



AIR Discussions (October 1st Week)

ALL INDIA RADIO SUMMARY (1 October -8 October 2020)

SPOTLIGHT (01 October 2020)

United Nations Biodiversity Summit 2020

GS-I: Environment and Biodiversity

Introduction: The UN Summit on Biodiversity convened on September 30 in the midst coronavirus that is thought to have spilled over to humans from an animal reservoir.

- The first UN Biodiversity Summit highlighted the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global community on a path towards “living in harmony with nature” – the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

Highlights of the summits:

- **Theme:** “Urgent Action on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development.”
- Member-nations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took note of the link between biodiversity loss and the spread of animal pathogens,
- The summit calls for an end to destructive industrial and commercial practices.
- It included two Leaders’ Dialogues on addressing biodiversity loss and mainstreaming biodiversity for sustainable development, and on harnessing science, technology and innovation, capacity building, access and benefit-sharing, financing, and partnerships for biodiversity.

Aichi target failure:

- Conservation targets set a decade ago in Aichi, Japan, to be achieved by 2020, have failed.
- Evidence is presented by the **UN Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report**: none of the 20 targets has been fully met.
- Many countries have chosen to ignore the connection between biodiversity and well-being, and depleted ecological capital in pursuit of financial prosperity.
- Aichi targets that failed badly are
 - reform or phasing out of subsidies that erode biodiversity
 - steps for resource use within safe ecological limits
 - preventing industrial fisheries from destroying threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems, and
 - an end to pollution, including growing plastic waste.
- Some progress is made on protecting surface and subsurface water, inland, coastal and marine areas.



WWF's Living Planet Index 2020

- Points to declines invertebrate populations, a key indicator, by 68% over 1970 levels.
- 196 CBD member-countries must chart a greener course, aligning it with the Paris Agreement, to reduce the impact on the health of flora and fauna.

India message at UN summit

- India's being a megadiverse country, recognise the value of nature.
- National laws of the 1970s and 1980s have indeed shielded islands of biodiversity, particularly in about 5% of the country's land designated as protected areas.
- There is a concern for indigenous communities that have fostered biodiversity, and no effort to make them strong partners in improving the health of forests and buffer zones.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- Informally as the Biodiversity Convention, it is a multilateral treaty.
- The Convention has three main goals:
 - the conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity);
 - the sustainable use of its components; and
 - the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.
- **Objective:** To develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.
- The Convention was opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993.
- It has two supplementary agreements, the Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol.

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

- It is an international treaty governing the movements of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology from one country to another.
- It was adopted on 29 January 2000 as a supplementary agreement to the CBD and entered into force on 11 September 2003.

Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS)

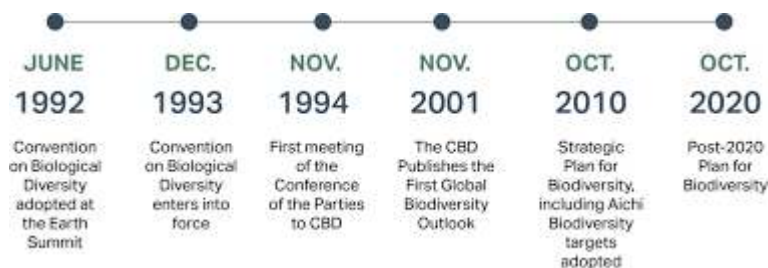
- It is another supplementary agreement to the CBD.
- It provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD:
 - the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
- The Nagoya Protocol was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan and entered into force on 12 October 2014.
- 2010 was the International Year of Biodiversity.



- UN declared 2011 to 2020 as the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.
- The Convention's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, created in 2010, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Commitments for biodiversity – a quick history

- At 2001 European Summit at Gothenburg leaders of the European Union (EU) launched the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy “...to protect and restore habitats and natural systems and halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010”.
- In April 2002, the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD-COP) committed themselves “...to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and the benefit of all life on Earth”.
- During COP 10, held in Nagoya, Japan, parties to the CBD agreed on a set of 20 global targets, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
- To realise these, several commitments were made by the Parties such as by the ‘Hyderabad call for Biodiversity Champions’ to promote the cause of biodiversity.
- However, only India and Maldives have formally joined to become the champions with eight other partners including business organisations.



Need of the hour

- First, countries need to get serious about making commitments that are measurable, achievable and that can be reviewed periodically.
- Second, the need for inclusive approaches to conservation action that also considers the actions and investments by non-state actors.

Conclusion:

- CBD members are set to draw up fresh conservation targets to be finalised next year, India too has the opportunity to plan a trajectory of green growth after COVID-19, around clean energy, ecological agriculture, a freeze on expansion of mining and dam-building, resource recovery from waste, and regeneration of arid lands.
- It is time that nationally determined commitments (NDCs), need to be drawn up for biodiversity, like in the case of climate change negotiations.



<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/pathways-to-diversity-the-hindu-editorial-on-un-biodiversity-summit/article32754839.ece>

<http://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-biodiversity-summit-supports-2030-agenda-aligned-post-2020-framework/>

<https://www.planeta.com/biodiversity-2020-summit/>

National news

India successfully test-fires BrahMos supersonic cruise missile

Context: India successfully test-fired the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with several indigenous features.

BrahMos

- It is a **surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile** features indigenous Booster and Airframe Section along with many other 'Made in India' sub-systems.
- It is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, ships, aircraft, or land.
- It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.
- It is a joint venture between the Russian Federation's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), who together have formed BrahMos Aerospace.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-successfully-test-fires-BrahMos-supersonic-cruise-missile&id=401097>

Ambedkar Social Innovation & Incubation Mission

Context: Social Justice and Empowerment Minister launched the Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission under Venture Capital Fund for Schedule Castes (SC).

Aim: To promote innovation and enterprise among SC students studying in higher educational institutions.

- **Venture Capital Fund for SCs** in 2014-15 to develop entrepreneurship amongst the SC and Divyang youth and to enable them to become job-givers.
- The objective of this fund is to provide concessional finance to the entities of the SC entrepreneurs.
- Under this fund, 117 companies promoted by SC entrepreneurs have been sanctioned financial assistance to set up business ventures.

Ambedkar Social Innovation Incubation Mission initiative

- Under this mission, one thousand SC youth will be identified in the next four years with start-up ideas through the Technology Business Incubators in various higher educational institutions.
- They will be funded 30 lakh rupees in three years as equity funding to translate their start-up ideas into commercial ventures.
- Successful ventures would further qualify for venture funding of up to five Crore rupees from the Venture Capital Fund for SCs.



<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Thaawarchand-Gehlot-launches-Ambedkar-Social-Innovation-%26-Incubation-Mission-under-Venture-Capital-Fund-for-SCs&id=401132>

ASCON Phase IV Network

Context: To meet the long pending demand of the Indian Army, the Cabinet Committee on Security had approved the proposal for the establishment of **Army Static Switched Communication Network (ASCON) Phase IV Network**.

About ASCON

- Implemented by M/s ITI, a Public Sector Undertaking, at an estimated cost of over 7 thousand 7 hundred 96 crore rupees with an implementation schedule of 36 months from the date of signing of the contract.
- The project is a strategic and theatre area communication network, which will upgrade the existing Asynchronous Transfer Mode Technology to Internet Protocol, Multi-Protocol Label Switching Technology.
- Optical Fibre Cable, Microwave Radio and Satellite will be used as communication media.
- The project will provide better survivability, responsiveness and high bandwidth in any operational scenario and enhance the communication coverage of network closer to International Border, Line of Control and Line of Actual Control.
- The network will extend the high bandwidth communication to the remote operational areas in Central and Eastern Sectors and enhance communication reach to the forward locations in the Western border too.
- It would augment the communication network of the Indian Army in the sensitive forward operational areas which in turn will provide a major boost to the operational preparedness of the Indian Army.
- With approximately 80 per cent indigenous content, the project will provide a boost to the Indian Industry.
- The project would generate employment opportunities especially to the people in remote border areas, support and boost the rural economy, assist in the upliftment of the local economies, provide skill development during the prolonged period of execution and maintenance of the network.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=CCS-approves-proposal-for-establishment-of-ASCON-Phase-IV-Network&id=401193>

'Tribes India E-Marketplace'

Context: Minister of Tribal Affairs launched India's largest handicraft and organic products marketplace- Tribes India E-Marketplace.

- It is in line with India Aatmanirbhar and self-reliant.
- It is an initiative of TRIFED that will showcase the produce and handicrafts of tribal enterprises from across the country.
- It will help them market their products directly.

Another highlight of the event:

- Inclusion of new tribal product ranges from the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and partnership of TRIFED and Tribes India with Amazon in their **Seller Flex program**.
- **Pakur Honey** launched which is 100 per cent natural honey, gathered by Santhal Tribals from Pakur, Jharkhand.



TRIFED

- TRIFED was established in August 1987 under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 by the Government of India as a National level Cooperative body.
- It comes under the administrative control of the then Ministry of Tribal Welfare of India
- TRIFED is mandated to ring about socio-economic development of tribals of the country by institutionalising the trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) & Surplus Agricultural Produce (SAP) collected/ cultivated by them.
- TRIFED plays the dual role of both a market developer and a service provider,
- It empowers tribal's by helping them with knowledge and tools to better their operations in a systematic, scientific manner and assist them in developing their marketing approach.
- TRIFED is involved actively in capacity building of the tribal people through sensitisation and the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs).

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Arjun-Munda-to-launch-largest-market-of-tribal-products-%e2%80%98Tribes-India-E-Marketplace%e2%80%99-tomorrow&id=401185>

Freedom fighter Shyamji Krishna Varma

Context: Prime Minister paid rich tributes to revolutionary freedom fighter Shyamji Krishna Varma on his birth anniversary.

Shyamji Krishna Varma

- He devoted his life towards India's freedom and inspired many nationalists.
- Shyamji Krishna Varma was born in 1857 and
- He founded the Indian Home Rule Society, India House and The Indian Sociologist in London.
- He propagated the cause of India's independence through his writings in a publication journal called '**The Indian Sociologist**'.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=PM-Modi-pays-tributes-to-freedom-fighter-Shyamji-Krishna-Varma-on-his-birth-anniversary&id=401364>

QUAD

Context: QUAD Foreign Ministers of India, USA, Japan, Australia in Tokyo; call for free, open & inclusive Indo-Pacific.

2nd QUAD Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo

- The vibrant and pluralistic democracies with shared values, the four QUAD member nations have collectively affirmed the importance of maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- The member countries remain committed to upholding the rules-based international order, transparency, freedom of navigation in the international seas, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and peaceful resolution of disputes in the region.
- **The objective** of the QUAD member countries, which include India, the United States, Japan and Australia, remains to advance the security and the economic interests of all countries having legitimate and vital interests.
- Indo-Pacific concept has gained increasingly wider acceptance in QUAD talks.



- These like-minded countries will look forward towards seeking collective solutions to global challenges including global recovery from the pandemic and reform of multilateral institutions
- Other areas of focus are connectivity and infrastructure development, security including counter-terrorism; cyber and maritime security; and the stability and prosperity in the region.

QUAD grouping

- A group of four nations, which was conceptualised in 2007 for Quadrilateral security dialogues, better known as QUAD.
- The member countries primary aim is to uphold democratic values and maintain a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- Quad countries including Australia and Japan have already assured huge investments in India's infrastructure, technology and supply chain.
- With the United States also hailing India as a big power in the Indo-Pacific region, the QUAD appears to have a pivotal role in reshaping the power dynamics of the world in the coming years.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Foreign-Ministers-of-all-four-Quad-countries--India%2c-US%2c-Japan%2c-Australia-to-meet-in-Tokyo-today&id=401468>

ISLRTC & NCERT to ink MoU to make educational materials accessible for Deaf children

Context: A historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center (ISLRTC) and NCERT to make educational materials accessible for Deaf children in their preferred format of communication.

Other details

- As part of this MoU, educational print materials including NCERT Textbooks, Teachers Handbook and other Supplementary materials and resources of Class I-XII of all subjects of both Hindi and English Medium will be converted into Indian Sign Language in Digital format.
- The signing of this MoU is seen as a historic step as availability of NCERT textbooks in Indian Sign Language will ensure that Deaf children can also now access educational resources in Indian Sign Language.
- This will also ensure educational standardization of Indian Sign Language as mandated in the New Education Policy, 2020.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=ISLRTC-%26-NCERT-to-ink-MoU-to-make-education-materials-accessible-for-Deaf-children&id=401469>

'Ayush Standard Treatment Protocol' to fight Coronavirus

Context: Health Minister released the 'Ayush Standard Treatment Protocol'.

- The protocol contains the details self-care guidelines for preventive health measures to help protect against COVID-19 pandemic.
- The up-gradation of protocols by the Ministry of AYUSH has been done in sync with ICMR and CSIR.
- Clinical studies have established some Ayurveda interventions like **Ashwagandha, Laung & Giloy as anti-inflammatory, antiviral & immunity-modulating** which help protect against COVID-19.



<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Health-Minister-Dr.-Harsh-Vardhan-releases-%26%2339%3bAyush-Standard-Treatment-Protocol%26%2339%3b-to-fight-Coronavirus&id=401503>

Sittwe Port

Context: India, Myanmar agree to work towards operationalization of Sittwe Port in the Rakhine state in the first quarter of 2021.

More about news:

- Both sides agreed to further strengthen their partnership in border security connectivity projects, capacity building, power and energy.
- They also agreed to deepen the economic and trade ties, further facilitate people to people and cultural exchanges and broad-base their defence exchanges across all the three services.
- They also discussed the progress in the ongoing Indian-assisted infrastructure projects such as the Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project.
- India announced a grant of two million US Dollars for the construction of the border haat bridge at Byanyu/Sarsichauk in Chin State that will provide increased economic connectivity between Mizoram and Myanmar.

Sittwe Port

- Sittwe Port is a deepwater port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal.
- It is situated at the mouth of the Kaladan River, the USD 120 Million port is being financed by India as a part of the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**, a collaboration between India and Myanmar.
- The project is aimed at developing transport infrastructure in southwestern Myanmar and northeastern India.

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

- The Kaladan Road Project is a project connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar by sea.
- In Myanmar, it will then link Sittwe seaport to Paletwa in Chin State via the Kaladan river boat route, and then from Paletwa by road to Mizoram state in Northeast India.





<http://newsonair.com/News?title=India%2c-Myanmar-agree-to-work-towards-operationalization-of-Sittwe-Port-in-first-quarter-of-2021&id=401520>

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Context: Union Cabinet approves ratification of seven chemicals listed under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

More about news:

- The Cabinet delegated its powers to ratify chemicals under the Stockholm Convention to Union Ministers of External Affairs and Environment, Forest and Climate Change concerning POPs regulated under the domestic regulations thereby streamlining the procedure.

Stockholm Convention

- The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and environment from POPs, which are identified chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in living organisms, adversely affect human health and have the property of long-range environmental transport.
- Exposure to POPs can lead to cancer, damage to central and peripheral nervous systems, diseases of the immune system, reproductive disorders and interference with normal infant and child development.

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=401623>

BRICS Bank

Context: BRICS Bank approves funds for Delhi-Meerut rapid rail, Mumbai metro; aims to reduce the journey time from Delhi to Meerut to 60 minutes.

More about news:

- **New Development Bank (NDB)**, also known as BRICS Bank has approved infrastructure projects worth 741 million dollars in India.
- Shanghai-based bank approved a loan of USD 500 million for the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Project and a loan of USD 241 million for Mumbai Metro Rail II (Line 6) Project.

Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Project

- The loan for Delhi NCR region would be used by Government of India for on-lending to the National Capital Region Transport Corporation Limited (NCRTC) for construction of a rapid rail corridor connecting the National Capital Territory of Delhi with the cities of Ghaziabad and Meerut located in the State of Uttar Pradesh.
- The RRTS will have a total length of 82.15 km with 25 stations.
- It will have a design speed of 180 km per hour, the maximum operating speed of 160 km per hour and high-frequency operations, which will reduce the journey time from Delhi to Meerut to 60 minutes.
- The Project will develop an efficient and sustainable regional transport system and reduce congestion in Delhi, by offering people the alternative of settling in surrounding cities and being able to commute to Delhi through a fast, reliable, safe and comfortable public transport system.



Mumbai Metro Rail II (Line 6) Project

- The Project will be implemented by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority.

NDB

- The NDB was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.
- According to NDB's General Strategy, sustainable infrastructure development is at the core of the Bank's operational strategy for 2017-2021.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=BRICS-Bank-approves-funds-for-Delhi-Meerut-rapid-rail%2c-Mumbai-metro%3b-aims-to-reduce-journey-time-from-Delhi-to-Meerut-to-60-minutes&id=401704>