News Analysis (23 Aug, 2018)

India-Pakistan Trade: Status, Outlook

Recently, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan had stated that the best way to alleviate poverty and uplift the people of the subcontinent is to resolve differences through dialogue and trade.

Where does India-Pak trade ties currently stand?

- Trade between India and Pakistan jumped nearly three-and-a-half times between 2000-01 and 2005-06 (from $251 million to $869 million per annum), however, the following decade witnessed a slower progress.
- In FY17, India-Pakistan trade was a mere $2.29 billion, or about 0.35% of India's overall trade.
- Also, informal trade, estimated to be around USD 4.71 billion, continues to thrive between India and Pakistan despite measures undertaken by the two countries to normalize trade.
- Informal trade is easier because of harassment by customs officials, political tensions between the two countries and ease of routing goods through third countries like West Asia and border countries.

Why has trade not grown?

- Obstacles in the way of normalising India-Pakistan trade relations include
  - weak logistics and customs processing
  - technical barriers to trade such as sanitary or phytosanitary (SPS) restrictions
  - enhanced visa restrictions due to the recent political and military tensions between the two countries
  - Lack of financial support and telecommunication connectivity.
  - persisting infrastructure and connectivity deficit along with poor awareness amongst traders with regard to non-tariff barriers.

- While India and Pakistan have facilitated a degree of industry outreach in recent years, progress on the ground has been very less.
- A study by ICIER has identified an export potential of $2.2 billion from Pakistan to India, and $9.5 billion from India to Pakistan per annum. However, of the top 50 potential export items from Pakistan, India was importing 45 from countries other than Pakistan and this situation remains largely unchanged even now.
- Article 1 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994, requires every WTO member country to accord Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to all other member countries. India accorded Pakistan MFN status in 1996; however, Pakistan hasn't reciprocated.
- In 2012, India announced a 30% reduction in its SAFTA Sensitive list for Non-Least Developed Countries (NLDCs), including Pakistan, allowing for the tariff on 264 items to be cut to 5% within three years. Further, a roadmap was established between the two countries to move towards full normalisation of bilateral trade. However, it hasn't been implemented yet as Pakistan has failed to take the first step of permitting all importable
items through the Wagah-Attari land route.

South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA)

- The South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was agreed to among the seven South Asia countries that form the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC): Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- SAFTA replaces the earlier South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and aims to reduce tariffs in order to promote intraregional trade among the SAARC members

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban to Include Elimination of Public Urination

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has issued new norms for declaring town and cities wanting to be declared ODF+ (Open Defecation Free Plus) and ODF++ (Open Defecation Free Plus Plus) under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) ODF+ and ODF++ protocol. Now, for the first time, SBM (Urban) will include the elimination of public urination in its agenda.

Norms under ODF

No visible faeces found in the environment
Every household as well as public/community institutions using safe technology option for disposal of faeces.

Norms under ODF+

- At any point in a day, not a single person should be defecating and/or urinating in open.
- All community and public toilets should be properly maintained and cleaned.

Norms under ODF++

- It includes proper treatment and management of faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated.
- There should be no discharge or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.

Why only in Urban Areas?

In the case of urban areas, the problem is not one of usage, but of availability. People are forced to do it because of the lack of clean toilets. There is a need for cleanliness, accessibility and visibility.

Concerns

Public urination, especially by men, is almost entirely a behaviour change issue. Even men who have access to toilets use the roads as a public urinal.

Other initiatives

Swachh Manch web portal

- The Swachh Manch is a web-based platform, which aims to bring together every stakeholder contributing to the Swachh Bharat Mission under a common platform.
- The platform will allow stakeholders to create/invite/participate in volunteering opportunities around neighbourhoods.
- The Swachh Manch will also be integrated with the existing Swachhata App to act as a citizens' grievance redressal platform.

Swachh Survekshan 2019

- Swachh Survekshan is a ranking exercise taken up by the Government of India to assess rural and urban areas for their levels of cleanliness and active implementation of Swachhata mission initiatives in a timely and innovative manner.
- Swachh Survekshan-Urban is conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Swachh Survekshan –Rural is conducted by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) had conducted 'Swachh Survekshan-2016' survey for the rating of 73 cities in January 2016.

- 'Swachh Survekshan-2017' conducted in January-February 2017 ranking 434 cities. The recently concluded Swachh Survekshan 2018 ranked 4,203 Cities
- Some of the interesting insights gleaned from Swachh Survekshan 2018 included the following:
  - 79% of residents find their area cleaner than last year.
  - 73,875 waste-pickers provided a formal livelihood.
  - In 137 cities, > 60% of the bulk garbage generators are doing on-site composting.

India says 'No' to Aid Offer From UAE for Kerala

The Government of India has said no to Rs. 700 Cr. aid offer from UAE for Kerala flood relief and rehabilitation. India has also refused similar help from Qatar, Thailand and Maldives.

India's reason for refusal

- The policy of not accepting foreign aid was put in place by the central government after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. India had also denied foreign aid during Kashmir Earthquake in 2005, Uttarakhand floods in 2013 and Kashmir floods in 2014.
- Following the policy in place, the government will meet the relief and reconstruction needs of Kerala through domestic efforts only.
- India is looking at itself as an emerging power and at a role as net security and assistance provider in the region. Thus, being an emerging economy India is capable of dealing with natural calamities.
- Allowing foreign aid from one country will start outpour of foreign aids from other countries and it will be diplomatically difficult to deny the offer.

Can India Accept?

> The National Disaster Management Plan, 2016 clearly states that the Government of India does not issue any appeal for foreign assistance. However, Central Government can accept the offer considering the goodwill gesture of a foreign state in solidarity with disaster victim.

National Disaster Management Plan-2016

- The National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) provides a framework and direction to the government agencies for all phases of the disaster management cycle.
- NDMP is designed to deal with all phases of disaster management:
  - Mitigation (prevention and risk reduction)
  - Preparedness
  - Response
  - Recovery (immediate restoration to build-back better)

- NDMP-2016 is in alignment with the goals and priorities set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

State can Stop Voluntary Retirement of Doctors

The Supreme Court (SC) has ruled that the State can stop government doctors from taking voluntary retirement in light of public interest.

> According to the SC,the fundamental right to retire is not above the right to save lives in a country.
> If the voluntary retirement sought by a government doctor will be against public interest,concept of public interest can be cited by the Government to stop his/her voluntary retirement.

Background

- The ruling is based on an appeal by the Uttar Pradesh government against the Allahabad High Court's decision in a (State of UP vs. Achal Singh) case to allow a doctor to voluntarily retire with effect from March 31, 2017.
- Though the High Court allowed the doctor to retire, it rued the way government doctors were seeking voluntary retirement almost every day in the State.
- The High Court also observed that government healthcare sector is in need of senior doctors as they are "absolutely necessary to run the medical services which are part and parcel of the right to life itself."

Key Observations

- The court observed that public health is suffering from scarcity of doctors.
- Qualified doctors did not join the public service, and even if they did so, they chose voluntary retirement and chose to go back into lucrative private practice.
- The SC asserted that, the poor could not be put in peril by a paucity of specialists in government hospitals. The State governments had an obligation "to make an endeavour under Article 47 to look after the provisions for health and nutrition."
- The court also held that the doctors, as citizens, has certain fundamental duties under Article 51(A) towards their fellow citizens.
- The right to practise a profession under Article 19(1)(g) is subject to the interest of the general public, i.e it is not absolute.

Article 47 - The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption

except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.

Article 51(A) - Provides 11 fundamental duties for the citizens.

Article 19(1)(g) - All Citizen shall have the right,to practise and profession, or to carry on any occupation,trade or business.

35% of Cyber Attacks on Indian Sites from China

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has submitted its report to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and other security agencies on the basis of its analysis of cyber attacks from April-June 2018.

Key Highlights

- **Cyber attacks from China**: The maximum number of cyber attacks on official Indian websites are from China followed by the US and Russia. The cyber attacks from China made up 35% of the total number of cyber attacks on official Indian websites, followed by US (17%), Russia (15%), Pakistan (9%), Canada (7%) and Germany (5%).
- **Attacks from Pakistan**: It has been observed that intruding activities are coming from Canadian and German cyberspace — most possibly suspected to have originated from Pakistan to target Indian websites.
- Many of the **institutions impacted by the malicious activities have been identified** and advised to take appropriate preventive action. These include Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), National Informatics Centre (NIC), Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), Railways, Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) and some banks like Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, State Bank of India and state data centres, particularly in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.
- The cyber **attacks are usually in the form of a trusted source** where they ask for personal details such as bank details, personal details, passwords. They are targeted by sending phishing emails with malware attachments.

Computer Emergency Response Team - India (CERT-IN)

- It is an organisation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, with the objective of securing Indian cyberspace.
- It is the nodal agency which deals with cybersecurity threats like hacking and phishing.
- It collects, analyses and disseminates information on cyber incidents, and also issues alert on cybersecurity incidents.

- CERT-IN provides Incident Prevention and Response Services as well as Security Quality Management Services.

Some important government initiatives for cyberspace security

- National Cyber Security Policy, 2013: The Policy is aimed at building a secure and resilient cyberspace for citizens, businesses and the Government. Its mission is to protect cyberspace information and infrastructure, build capabilities to prevent and respond to cyber attacks, and minimise damages through coordinated efforts of institutional structures, people, processes, and technology.
- Cyber Swachhta Kendra' (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre): To combat cyber security violations and prevent their increase,Government of India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) in 2017 launched 'Cyber Swachhta Kendra' (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) a new desktop and mobile security solution for cyber security in India.
- Creating mechanisms for security threats and responses to the same through national systems and processes. National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) functions as the nodal agency for the coordination of all cybersecurity efforts, emergency responses, and crisis management.
- In 2014, the Prime Minister's Office created the position of the National Cyber Security Coordinator.
  National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) is an organisation of the Government of India created under Section 70A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (amended in 2008).

NGT asks for Action Plan on E-waste in Three Months

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked Ministry of Environment forest (MoEF) to submit an action plan for enforcement of rules and taking actions against violators E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

> The NGT was disposing of a plea against unauthorised "recycling, collection, dismantling, burning, selling" of e-waste and other solid waste on roadsides and riverbanks in violation of E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

E-waste

- 'E-waste' means electrical and electronic equipment, completely or in part discarded as waste by the consumer or bulk consumer as well as rejects from manufacturing, refurbishment and repair processes.

- E-Waste is short for Electronic-Waste. It is the term used to describe old, end-of-life or discarded electronic appliance. It includes computers, mobiles, consumer electronics etc.
- India is the fifth largest producer of e-waste in the world with annual e-waste generation of more than 18 million tonnes.

Why should E-waste be managed properly?

- E-waste consist of toxic elements such as Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Chromium, Polybrominated biphenyls and Polybrominated diphenyl.
- Non-Disposal and burning of e-waste can have serious implication on human health and can cause air, soil pollution and groundwater contamination.

E-waste management rules 2016

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 in supersession of the e-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011.
- Making the norms stringent, the new E-waste rules included Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) and other mercury-containing lamps, as well as other such equipment.
- For the first time, the rules brought the producers under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), along with targets. Producers have been made responsible for the collection of E-waste and for its exchange.
- Various producers can have a separate Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) and ensure collection of E-waste, as well as its disposal in an environmentally sound manner.
- The role of State Governments has been also introduced to ensure safety, health and skill development of the workers involved in dismantling and recycling operations. A provision of penalty for violation of rules has also been introduced.

Medical Device Margins to be Capped

The **NITI Aayog** has recommended to cap trade margin at 65% for medical devices, abandoning the current price control mechanism.

- This will seek to curb profiteering as well as allay concerns of device makers, particularly importers of stents and knee implants, who have complained that price restrictions hurt innovation.
- According to Niti Aayog's formula, the maximum retail price (MRP) of a device will be decided by **adding the trade margin** to the price at the first point of sale (stockist).
- The trade margin is the **difference** between the price at which the **manufacturers/importers** sell to stockists and the **price charged to consumers.**

- In India the trade margins are huge hovering around 62% to 405%.
- Since, many expenditures are incurred by the importing companies, including clinical education on deployment, and therefore trade margins should start from the first point of sale, that is the stockist.
- Once the new mechanism of calculation of trade margins is approved, it will be applicable on devices such as cardiac stents, prices of which were slashed by as much as 85% by **National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority(NPPA)** in 2017.
- However, experts have termed the government's plan to as a regressive move that will hurt consumers and domestic industry. This will make stents not only more expensive for consumers but will also negatively effect domestic industry.

Background

- Currently, 23 medical devices have been notified as drugs and are regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.
- Of these, only four—cardiac stents, drug-eluting stents, condoms and intra-uterine devices—are included in the **National List of Essential Medicines** and are, therefore, subject to notified price caps.
- Stents were brought under price control after they were included in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) in 2015 on the recommendation of a **sub-committee headed by Prof. Y. K. Gupta**.
- Coronary stents are among the categories of medical devices that have been **notified as "drugs" and not** as medical devices under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940.

National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority

- NPPA is an organization under Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers which was set up in 1997 to revise the prices of controlled bulk drugs and formulations and to enforce prices and availability of the medicines in the country, under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 1995.
- The prices are now fixed/revised under Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013.
- It also monitors the prices of decontrolled drugs in order to keep them at reasonable levels.

National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)

- Essential medicines are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population. These are selected with due regard to disease prevalence, evidence on efficacy and safety, and comparative cost-effectiveness.
- The list is prepared by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Important Facts for Prelims (23 August 2018)

National Mission for Manuscripts

- The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was launched by the **Ministry of Culture** in the year **2003**.
- The Mission has the mandate of identifying, documenting, conserving and making accessible the manuscript heritage of India. The ultimate objective of the Mission is to establish a Digital Manuscripts Repository at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in which researchers and scholars can view and consult the manuscripts
- IGNCA is an autonomous institution under the Union Ministry of Culture. It was established in 1987 as a centre for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts.
- Its motto is **'conserving the past for the future'**.
- National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) is also developing an app to make around 3 lakh manuscripts accessible.