

Decisions taken by the Union Cabinet

- **Cabinet approves MoU between India and Brunei Darussalam on Cooperation in the operation of Telemetry Tracking and Telecomm and station for satellite and launch vehicles, and for cooperation in the field of Space Research, Science and Applications**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Brunei Darussalam on Cooperation in the operation of Telemetry Tracking and Telecomm and station for satellite and launch vehicles, and for cooperation in the field of Space Research, Science and Applications. The MoU was signed in New Delhi on 19th July 2018.

Benefits:

The MoU enables India to continue to operate, maintain and augment its ground station meant for supporting India's launch vehicle and satellite missions. This will also help India to share its experience and expertise in space activities through training of officials and students from Brunei Darussalam on space technology applications.

Cooperation with Brunei Darussalam through this MoU would lead to operation, maintenance and augmentation of Indian Ground Station to support India's launch vehicle and satellite missions. Thus all sections and regions of the country will get benefited.

The MoU will provide impetus to explore newer research activities in ground station operations and training on space technology applications.

- **Cabinet approves Transfer of land of M/s. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers (RCF) to Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA)**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval for

- i. transfer of land of M/s Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Ltd. (RCF) to Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA);
- ii. proposal for approval for transfer of land of M/s Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Ltd. (RCF) to Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) and
- iii. for selling of Transferable Development Right (TDR) Certificate received/receivable against the transfer of land to MMRDA/MCGM.

- **Cabinet approves MoU between India and South Africa on cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Africa on cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes. The MoU was signed in Johannesburg on 26th July 2018.

Salient Features:

The areas of cooperation under this MoU are the following:

1. Remote sensing of the earth;
2. Satellite communication and satellite-based navigation;
3. Space science and planetary exploration;
4. Use of spacecraft, launch vehicles, space systems and ground systems;
5. Practical applications of space technology including geospatial tools and techniques; and
6. Other areas of cooperation to be determined by the Parties.

The Cooperation under this MoU shall be carried out in the following forms:

1. Planning and implementation of joint space projects of mutual benefit and interest;
2. Establishment, operation and maintenance of ground stations for supporting space activities;
3. Sharing of satellite data, results of experiments, and scientific and technological information;
4. Joint research and developmental activities;
5. Exchange of technical and scientific personnel designated to participate in the cooperative programmes;
6. Capacity building in space science and technology, and space application programmes for societal purposes;
7. Organization of joint symposia, conferences and scientific meetings; and
8. Additional forms of cooperation will be determined in writing upon mutual consent between the Parties.

Benefits:

Signing of this MoU shall enable pursuing the potential areas of cooperation such as space science, technology and applications including remote sensing of the earth, satellite communication and satellite-based navigation; space science and planetary exploration; use of spacecraft and space systems and ground systems; and application of space technology.

- **Cabinet approves MoU on Collaborative Research on Distributed Ledger and Block Chain Technology in the context of Development of digital economy by Exim Bank under BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Collaborative Research on Distributed Ledger and Block chain Technology in the context of Development of digital economy by Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) with the participating member banks, under the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism namely Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social (BNDES, of Brazil), China Development Bank (CDB), State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs (Vnesheconombank, of Russia) and

Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

Major Impact

Distributed Ledger/Block chain technology holds potential for solutions to various challenges being faced in the financial sector space of the BRICS nations. The MoU intends to enhance understanding of Distributed Ledger/Block Chain technology, through the joint research efforts to identify areas within respective business operations where it may have the potential for applications aimed at enhancing the operational efficiencies.

- **Cabinet approves MoU between India and Egypt on cooperation in the field of Agriculture & allied sectors**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Egypt for cooperation in the field of agriculture & allied sectors.

The MoU provides for cooperation in areas of agricultural crops (especially wheat and maize), agricultural biotechnology, nanotechnology, irrigation and water management technology including water harvesting and micro-irrigation technology, management of agriculture wastes management for energy production; food security, safety and quality; horticulture; organic agriculture; livestock husbandry, livestock breeding, dairying, fisheries, feed and fodder production; animal products and value addition; sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues concerning trade in plant and animal products; agriculture machinery in small scale; agri-business and marketing; pre and post-harvest procedures; food technology and processing; integrated pest management in agriculture; agricultural extension and rural development; agricultural trade & investment; intellectual property rights issues; technical know-how and human resources in seed sector; infrastructure development and capacity building in agriculture & allied sectors and other related areas of interest that are mutually agreed upon by both Parties.

Cooperation will also be effected through exchange of research scientists and experts; exchange of agricultural information and scientific publications (journals, books, bulletins, statistical data on agriculture

and allied sectors); exchange of germplasm & agriculture technology; and conducting joint seminars, workshops, symposiums and other similar activities.

Under the MoU, a Joint Working Group (JWG) will be formed to enhance cooperation on matters of mutual interest including consultations on bilateral issues. The JWG will meet at least annually in the initial two years, alternately in India and Egypt to formulate joint work programs, facilitation and consultation, including making additional supplementary engagements with regard to specific issues.

- **Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Malta for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Malta for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism. The MoU will be signed during the upcoming visit of the Vice President to Malta.

Main objectives of the MoU are:

1. To encourage the quality destination of tourism industry in both countries;
2. To increase tourist arrivals in both countries from the entire world through the territories of India and Malta;
3. Promoting human resource development in tourism and travel-related industries in both countries;
4. To contribute to a new tourism, offer, particularly through the promotion of natural and tangible, and intangible cultural heritage, the development of sustainable tourism and the use of information technologies; and
5. To recognize that tourism is a means to foster relationship between peoples of the two countries.

Benefits:

This MoU will help the two parties in creating an institutional mechanism for enhancing cooperation in the tourism sector. It will also help India in increasing foreign tourist arrivals from Malta. This, in turn, will result

in economic development and employment generation.

The MoU will create favourable conditions for long-term tourism cooperation for the mutual benefits of all stakeholders within the broader framework and areas of cooperation. It will also explore to incorporate the best practices in order to implement the measures that will realize its objectives.

- **Cabinet approves Policy Framework to Promote and Incentivize Enhanced Recovery Methods for Oil and Gas**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Policy framework to promote and incentivize Enhanced Recovery (ER)/ Improved Recovery (IR)/ Unconventional Hydrocarbon (UHC) production Methods/techniques to improve recovery factor of existing hydrocarbons reserves for augmenting domestic production of oil and gas. The ER includes Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) and Enhanced Gas Recovery (EGR), Unconventional Hydrocarbon (UHC) production methods include Shale oil and gas production, tight oil and gas production, production from oil shale, gas hydrates and heavy oil. Enhanced Recovery, Improved Recovery and exploration and exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbons are capital intensive, technologically complex and challenging in nature. It calls for supporting infrastructure, logistic support, fiscal incentives and enabling environment.

The strategic objective of the Policy is to build a supportive ecosystem through academic and research institutes, industry- academia collaboration and to support and encourage Exploration and Production (E&P) Contractors to deploy ER/IR/UHC Methods/ techniques. The Policy will be applicable to all contractual regimes and Nomination fields. This policy initiative is expected to spur new investment, provide impetus to economic activities and generate additional employment opportunities. The Policy is expected to facilitate induction of new, innovative and cutting-edge technology and forging technological collaboration to improve productivity of existing fields.

Technological interventions have significant potential in stimulating the recovery of hydrocarbon reserves from the matured/aging fields. An increase by 5% in recovery rate of original in-place volume in oil production is envisaged producing 120 MMT additional oil in next 20 years. In case of gas, an increase of 3% recovery rate on original in- place volume is envisaged, leading to additional production of 52 BCM of gas in

next 20 years.

- **Cabinet approves New Umbrella Scheme “Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan” (PM-AASHA)**

Giving a major boost to the pro-farmer initiatives of the Government and in keeping with its commitment and dedication for the Annadata, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved a new Umbrella Scheme “Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan’ (PM-AASHA). The Scheme is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce as announced in the Union Budget for 2018.

This is an unprecedented step taken by Govt. of India to protect the farmers’ income which is expected to go a long way towards the welfare of farmers. Government has already increased the MSP of kharif crops by following the principle of 1.5 times the cost of production. It is expected that the increase in MSP will be translated to farmer’s income by way of robust procurement mechanism in coordination with the State Governments.

Components of PM-AASHA:

The new Umbrella Scheme includes the mechanism of ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers and is comprised of

- Price Support Scheme (PSS),
- Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)
- Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS).

The other existing schemes of Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) for procurement of paddy, wheat and nutri-cereals/coarse grains and of Ministry of Textile for cotton and jute will be continued for providing MSP to farmers for these crops.

Cabinet has also decided that participation of private sector in procurement operation needs to be piloted so

that on the basis of learnings the ambit of private participation in procurement operations may be increased. Therefore in addition to PDPS.

Expenditure:

The Cabinet has decided to give additional government guarantee of Rs.16,550 crore making it Rs. 45,550 crore in total. In addition to this, budget provision for procurement operations has also been increased and Rs. 15,053 crore is sanctioned for PM-AASHA implementation. The scheme henceforth is a reflection of Government's commitment and dedication to our 'Annadata'.

Procurement over the years:

During financial years 2010-14 total procurement was Rs. 3500 crore only whereas during financial years 2014-18, it has risen 10 times and reached to Rs. 34,000 crore. For procurement of these agri-commodities during 2010-14, Government Guarantee of Rs. 2500 crore was provided with expenditure of only Rs. 300 crore; while during 2014-18, Guarantee amount has been increased to Rs. 29,000 crore with expenditure of Rs. 1,000 crore.

Pro-farmer initiatives of the Government:

The Government is committed to realizing the vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022. The emphasis is on enhancing productivity, reducing cost of cultivation and strengthening post-harvesting management, including market structure. Several market reforms have been initiated. These include Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act, 2017 and Model Contract Farming and Services Act, 2018. Many States have taken steps to adopt these through legislation.

Efforts are on for a new market architecture, so as to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices on their produce. These include setting up of Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs) so as to promote 22,000 number of retail markets in close proximity of farm gate; competitive and transparent wholesale trade at APMC through eNAM and a robust and pro-farmer export policy.

Besides, several other pro-farmers' initiatives such as implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri KrishiSinchai Yojana, ParamparagatKrishi Vikas Yojana and distribution of Soil Health Cards have been undertaken. The commitment for farmer welfare is also reflected by unprecedented decision of announcing minimum support price based on the formula of 1.5 times the cost of cultivation.

- **Cabinet approves amendment to National Institute of Design (NID) Act, 2014**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for introduction of Bill in Parliament for amendment of NID Act, 2014 to include the four new National Institutes of Design (NID) viz. National Institute of Design, Amaravati/Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh; National Institute of Design, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh; National Institute of Design, Jorhat, Assam and National Institute of Design, Kurukshetra, Haryana within the ambit of the National Institute of Design Act, 2014 and to declare them as Institutions of National Importance (INIs) at par with the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. Some minor amendments to the Act including consequential amendments considered necessary namely, to re-name NID Vijayawada as NID Amaravati and nomenclature of Principal Designer as equivalent to Professor are also proposed in the Bill.

Establishing new NIDs as Institutions of National Importance in different geographical regions of the country will help produce highly skilled manpower in design which, in turn, will create job opportunities, both direct and indirect, by providing sustainable design interventions for crafts, handloom, rural technology, small, medium and large scale enterprises; and outreach programmes for capacity, capability and institution building.

- **Cabinet approves on Fixation/Revision of ethanol price derived from B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice and 100% sugarcane juice under Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme for Ethanol Supply Year 2018-19**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval to revise / fix the price of ethanol derived from B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice and fix a higher price for 100% sugarcane juice based ethanol for the forthcoming sugar season 2018-19 during ethanol supply year from 1st December 2018 to 30th November 2019 as under:

- To fix the ex-mill price of ethanol derived out of B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice to Rs.52.43 per litre (from prevailing price of Rs.47.13 per litre).
- To fix the ex-mill price of ethanol derived from 100% sugarcane juice at Rs.59.13 per litre (from prevailing price of Rs.47.13 per litre) for those mills who will divert 100% sugarcane juice for production of ethanol thereby not producing any sugar.
- Additionally, GST and transportation charges will also be payable. OMCs have been advised to fix realistic transportation charges so that long distance transportation of ethanol is not disincentivised.
- OMCs are advised to prioritise ethanol from 1) 100 % sugarcane juice, 2) B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice, 3) C heavy molasses and 4) Damaged Food grains/other sources, in that order.

Impact:

- The decision will serve multiple purposes of reducing excess sugar in the country, increasing liquidity with the sugar mills for settling cane farmer's dues and making higher ethanol available for Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.
- All distilleries will be able to take benefit of the scheme and large number of them are expected to supply ethanol for the EBP programme. Remunerative price to ethanol suppliers will help in reduction of cane farmer's arrears, in the process contributing to minimizing difficulty of sugarcane farmers.
- Ethanol availability for EBP Programme is expected to increase significantly due to higher price being offered for procurement of ethanol from B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice and 100% sugarcane juice for first time.
- Increased ethanol blending in petrol has many benefits including reduction in import dependency, support to agricultural sector, more environmental friendly fuel, lesser pollution and additional income to farmers.
- **Cabinet approves continuation of Capacity Development Scheme for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved continuation of the Capacity Development Scheme for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 with an outlay of Rs 2,250 crore. The Capacity Development Scheme is an Ongoing Central Sector Scheme of MoSPI.

The overall objective of the scheme is to augment infrastructural, technical as well as manpower resources for making available credible and timely Official Statistics for policy makers and public at large.

The major ongoing activities under the Capacity Development Scheme, include augmenting resources for bringing out important statistical products, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Consumer Price Index (CPI), Index of Industrial Production (IIP), Statistical classifications, etc.; conducting various Socio-Economic surveys, capacity building and strengthening statistical coordination, and improving IT infrastructure. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), a continuous survey to assess quarterly labour data in urban areas and annual labour data for the whole country (urban and rural areas), was launched in April, 2017 under the scheme.

The Capacity Development Scheme has two Sub-schemes, Economic Census and Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS). Under Economic Census, listing of all non-agricultural establishments is undertaken periodically, which forms the basis for conducting detailed socio-economic surveys. The last (61) Economic Census was conducted during January, 2013 to April, 2014 and the Government now aims to conduct the Census once every three years in future. The SSS Sub-scheme is to strengthen State/ Sub-State level statistical systems/ infrastructure to facilitate development of a robust national system. Funds are released to States/ UTs for this purpose after detailed examination of their proposals.

In view of the requirement for better statistical coverage of sectors/areas, in addition to the regular ongoing activities, the Ministry proposes to also take up three new surveys under the Capacity Development Scheme, namely, Time Use Survey (TUS), Annual Survey of Service Sector Enterprises (ASSSE), and Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE).

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