



Daily Current Affairs

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MoC between India and Japan in the field of Food Processing Industry

Why in news?

Recently The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval to the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan in the field of food processing sector.

Benefits:

- Bilateral cooperation in the field of food processing between India and Japan will be mutually beneficial to the food processing sector in both countries.
- It will promote understanding of best practices in food processing in the two countries and will help in improving the food processing sector as well as improved market access, leading to equity and inclusiveness.
- The MoC will lead to betterment of the food processing sector in the country by introducing innovative techniques and processes. It will help in increasing food processing in the country by getting access to best practices and better markets.

Food Processing Industry in India

- Food processing is the transformation of agricultural products into food, or of one form of food into other forms. Food processing

includes many forms of processing foods, from grinding grain to make raw flour to home cooking to complex industrial methods used to make convenience foods.

- India Food Processing Industry is estimated at \$135 billion industry which is growing at about 8% annually.
- This growth rate is significantly more than agricultural growth rate which remains around 4%.
- These signals indicate toward phenomenal shift toward food processing from traditional ways. GDP by processing constitute about 10% that of agriculture. But given potential of India, this is an underachievement.

Goals and Roles

A strong and dynamic food processing sector plays a vital role in reduction in the wastage of perishable agricultural produce, enhancing shelf life of food products, ensuring value addition to agricultural produce, diversification & commercialization of agriculture, generation of employment, enhancing income of farmers and creating surplus for the export of agro & processed foods. In the era of economic liberalization, all segments including; private, public and co-operative sectors have defined roles to play and the Ministry promotes their active participation.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has a clear goal of attaining these objectives by facilitating and acting as a catalyst to attract quality investments from within India and abroad into this sector with the aim of making food processing a national initiative. With this overall objective, the Ministry aims to:

- Enhance farmer's income by better utilization and value addition of agricultural produce
- Minimize wastage at all stages in the food processing chain by the development of infrastructure for storage, transportation and processing of agro-food produce;
- Introduce of modern technology into the food processing industries from both domestic and external sources;

- Encourage R&D in food processing for product and process development and improved packaging;
- Provide policy support, and support for creation of Infrastructure, capacity expansion/ Upgradation and other supportive measures form the growth of this sectors;
- Promote export of processed food products.

About PMKSY Scheme:

- Government of India (GOI) has approved a new Central Sector Scheme - Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters) with an allocation of Rs. 6,000 crore for the period 2016-20 coterminous with the 14th Finance Commission cycle.
- The scheme will be implemented by Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI).
- PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana is a comprehensive package which will result in creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.
- It will not only provide a big boost to the growth of food processing sector in the country but also help in providing better returns to farmers and is a big step towards doubling of farmers income, creating huge employment opportunities especially in the rural areas, reducing wastage of agricultural produce, increasing the processing level and enhancing the export of the processed foods.

Mega Food Park

- The Scheme of Mega Food Park aims at providing a mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers, processors and retailers so as to ensure maximizing value addition, minimizing wastage, increasing farmers income and creating employment opportunities particularly in rural sector.
- The Mega Food Park Scheme is based on "Cluster" approach and envisages creation of state of art support infrastructure in a well-defined agri / horticultural zone for setting up of modern food processing units in the industrial plots provided in the park with well-

established supply chain.

- Mega food park typically consist of supply chain infrastructure including collection centers, primary processing centers, central processing centers, cold chain and around 30-35 fully developed plots for entrepreneurs to set up food processing units.
 - The Mega Food Park project is implemented by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which is a Body Corporate registered under the Companies Act.
 - State Government, State Government entities and Cooperatives are not required to form a separate SPV for implementation of Mega Food Park project.
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Amendment to the 'Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries'

Why in news?

Recently Cabinet approves Amendment to the 'Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries' to incorporate 'Standby Swap' amounting to USD 400 million operated within the overall size of the facility.

Salient features:

- Due to heightened financial risk and volatility in global economy, short term swap requirements of SAARC countries could be higher than the agreed lines.
- The incorporation of 'Standby Swap' within the approved SAARC Swap Framework would provide necessary flexibility to the Framework and would enable India to provide a prompt response to the current request from SAARC member countries for availing the swap amount exceeding the present limit prescribed under the SAARC Swap Framework.

Background:

- Cabinet approved the Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries on March 1, 2012 with the intention to provide a line of funding for short term foreign exchange requirements or to meet balance of payments crises till longer term arrangements are made or the issue is resolved in the short-term itself.
- Under the Facility, RBI offers swaps of varying sizes in USD, Euro or INR to each SAARC member country depending on their two months import requirement and not exceeding US\$ 2 billion in total.
- The swap amount for each country has been defined in the above Facility, subject to a floor of USD 100 Million and a maximum of USD 400 Million. Each Drawal will be for three months tenor and upto maximum of two rollovers.
- RBI will negotiate the operational details bilaterally with the Central Banks of the SAARC countries availing the Standby Swap.

What is currency swap?

A currency swap is an agreement in which two parties exchange the principal amount of a loan and the interest in one currency for the principal and interest in another currency.

Uses of Currency Swap:

- To secure cheaper debt (by borrowing at the best available rate regardless of currency and then swapping for debt in desired currency using a back-to-back-loan).
- To hedge against (reduce exposure to) forward exchange rate fluctuations.
- To defend against financial turmoil by allowing a country beset by a liquidity crisis to borrow money from others with its own currency, see Central bank liquidity swap.
- Cross-currency swaps are an integral component in modern financial markets as they are the bridge needed for assessment of yields on a standardised USD basis.

- For this reason they are also used as the construction tool in creating collateralized discount curves for valuing a future cashflow in a given currency but collateralized with another currency.
 - Given the importance of collateral to the financial system at large, cross-currency swaps are important as a hedging instrument to insure against material collateral mismatches and devaluation.
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National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the creation of National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT).

Highlights:

- Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal is the forum of second appeal in GST laws and the first common forum of dispute resolution between Centre and States.
- The appeals against the orders in first appeals issued by the Appellate Authorities under the Central and State GST Acts lie before the GST Appellate Tribunal, which is common under the Central as well as State GST Acts.
- Being a common forum, GST Appellate Tribunal will ensure that there is uniformity in redressal of disputes arising under GST, and therefore, in implementation of GST across the country.
- The National Bench of the Appellate Tribunal shall be situated at New Delhi. GSTAT shall be presided over by its President and shall consist of one Technical Member (Centre) and one Technical Member (State).
- Chapter XVIII of the CGST Act provides for the Appeal and Review Mechanism for dispute resolution under the GST Regime.
- Section 109 of this Chapter under CGST Act empowers the Central

Government to constitute, on the recommendation of Council, by notification, with effect from such date as may be specified therein, an Appellate Tribunal known as the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the Appellate Authority or the Revisional Authority.

India Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)- 2019

Why in news?

Recently Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)-2019 is being conducted at Pune on 23-24 January 2019.

Highlights:

- The joint training exercise is being conducted with more than a dozen African countries & India. It aims at synergising humanitarian mine action and joint peace operations. The initial planning conference for the exercise was held in December
 - 2018.
 - Delegates from Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, Mozambique, Uganda, Niger & Zambia attended the conference.
 - Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)-2019 is scheduled to be conducted at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering, Pune from 18 March to 27 March 2019.
 - The IAFTX-2019 is a positive step towards growing political and military ties with the member nations of African continent and will boost the already strong strategic cooperation between the countries.
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Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

Why in news?

Government has instituted an annual award titled Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.

Highlights:

- The award is to be announced every year on 23rd January on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
 - In the aftermath of any disaster, many organisations and individuals work silently but effectively to alleviate suffering of the affected population.
 - Their immense contribution and selfless service to humanity often goes unacknowledged. Keeping this in view, Prime Minister has advised to institute a National Award so as to recognise the efforts of such organisations and individuals.
 - All Indian Citizens and organizations, who have excelled in areas of Disaster Management; like Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Rescue, Response, Relief, Rehabilitation, Research/ Innovations or Early Warning are eligible for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.
 - The award scheme for the year 2019 was given wide publicity and nominations of the award were solicited from 19th Dec 2018 onwards.
 - For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) located at Ghaziabad has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for its commendable work in Disaster Management. The Award recipient will receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakh.
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National Girl Child Day

Why in news?

The Women & Child Development Ministry will celebrate National Girl

Child Day (NGCD) on 24th January, 2019.

The National Girl Child Day is celebrated in India every year on January 24. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India initiated this celebration in 2008.

Objectives:

The objective of celebrating National Girl Child Day are as follows.

- Highlight the inequalities faced by girls in the country.
- Promote awareness about the rights of a girl child.
- Generate awareness on importance of girl education, health and nutrition.

Highlights:

- Theme of this NGCD is “*Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow*”.
- celebrating NGCD with objectives of generating awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and create a positive environment around valuing the girl child.
- Minister will felicitate principal Secretaries for their exemplary work done in three categories,
 - (i) Effective Community Engagement.
 - (ii) Enforcement of Pre Conception & Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PC&PNDT Act) and
 - (iii) Enabling Girl Child Education.

About Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was launched by Hon’ble Prime Minister on 22nd January, 2015 at Panipat in Haryana.
- Out of 640 districts, 405 districts are covered under advocacy & multi-sectoral action while the remaining 235 districts are covered

under media advocacy & outreach. It is a tri-ministerial effort of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.

- BBBP Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% financial assistance for District level component and the fund are directly released to the DC/DM's account for smooth operation of the Scheme.
 - BBBP is a comprehensive programme to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum.
 - The CSR, defined as number of girls per 1000 boys in the age group of 0-6 years. The specific objectives of the scheme include preventing gender biased sex selective elimination; ensuring survival and protection of the girl child and ensuring education and participation of the girl child.
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