantum of power has been opened and copies have been made available to the concerned generating company.
 - These **LCs can be invoked if the Discom defaults in payments to the power generation company (Genco)** beyond the 45-day or 60-day grace period for

clearing dues, as provided in the power purchase agreement (PPA).

Source: Tol

South-Asian Speaker's Summit

Recently, the **4th South-Asian Speaker's Summit** on achieving **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) concluded in Male, Maldives.

- India had a heated discussion during the summit over the **Kashmir** issue with Pakistan, where India rejected the politicization of the forum by raising internal issues of a particular country.
- The joint statement released by the leaders in Male unanimously supported India's bid regarding Kashmir, & claimed it to be an internal matter of India, overlooking Pakistan's claims.
- In the summit, the Indian delegation was led by the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
- **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)** also participated in the summit in order to achieve SDGs 2 & 3 targets: **Nutrition and food security as drivers of maternal, child and adolescent health in the Asia-Pacific region.**

About Summit

- The Summit is intended for Speakers of the Parliaments of **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.**
- Parliaments play a key role in ensuring a sustainable future for current and future generations- given their legislative oversight, & representative and budgetary functions.
- This forum allows Speakers of various Parliaments to continue to develop dialogue and parliamentary cooperation on achieving the SDGs.

Source: IE

Terracotta Grinder

The **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** has launched the first-ever '**Terracotta Grinder**' at Varanasi.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has also started manufacturing of **plastic-mixed handmade paper.**

- It is being manufactured under KVIC's project **REPLAN (REducing PLAstic in Nature).**

- In this project, the waste plastic is collected, cleaned, chopped, beaten and treated for softness.
- Later it is mixed with the paper raw material in a ratio of 80 % (pulp) and 20% (plastic waste).

Terracotta Grinder

- It will grind the wasted and broken pottery items for re-using in pottery-making.
- It will reduce the cost of production, and will also help to solve the problem of shortage of clays for pottery making.

Project REPLAN

- The initiative is launched by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- REPLAN stands for **REducing PLastic in Nature**.
- It aims to make carry bags by mixing processed and treated plastic waste with cotton fibre rags in the ratio 20:80.
- The made paper is found to have good strength and durability
- It can be used to make paper bags, fine tissues and other paper-based items.

Terracotta

- Terracotta is a type of ceramic pottery.
- Terracotta is made by baking terracotta clay.
- In fact, the word “terracotta” comes from the Italian words for “baked earth.”
- It is often used for making pipes, bricks, and sculptures.

Source: PIB

India's Tallest ATC Tower

Recently, the Minister Civil Aviation inaugurated the Delhi Air Traffic Service Complex, which is the **tallest Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower in the country**.

- At a height of 102 meters, the tower enables air traffic controllers to have better visibility of all the three runways of **Indira Gandhi International airport (India's busiest airport)**.
- The tower is expected to **enhance the safety and the efficiency** of air transport management services.
- The new facility opens the possibility for **independent parallel approach**.
This allows for **simultaneous landings** from the same direction on parallel runways which will further increase the capacity of the airport.
- Apart from the height of the tower, it is also equipped with **sophisticated radar and**

other state-of-the-art communication systems.

- **Air Traffic Control** is the ground-based personnel and equipment concerned with controlling and monitoring air traffic within a particular area.

Source: PIB
