



## News Analysis (01 Jan, 2021)

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### New Industrial Infrastructure Projects

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#### Why in News

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Recently, the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved three infrastructure proposals worth **Rs 7,725 crore** for setting up **greenfield industrial cities** with **connectivity to major transportation corridors**.

The cabinet also approved a modified scheme for **interest subvention for Ethanol production** expanding the scheme to **include grain based distilleries and not just molasses based ones**.

The scheme would **encourage ethanol production** from grains like barley, maize, corn and rice and **boost production and distillation capacity** to 1,000 crore litres and help in meeting the **goal of 20% ethanol blending with petrol by 2030**.

#### Key Points

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- These projects are based on major transportation corridors like **Eastern & Western Dedicated Freight Corridors, Expressways and National Highways, proximity to ports, airports**.
- This will **attract investments into manufacturing and position India as a strong player in the global value chain**.
- These projects will generate **ample employment opportunities through** development of Industrial Corridors.

#### Industrial Corridors

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- **Industrial corridors** offer **effective integration between industry and infrastructure**, leading to overall **economic and social development**.

- **Economic Significance:**

- **Avenues for Exports:** The Industrial Corridors are likely to lower the cost of logistics thereby increasing the efficiency of industrial production structure. Such an **efficiency lowers the cost of production which makes the Indian made products more competitive in international markets.**
- **Job Opportunities:** Development of Industrial Corridors would attract investments for the development of Industries which is likely to **create more jobs in the market.**
- **Logistics:** These corridors would **provide necessary logistics infrastructure needed to reap economies of scale**, thus enabling firms to focus on their areas of core competence.
- **Investment Opportunities:** Industrial corridor **provides opportunities for private sector investment** in the provision of various infrastructure projects associated with the exploitation of industrial opportunity.
- **Improved Functioning:** Apart from the **development of infrastructure**, long-term advantages to business and industry along the corridor include benefits arising from smooth access to the industrial production units, **decreased transportation and communications costs, improved delivery time and reduction in inventory cost.**

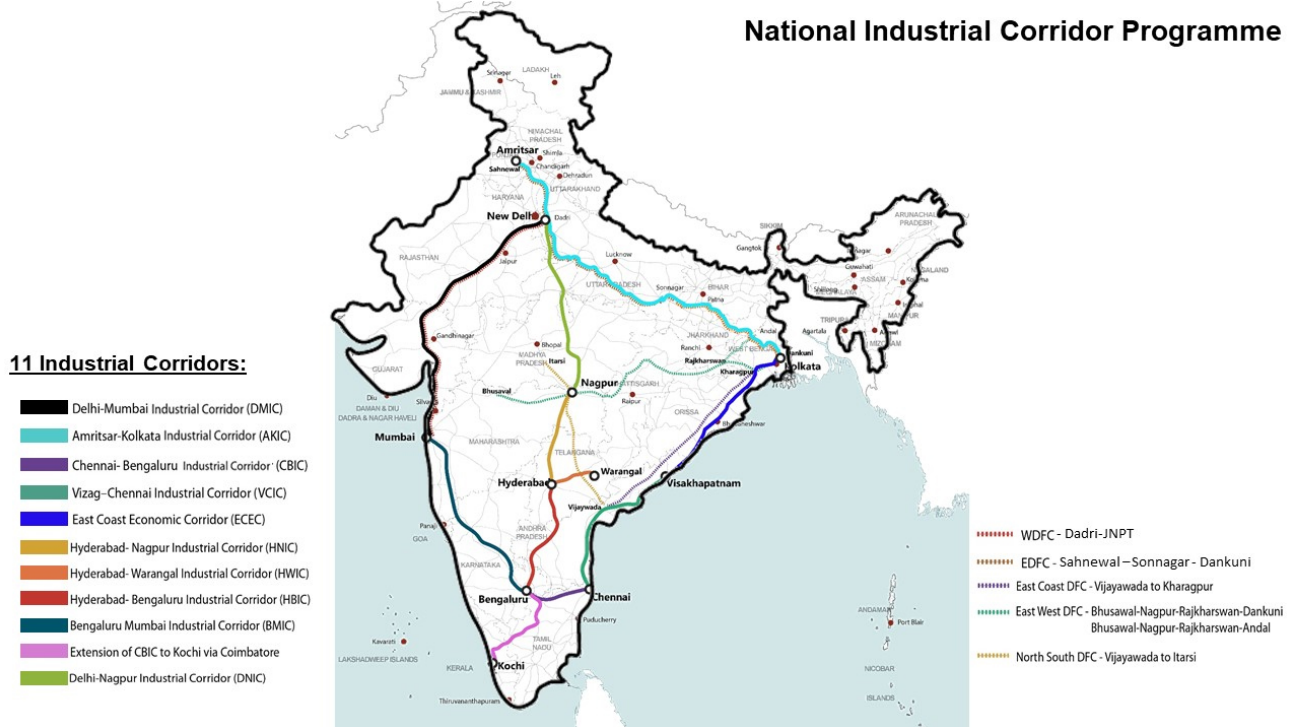
- **Environmental Significance:**

The establishment of Industrial Units in a scattered manner along the industrial corridor across the length of the state will **prevent concentration of industries in one particular location which exploited the environment beyond its carrying capacity** and caused environmental degradation.

- **Socio-Economic Significance:**

- The cascading effect of industrial corridors in socio-economic terms are many such as setting up of industrial townships, educational institutions, hospitals. These will further **raise the standards of human development.**
- Moreover, people would find job opportunities close to their homes and would not have to migrate to far-off places (would prevent distress migration).

- **National Industrial Corridor Development Programme:**



- **Aim:** The Government of India is developing various Industrial Corridor Projects as part of the **National Industrial Corridor programme** which is aimed at development of futuristic industrial cities in India which can compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations in the world.
- **Administration:**
  - National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT)** is under the administrative control of **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** for coordinated and unified development of all the industrial corridors which are at various stages of development and implementation.
- It is India's most ambitious infrastructure programme aiming to develop new industrial cities as **"Smart Cities"** and **converging next generation technologies** across infrastructure sectors.
- 11 Industrial Corridors Projects are being taken up for development with 30 Projects to be developed in **04 phases up to 2024-25:**

## Way Forward

- To make the corridors successful, India has to be part of the **Industrial Revolution 4.0**, which will be **shaped by a fresh wave of innovation** in areas such as smart robotics, materials that are lighter and tougher, and a manufacturing process built around 3D printing and analytics.
- **Industrial corridors will help India's efforts to lead the world in the fourth wave of industrial revolution.** Effective execution of this plan could make India take a major leap in the race of development

**Source: TH**

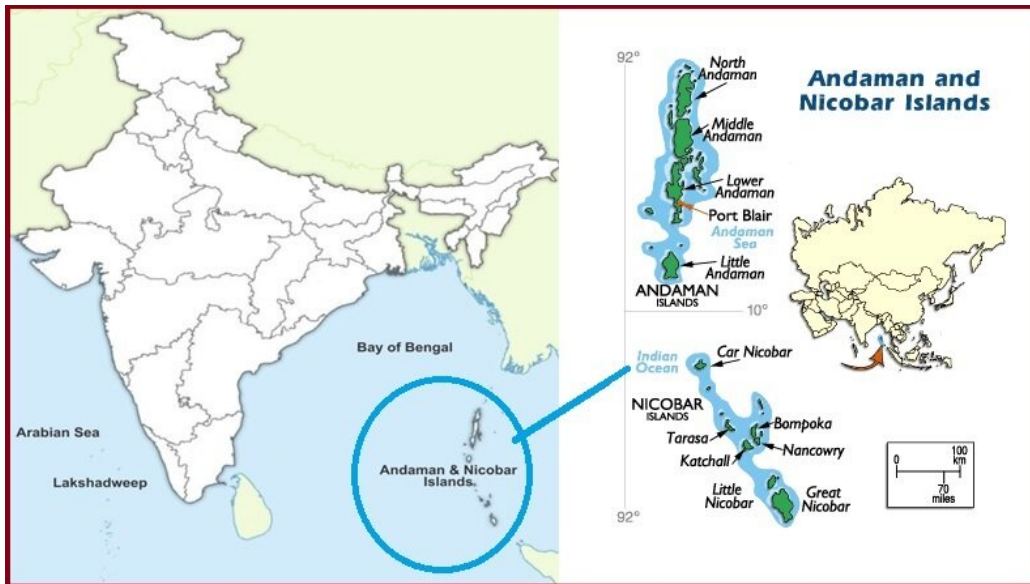
## Protecting the Sentinelese

## Why in News

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Recently, the **Anthropological Survey of India (ANSI)** policy document warned of threat to the Sentinelese from commercial activity.

The policy document comes almost two years after American national John Allen Chau was allegedly **killed by the Sentinelese on the North Sentinel Island**.



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## Key Points

- **ANSI Guidelines:**
  - Any **exploitation** of the **North Sentinel Island of the Andamans** for commercial and strategic gain would be **dangerous for its occupants, the Sentinelese**.
  - The **Right of the people** to the island is **non-negotiable, unassailable and unfringeable**. The prime duty of the state is to protect these rights as eternal and sacrosanct.
  - Their **island should not be eyed** for any commercial or strategic gain.
  - The document also calls for **building a knowledge bank on the Sentinelese**.
  - Since 'on-the-spot study' is not possible for the tribal community, anthropologists suggest the **'study of a culture from distance'**.

- **About the Sentinelese:**

- The Sentinelese are a **pre-neolithic, negrito tribe** who live in North Sentinel Island of the Andamans.
- They are **completely isolated with no contact to the outside world**. The first time they were contacted by a team of Indian anthropologists in 1991.
  - Due to no contact, the census of Sentinelese is taken through photographing the island individuals from distance.
  - It has a population of about **50 to 100 on the North Sentinel Island**.
- Surveys of North Sentinel Island have **not found any evidence of agriculture**. Instead, the community seems to be **hunter-gatherers, getting food through fishing, hunting, and collecting wild plants living on the island**.
- Sentinelese are also listed under **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** by the government of India. The **other four PVTGs** of the islands are **Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, and Shompens**.
- They are protected under the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956**.
  - It declares traditional areas occupied by the tribes as reserves, and prohibits entry of all except those with authorization.
  - Photographing or filming tribe members is also an offense..

### **Anthropological Survey of India**

- It is a **premier research institute for anthropological research in bio-cultural studies**.
- It was established in **1945**. It is one of the many organizations under **the Ministry of Culture**. It has **headquarters at Kolkata** and **branches in Port Blair, Shillong, DehraDun, Udaipur, Nagpur, and Mysore** in addition to two **field stations at Jagdalpur and Ranchi**.
- The Survey through its anthropological research **contributes in respect of the biological, social and cultural heritage of the country**.
- It is also recognised as one of the most advanced centres **for research and training in anthropology and allied disciplines**.
- **Objectives:**
  - To **study the tribes and other communities** that form the population of India both from the biological and cultural point of view
  - To **study and preserve the human skeletal remains**, both from modern and Archaeological.
  - To **collect samples of arts and crafts** of the tribes of India.
  - To function as a **training center for advanced students in anthropology** and for administration.
  - To **publish** the results of the research.

### **Way Forward**

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- The academics have suggested that the **best path forward is a policy of "controlled contact"** with these communities instead of a policy of no contact.
- Carefully managed contact to avoid the spread of disease, but **also enable the building of trust and providing aid and medical help if needed is the best way**.
- Establishing contact with the outside world can also **help governments to document their way of life, preserve their culture and their holistic development**.

**Source:TH**

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# Covid Deaths: Developed Versus Developing Countries

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## Why in News

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As per a new study, **better hygiene and sanitation** in the rich and developed countries could, paradoxically, be **one of the reasons for the high rates of coronavirus-related deaths** lending credence to what is known as the ‘**hygiene hypothesis**’

## Key Points

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- **The Study:**
  - The study is based on analysis of data until 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020, by which time more than 5 lakh deaths had been reported with 70% of it in **high-income countries**.
  - It correlated coronavirus deaths in several countries with indicators such as **Gross Domestic Product, population density, human development index rating, demography, sanitation and hygiene, and prevalence of autoimmune diseases**.
- **Findings:**
  - **Case of Developed Countries:**

Among countries with the **highest rates of death per million of population are Belgium, Italy and Spain**, where more than **1,200 have died per million**. The US and the UK have more than 1,000 deaths per million of population.
  - **India Specific Findings:**

In contrast, India has seen just about **110 deaths per million**, less than half the world average of about 233. Most other South Asian countries, as also in rest of Asia and Africa, have **much lower death rates**.
  - **The Paradox:**

The lower-income countries, with **higher population densities and much lower sanitation standards**, seem to have recorded much fewer coronavirus-related deaths compared to richer and more developed countries.
  - **Exceptions:**

Countries such as **Japan, Finland, Norway, Monaco or Australia** have also recorded very low death rates.
  - **Other factors Involved:**
    - Stage of the epidemic,
    - **Lower reporting/testing** in less developed countries that could also affect the mortality numbers.
    - It found that ‘**hygiene hypothesis**’ could be one of the reasons for the same.

## Hygiene Hypothesis

- According to the Hygiene hypothesis, people in countries with **low sanitation standards** get exposed to **communicable diseases** at an early age and **develop stronger immunity**, helping them to ward off diseases later in life, a phenomenon called ‘**immune training**’.
- Conversely, people in richer countries have **better access to healthcare and vaccines**, and things like clean drinking water, due to which they remain safer from such infectious diseases. Paradoxically, this also means that **their immune system remains unexposed to such dangers**.
- This hypothesis is also sometimes used to explain the prevalence of **auto-immune diseases**, in which the immune system sometimes ‘**overreacts**’ and **starts attacking the body’s own cells**, leading to disorders like **type-1 diabetes mellitus** or **multiple sclerosis**.

- However, few suggest that it would be better if the hypothesis were renamed, e.g. as the ‘microbial exposure’ hypothesis, or ‘microbial deprivation’ hypothesis. Avoiding the term ‘hygiene’ would help **focus attention on determining the true impact of microbes**, while **minimizing risks of discouraging good hygiene practice**.

Source: IE

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## Boost to Defence Exports

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### Why in News

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The Union Cabinet has recently approved export of the **Akash surface-to-air missile to “friendly countries”** and constituted a **committee, headed by the Defence Minister**, for faster approval of export of defence platforms.

This committee would **authorise subsequent export of major indigenous platforms** to various countries.

### Key Points

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- The export version of Akash, will be **different from the system currently deployed with the Indian armed forces**.
- The Cabinet approval will facilitate Indian manufactures to participate in **RFI/RFP issued by various countries**.
  - A **request for information (RFI)** is used when the owner wants several contractors to provide potential solutions, while a **request for proposal (RFP)** is used in a **bidding process to solicit offers for a project**.
- So far, Indian defence exports included parts/components etc. The export of big platforms was minimal.
  - This initiative of the Cabinet would help the country **improve its defence products and make them globally competitive**.
  - It would be a significant step under **Atma Nirbhar Bharat**,
- Besides Akash, there is interest in other major platforms like the **coastal surveillance system, radars and air platforms**.

### Akash Missile

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- Akash is India’s **first indigenously produced medium range Surface to Air missile** that can engage multiple targets from multiple directions.
  - The all-weather missile can engage targets at a speed **2.5 times more than the speed of sound** and can detect and destroy targets flying at **low, medium and high altitudes**.
- The Akash missile system has been designed and developed as part of India’s 30-year-old **integrated guided-missile development programme (IGMDP)** which also includes other missiles like **Nag, Agni, Trishul and Prithvi**.
- **Range and Capability:**
  - The **nuclear-capable missile** can fly at a speed of up to **Mach 2.5** (nearly 860 meter per second) at a maximum height of **18 km**.
  - It can strike enemy aerial targets like fighter jets, drones, cruise missiles, air-to-surface missiles as well as ballistic missiles from a distance of **30 km**.

- **Unique features of Akash:**

- The missile is unique in the way that it can be launched from **mobile platforms like battle tanks or wheeled trucks**. It has nearly 90% kill probability.
- The missile is supported by the **indigenously developed radar** called '**Rajendra**' that can handle **highly-maneuvring multiple targets from multiple directions in group or autonomous mode**.
- The missile is reportedly cheaper and more accurate than US' Patriot missiles due to its solid-fuel technology and high-tech radars.

- **Manufactured by:**

The missile system is designed and developed by **Defence Research and Development Organisation** (DRDO)

## India's Defence Exports

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- As per the data published by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**, or SIPRI, in March 2020, India is **ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in the list of major arms exporters** for 2015-2019 and 19<sup>th</sup> for 2019.
  - The **Ministry of Defence's annual report** 2018-19 records that the defence exports were worth Rs **10,745 crore**, a growth of more than 100% from 2017-18 (Rs 4,682 crore) and over 700 % since 2016-17 (Rs 1,521 crore).
  - It's share of global arms exports is only **0.17%**.
- The current government has been laying emphasis on defence manufacturing in India to build up the country's manufacturing base, ensure jobs for its youth and to bring down India's arms import bill. India's target was to export **5 billion USD** worth of military hardware by 2025

## Way Forward

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There is a need to create an environment for **greater participation of private industry**, a stable macro-economic and political environment, and a transparent business environment which encourages **fair competition**.

**Source:IE**

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## Extension RoDTEP Scheme

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Government has decided to **extend the benefit** of the Scheme for **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)** to all export goods.

### Key Points

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- **Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP):**
  - The scheme was announced in 2020 as a replacement for the **Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS)**, which was not compliant with the rules of the **World Trade Organisation**.
    - Following a complaint by the US, a dispute settlement panel had ruled against India's use of **MEIS** as it had found the duty credit scrips awarded under the scheme to be **inconsistent with WTO norms**.
    - The **RoDTEP** scheme would **refund to exporters the embedded central, state and local duties or taxes** that were so far not being rebated or refunded and were, therefore, placing India's exports at a disadvantage.
  - **Significance:**
    - Indian **exporters** will be able to **meet the international standards** for exports as affordable testing and certification will be made available to exporters within the country instead of relying on international organizations.
    - Also under it, **tax assessment is set to become fully automatic for exporters**. Businesses will get access to their refunds for GST via an automatic refund-route.
    - This would **increase the economy for the country and working capital for the enterprise**.
- **Extension of Benefits:**
  - The government has decided to **extend the benefits of the RoDTEP to all export goods** starting **1<sup>st</sup> January 2021**.  
Initially, the scheme was expected to be limited to around three sectors to start with due to limited resources.
  - The rates under this scheme, which are expected to be notified soon, will be applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to all eligible exports of goods.
  - **Reason for Extension:**
    - It will boost the export sector of the country.
    - So far refunds were not taking place, **adversely impacting exports**.  
India's exports fell **8.74%** in November, steeper than **5.12%** dip in October.

**Source:PIB**

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## **India in GAVI Board**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, the **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare** has been nominated by the **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation** (GAVI) as a member on GAVI board.

Earlier in May 2020, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare was also elected as the **Chair of the World Health Organization's Executive Board**.

### **Key Points**

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- The minister will be representing the **South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO)** constituency on the GAVI Board.
- The seat is **currently held by Myanmar** and **India will be holding** it from **1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**.

- **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation:**
  - **Created in 2000**, Gavi is an international organisation, a **global vaccine alliance**.
  - It **brings together public and private sectors** with the **shared goal of creating equal access to new and underused vaccines** for children living in the world's poorest countries.
  - Its core partners include the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, the **World Bank** and the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**.
  - As part of its **mission to save lives, reduce poverty and protect the world against the threat of epidemics**, GAVI has **helped vaccinate more than 822 million children in the world's poorest countries**, preventing more than 14 million future deaths.
- **GAVI Board:**
  - It is **responsible for strategic direction and policy-making**, oversees the operations of the **Vaccine Alliance and monitors programme implementation**.
  - With membership drawn from a range of partner organisations, as well as experts from the private sector, the Board **provides a forum for balanced strategic decision making, innovation and partner collaboration**.
  - It normally **meets twice a year** in June and November/December and **holds an annual retreat**, normally in March or April.

**Source: PIB**

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## **Mera Gaon, Mera Gaurav Programme: ICAR**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, under the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**'s initiative 'Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav', cleanliness drive was carried out in few villages of Goa along with guidance to village panchayats on waste disposal.

**ICAR** is an autonomous organisation under the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

### **Key Points**

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- **Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav:**
  - The scheme was **launched in 2015**.
  - The scheme envisages **scientists to select villages as per their convenience and remain in touch with the selected villages** and **provide information to the farmers on technical and other related aspects of agriculture** in a time frame **through personal visits or on telephone**.
  - They may function with the help of **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)** and **Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA)**.
- **Objective:**
  - To promote the **direct interface of scientists** with the farmers to hasten the **"lab to land"** process.

### **Agriculture Technology Management Agency**

- It is a **registered society responsible for technology dissemination at the district level**. It is a focal point for integrating research extension and marketing.

- **Launch:** It was **launched during 2005-06.**
- **Funding:** The funding pattern is **90% by the central Government and 10% by the state government.**
- **Objectives:**
  - To strengthen **research – extension – farmer linkages.**
  - To provide an **effective mechanism for coordination and management of activities of different agencies** involved in technology adoption/validation and dissemination at the district level and below.
  - To **increase the quality and type of technologies** being disseminated.
  - To move towards **shared ownership of the agricultural technology** system by key shareholders.
  - To **develop new partnerships** with private institutions including NGOs.
- **Beneficiaries:** Individual, Community, Women, Farmers/Farm Women groups.

**Source:PIB**

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## **Virtual Agri-Hackathon 2020**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, the Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare inaugurated the **Virtual Agri-hackathon 2020** in association with **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI)**, Pusa, New Delhi.

**IARI** is the country's **premier national Institute for agricultural research, education and extension.**

### **Key Points**

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- **About Agri-Hackathon 2020:**
  - **Objective :**

It will **bring together the most important stakeholders** from industry and government alongside India's young **bright minds, creative startups and smart innovators** who will build new, fast and frugal solutions to tackle the challenges of the agriculture sector.
  - **The Competition:**
    - **Requirement:** The hackathon will **accept innovations and ideas on farm mechanization, precision agriculture, supply chain and food technology, waste to wealth, green energy**, etc.
    - **Prize: Final 24 winners** will get a cash prize of **Rs 1,00,000** along with incubation support, tech & business mentoring and various other benefits.
- **Significance:**
  - This event is very **crucial from the standpoint of new technology and value addition in agriculture.**
  - It will help achieve **doubling the farmer's income** which in turn will **create many growth opportunities for the entire country.**

**Source:PIB**

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## **Moringa Powder**

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## Why in News

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The **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** has been supporting private entities in creating necessary infrastructure to promote **Moringa products exports** from India.

## Key Points

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- Globally, the demand for Moringa products, such as **Moringa Leaf Powder and Moringa Oil, Moringa as a nutritional supplement and in food fortification** has been witnessing healthy growth.
- Its usage has been well received among the global consumers for its nutritional, medicinal, culinary uses.

## Moringa

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- Botanical name: *Moringa oleifera*
- It is a **fast-growing, drought-resistant tree native to the Indian subcontinent**.
- Common names include moringa, drumstick tree, horseradish tree etc.
- It is widely cultivated for its **young seed pods and leaves**, used as vegetables and **for traditional herbal medicine**. It is also used for **water purification**.
- It has various healthy compounds such as **various vitamins**, important elements such as **Iron, Magnesium** etc. and is extremely low on fats and contains **no cholesterol**.

## Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority

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- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established by the Government of India under the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985**.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The Authority has its **headquarters in New Delhi**.
- APEDA is mandated with the **responsibility of export promotion and development** of the scheduled products like fruits, vegetables and their products, meat and meat products, etc.
- APEDA has been entrusted with the **responsibility to monitor import of sugar**.

**Source:PIB**

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## Revival of Monpa Handmade Paper

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## Why in News

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Recently, **the Monpa Handmade Paper** (1000-year old heritage art) of Arunachal Pradesh has been revived by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.



## Key Points

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- **About Monpa Handmade Paper:**

- The fine-textured handmade paper, which is called **Mon Shugu** in the local dialect, is **integral to the vibrant culture** of the local tribes in Tawang.
- The paper has great historic and religious significance as it is the paper **used for writing Buddhist scriptures and hymns in monasteries.**
- The **Monpa handmade paper** is made from the **bark of a local tree called Shugu Sheng**, which has medicinal values too.

- **Monpa Handmade Paper Industry:**

- The art of making **Monpa handmade paper** originated over **1000 years ago**. Gradually the art became an **integral part of local custom and culture** in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Once produced in every household in Tawang, this **handmade paper was a major source of livelihood for the locals.**
- The handmade paper industry almost disappeared in the last 100 years.

- **Revival Program:**

- An **attempt** for the revival of this handmade paper industry was made **in 1994** but **failed.**
- KVIC commissioned a Monpa handmade paper making unit in Tawang which not only aimed at reviving the art but also **engaging the local youths with this art professionally and earn.**
- The revival is aligned with the Prime Ministers Mantra of **Vocal for Local.**

- **Future Programs:**

- Tawang is also known for **two other local** crafts:
  - **Handmade pottery**
  - **Handmade furniture**
- KVIC announced that within six months **plans will be rolled out for revival of these two local arts.**

Revival of **handmade pottery** will be taken up on priority under **Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana** very soon.

**Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana (KSY):** It was launched in 2018 to strengthen and improve the living of potters in the country by making them self reliant.

### **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**

- KVIC is a statutory body established under the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956.**
- The KVIC is charged with the **planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries** in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.**

**Source: PIB**

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