



AIR Discussions (September 1st Week)

ALL INDIA RADIO SUMMARY (1 September -7 September, 2020)

SPOTLIGHT (03 September, 2020)

US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) third Annual Leadership Summit

GS-II: International Relations

Introduction: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave a special keynote address at the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) third Annual Leadership Summit.

Highlights of the summits:

Theme:

- The theme of the five-day summit that began on August 31 is "**US-India Navigating New Challenges**".
- It covers various subjects such as **India's potential in becoming a Global Manufacturing Hub, Opportunities in India's Gas Market, Ease of Doing Business to attract FDI in India, Common Opportunities & Challenges in Tech Space.**
- It also covers the **Indo-Pacific Economic issues, Innovation in Public Health** and others.

PM Address keynotes:

- **India has one of the lowest death rates:** India, a country with 1.3 billion people and limited resources, has one of the lowest death rates per million in the world.
- **World's largest housing programme in making:** India has battled coronavirus, floods, cyclones, locust attack in the last few months. The government is actively working on the world's largest housing programme
- **Significant improvement in India's medical infra:** India scaled up its medical infra in record time and the country has one of the lowest death rates from coronavirus in the world.
- **Lesson of trust from pandemic:** This pandemic has shown the world that decision on global supply chains should not be based only on cost but also on trust.
- **Adversities made India stand stronger:** India has battled coronavirus and also natural disasters in the last few months. Such adversities have only made our resolve stronger
- **India was among the first to advocate the use of masks:** India was among the first to advocate the use of masks and face coverings as a public health measure. We were also among the earliest to create public awareness campaigns about social distancing
- **Govt. is focusing on ramping up capacities, securing the poor, and future proofing its citizens:** While looking at the way ahead, we should keep our focus on ramping up our capacities, securing the poor, and future proofing our citizens. This is the path India is taking.



- **Human-centric mindset required to fight current situation:** The current situation demands a fresh mindset. A mind set where the approach to development is human-centric.
- **Ease of doing business is as important as ease of living:** For development in India, you need the government who believes in delivering results. Ease of living is as important as ease of doing business.
- **Road ahead is full of opportunities:** The road ahead is full of opportunities in the public and private sectors. Production linked incentives are well received
- **FDI into India rose by 20% in 2019:** FDI into India rose by 20% in 2019, shows the success of India's FDI regime
- **India is a favorable destination to invest - PM Modi:** India is a favorable destination to invest and the country has received over \$20 billion of foreign investment inflows this year -
- **Banking credit, digital payments, insurance to millions of people in India amid pandemic:** The government has taken steps to provide banking credit, digital payments and insurance to millions of people using world-class technology and global best practices
- **India's aspiration is intact amid pandemic:** The pandemic has affected everything but it did not affect the aspirations of 130 crores people
- **PM Modi highlights govt's schemes such as free food grains:** Government's landmark schemes to support lives and livelihood amid the pandemic.
- **PM hails India for a responsive system for lockdown:** India was the first to create a responsive system for lockdown, and introduced facemasks to prevent the spread of coronavirus.
- **Need global cooperation in this challenging time:** Current situation demands fresh mindset, with a spirit of cooperation between everyone
- **PM Modi has been urging foreign investors to be a part of India's growth story:** Earlier in the USIBC summit, PM said that India and the US together can play an important role in helping the global economy bounce back quicker post the coronavirus pandemic and urged the US investors to invest in India's growth story.
- **Gujarat's 'sister state' agreements with New Jersey and Delaware:** Announce a new era of enhanced and increased collaboration between our two countries.
- **Most issues already resolved and India is ready to sign initial limited trade package with America:** Need to take the Indo-US trade to greater heights; the two nations can be resilient trusted partners in the global value chain. India is ready to sign the initial limited trade package with America.
- **Chance of a 'mini trade deal' between the US and India even before the November 3 presidential election in the United States.** India and the US are negotiating a deal to remove roadblocks on trade issues to boost economic ties.
- **Security:** As India and the US stand more closely together for security, it will only strengthen the case for a future of freedom
- **Indian govt. facilitated flow of credit decisively for all concerned sectors:** Government of India has facilitated the flow of credit decisively for all the concerned sectors of the economy particularly towards the MSME
- **'Self-Reliant India' is not protectionist India:** 'Self Reliant India' does not mean a protectionist India. It calls for value addition in manufacturing.
- **USA and India are natural allies:** We are democratic; we value life, the status of our people, and human rights of all. The leaders of our nations have realized this and have built a stronger relationship together



- **Indians in America should now participate in American politics:** Talented Indians in the US are all assets that are integral for America to move ahead. Indians in America should now participate in American politics by not just supporting leaders, but running to become one.
- **US-India energy industries are working together to reinvigorate the energy linkages:** The US & India are working together to stabilize the global energy markets, and despite the challenges of COVID19, the US-India energy industries are working together to reinvigorate the energy linkages between the two countries.
- **Trade between US and India has been growing consistently:** In 2019, the total goods and service trade between the US and India was \$146 bn, which is more than double the value of trade in 2009 of \$60 bn.
- **Borders do not exist between US and India:** USA and India are one. Borders do not exist between us. The growing investment of US industries in Gujarat and a rich diaspora of Gujarati's in the USA is a testimony of our growing mutual trust.
- **Better strategic collaboration for the two countries likely:** India & the USA have signed several **defense agreements**, with potential for more such agreements in the near future. This will enable **better strategic collaboration** for the two countries, within the autonomy we have maintained so far.
- **India wants peace and tranquility across borders:** We want peace and tranquility across our borders. Despite China's aggressive misadventures, India has adopted an adequate measure **to control and stop these misadventures**
- **Old associations and new friendships:** Delighted to renew old associations and forge new friendships! MSME's has important role in deepening the India-US partnership.

Significance of this summit:

- It signifies **importance of US-India relations in the current challenging environment.**
- India and the US are exploring the **option of inking a limited trade pact** before the American Presidential elections in November, as both countries have sorted out "most" of the issues preventing its conclusion.
- It is a **win-win partnership mutually dependent geo-politically, trade, culturally, diplomatically and scientifically.**
- Aggressive and **assertive China** provides further **opportunity for both nations to collaborate and ensure international rule of law prevails.**
- The summit highlights **areas of bilateral cooperation: trade and investment; strategic energy ties; India's position in global supply chains, collaboration in fintech, healthcare, and technology.**

About US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF):

- The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) is a **non-profit organization**, with the primary **objective of strengthening the U.S.-India bilateral and strategic partnership.**
- The formation of USISPF signals a new chapter in U.S.-India relations. **Dedicated to strengthening economic and commercial ties**, USISPF plays a significant role in fostering a robust and dynamic relationship between the two countries through **policy advocacy that will lead to driving economic growth, entrepreneurship, employment-creation, and innovation to create a more inclusive society.**



The six pillars of USISPF

- Business policy advocacy
- Legislative affairs
- B-b-g opportunities
- Inclusive development
- Strategic engagement
- Education, innovation & entrepreneurship

Goals:

- It is committed to creating the most powerful strategic partnership between the U.S. and India.
- Promoting bilateral trade is an important part of our work.
- It is about business and government coming together in new ways to create meaningful opportunities that have the power to change the lives of citizens.
- It work closely together with business and government leaders to achieve goals of **driving economic growth, job creation, innovation, inclusion, and entrepreneurship**.

Conclusion:

- The strong India-US ties are due to relationship that President Trump and PM Modi shares; the best is yet to come in the US-India relations. As India and the **US stand more closely together for security, it will only strengthen the case for a future of freedom**, the strong India-US ties is a result of the relationship that President Trump and Prime Minister Modi have forged as they are both larger than life figures.

Reference:

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/pm-modi-to-address-third-leadership-summit-of-us-india-strategic-and-partnership-forum-2840625.html>

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/prime-minister-narendra-modi-highlights-pm-delivers-keynote-address-at-india-us-strategic-partnership-forum-2290070>

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/modi-to-address-us-india-forum-ease-of-doing-business-manufacturing-fdi-on-pms-mind/2072547/>

National news

NIDHI-EIR programme

Context: NIDHI-EIR Brochure featuring Entrepreneurs in Residence launched



About:

- **Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EIR) Programme under National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing innovations (NIDHI) of Department of Science and Technology** supports aspiring or budding entrepreneur of considerable potential for pursuing a promising technology business idea over a period up to 18 months with a subsistence grant up to Rs 30000 per month with a maximum cap for total support of Rs 3.6 lakh to each EIR over a maximum of 18 months.
- The programme **aims to provide guidance to these aspiring entrepreneurs from experienced, innovative and highly successful entrepreneurs on the business concept strategy and insight into specific industries or markets, inspire the best talents to be entrepreneurs, to minimise the risk involved in pursuing start-ups, and to partially set off their opportunity costs of high paying jobs.**
- The NIDHI-EIR programme provides tremendous opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs to expand their networks and get critical feedback on their ventures in order to promote their entrepreneurial career goals and aspirations.
- This program is important in that it **creates a pipeline of startups with a focus on young budding entrepreneurs.**

Reference: <http://ddnews.gov.in/national/nidhi-eir-brochure-featuring-entrepreneurs-residence-launched>

Daudkandi to Sonamura river route

Context: Trial run on new river route connecting Bangladesh with Tripura starts.

About:

- The trial run from Daudkandi in Bangladesh to Sonamura in Tripura started as the MV Premier sailed from Daudkandi with 50 metric tonnes of cement cargo.
- It is scheduled to arrive in Sonamura in Tripura after covering a distance of 93 kilometers through river Gumti.
- The route **will connect Tripura with Bangladesh using the inland waterways for the first time.**
- This is yet another recent connectivity initiative with Bangladesh, which will greatly enhance connectivity between Bangladesh and the North Eastern states of India boosting bilateral trade with Bangladesh.
- The opening of the new route follows the signing of the 2nd addendum to the Protocol for Inland Water Trade & Transit (PIWTT) in May 2020, which opened two new routes.
- The **PIWTT was signed between India and Bangladesh in 1972 to connect the two countries through inland waterways.** In 2019-2020, approx. 3.5 million MT of cargo was transported between India and Bangladesh on the protocol routes.
- Enhanced connectivity through inland waterways in the present Covid-19 scenario **will provide an economical, faster, safer and cleaner mode of transportation for traders and business communities of both countries.**

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Trial-run-on-new-river-route-connecting-Bangladesh-with-Tripura-starts&id=398992>

AIR Scanner

Context: IIT Bombay students develop AIR Scanner, an Indian alternative to CamScanner.



About:

- Giving a push to the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' IIT Bombay has launched an alternative to CamScanner, a Chinese app mainly used for scanning documents that was banned by the Government of India.
- The new app launched by IIT Bombay students is called as **AIR SCANNER and is available free of cost.**
- IIT Bombay has developed an indigenous alternative to Chinese document-scanning app, following the Centre's decision to ban 59 mobile apps. AIR Scanner was launched on Independence Day, 15th August 2020.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=IIT-Bombay-students-develop-AIR-Scanner%2c-an-Indian-alternative-to-CamScanner&id=398785>

PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana.

Context: Govt. gives nod to 27 integrated cold chain development projects under PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana.

About:

- Government gave its nod to 27 projects under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana for **development of integrated cold chains and value addition infrastructure** in the country.
- The new integrated cold chain projects will **generate direct and indirect employment for over 16,000 people and benefit nearly 2,57,000 farmers.**
- Saving the perishable produce, by provisioning adequate infrastructure, will help in augmenting **farmers' incomes** and will also act towards **making India self-reliant** in the fruits and vegetables sector.
- The projects will **help in streamlining the agricultural supply chain and generate direct and indirect employment opportunities in rural areas.**
- These 27 new projects will leverage a total investment of **Rs 743 crores for the creation of modern, innovative infrastructure and effective cold chain facilities** for the food processing sector across various states including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- 85 Cold Chain Projects have also been considered for financial assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana.

About Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana:

- A Central Sector Scheme - SAMPADA (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters) was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in 2017. This umbrella scheme has now been renamed as the "Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)" to be implemented by Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI).

OBJECTIVES OF PM KISAN SAMPADA YOJANA

- Creation of modern infrastructure for food processing mega food parks/ clusters and individual units



- To create effective backward and forward linkages - linking farmers, processors and markets
- To create robust supply chain infrastructure for perishables.

The following schemes will be implemented under PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana :

- Mega Food Parks
- Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure
- Creation/ Expansion of Food Processing/ Preservation Capacities (Unit Scheme)
- Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters
- Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages
- Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure
- Human Resources and Institutions

Reference:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Govt.-gives-nod-to-27-integrated-cold-chain-development-projects-under-PM-Kisan-SAMPADA-Yojana&id=398784>

Robot Rakshak

Context: Health assistant Robot Rakshak designed by Railways can remotely communicate between doctor and patient.

About:

- Vidyarth In the series Atmanirbhar Bharat and to fight against the spread of Covid 19 pandemic, the Railways has designed a **health assistant Robot Rakshak**, which can **remotely communicate between doctor and patient**.
- The medical aid robot is **able to measure health parameters such as temperature, pulse, oxygen percentage**. It can also **provide medicines, food to the patients and make a two-way video communication between the doctor and the patient**. It can move in all directions at all levels with a range of remote operations up to 150 meters.
- With a full charge battery, the Rakshak robot can work continuously for **6 hours** and can carry up to 10 kg of weight in its tray. It is based on Wi-Fi and therefore does not require any mobile data. It also operates with an Android mobile application.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Health-assistant-Robot-Rakshak-designed-by-Railways-can-remotely-communicate-between-doctor-and-patient&id=398769>

Sustainable recovery of economic growth

Context: RBI announces steps to ease pressure on liquidity and to maintain congenial financial conditions for sustainable recovery of economic growth

Details:



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a host of steps, including term repo operations totaling Rs. 1 lakh crores in mid-September to ease pressure on the liquidity and maintain congenial financial conditions with a view to ensuring sustainable recovery of economic growth.
- RBI stands ready to conduct market operations as required through a variety of instruments so as to ensure orderly market functioning.
- Recent market sentiment has been impacted by concerns relating to the inflation outlook and the fiscal situation amidst global developments that have firmed up yields abroad.
- In order to reduce the cost of funds, banks that had **availed of funds under long-term repo operations (LTROs)** may exercise an option of reversing these transactions before maturity.
- The banks may **reduce their interest liability by returning funds taken at the repo rate prevailing at that time** (5.15 per cent) and availing funds at the current repo rate of 4 per cent.
- RBI will conduct **additional special open market operations** involving the simultaneous purchase and **sale of government securities** for an aggregate amount of Rs 20,000 crores in two tranches of Rs 10,000 crores each.
- RBI decided to allow banks to hold **fresh acquisitions of statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) securities** acquired from September 1, 2020, under Held-To-Maturity (HTM) up to an overall limit of 22 per cent of net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) up to March 31, 2021, which shall be reviewed thereafter.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=RBI-announces-steps-to-ease-pressure-on-liquidity-and-to-maintain-congenial-financial-conditions-for-sustainable-recovery-of-economic-growth&id=398718>

JAPAN MEDICAL AID

Context: India to receive development assistance loan worth Rs 3,500 Cr from Japan to fight COVID-19

More information:

- This programme loan aims to support India's efforts in fighting COVID-19 and to prepare the health system to manage future epidemics and also to improve the resilience of India's health systems against infectious diseases.
- This Grant-in-aid from the Government of Japan is for providing medical equipment to strengthen the public health and medical system in India.
- It will strengthen the health care facilities for managing critical and serious patients suffering from COVID-19 infection.
- India and Japan have had a long and fruitful history of bilateral development cooperation since 1958. In the last few years, the economic cooperation between India and Japan has strengthened and grown into strategic partnership. It further consolidates and strengthens the Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-to-receive-development-assistance-loan-worth-Rs-3%2c500-Cr-from-Japan-to-fight-COVID-19&id=398748>

'MEDBOT'

Context: Indian Railways develops remote-controlled medical trolley 'MEDBOT' to deliver food, medicines to COVID-19 patients

More information:



- The During Corona crisis, apart from providing transport facilities and essential items like foodgrains to people, Indian Railways has also provided facilities for COVID-19 patients.
- It has developed a **remote-controlled medical trolley named 'MEDBOT' to help deliver food and medicines to COVID-19 patients.**
- It is **providing service in the Central Hospital of the Diesel Rail Engine Factory of Indian Railways.**

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Indian-Railways-develops-remote-controlled-medical-trolley-%e2%80%98MEDBOT%e2%80%99-to-deliver-food%2c-medicines-to-COVID-19-patients&id=398685>

Unstarred questions

Context: Govt. says, it is ready to reply to unstarred questions during Monsoon Session of Parliament

More information:

- There will be no Question Hour and Private Members' Bills will not be taken up in the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament. The Zero Hour will be restricted.
- **Unstarred questions** are those where a minister gives a written reply to questions asked by MPs, whereas starred questions get verbal responses in the House.
- **Question Hour** is the liveliest hour in Parliament. It is during **this one hour that Members of Parliament ask questions of ministers and hold them accountable for the functioning of their ministries.** The questions that MPs ask are designed to elicit information and trigger suitable action by ministries.
- Over the last 70 years, MPs have successfully used this parliamentary device to shine a light on government functioning. Their questions have exposed financial irregularities and brought data and information regarding government functioning to the public domain. With the broadcasting of Question Hour since 1991, Question Hour has become one the most visible aspects of parliamentary functioning.
- While Question Hour is strictly regulated, **Zero Hour is an Indian parliamentary innovation.** The **phrase does not find mention in the rules of procedure.** The concept of Zero Hour started organically in the first decade of Indian Parliament, when MPs felt the need for raising important constituency and national issues.
- Parliament has comprehensive rules for dealing with every aspect of Question Hour. And the presiding officers of the two houses are the final authority with respect to the conduct of Question Hour.
- Parliamentary rules provide guidelines on the kind of questions that can be asked by MPs. Questions have to be limited to 150 words. They have to be precise and not too general. The question should also be related to an area of responsibility of the Government of India. Questions should not seek information about matters that are secret or are under adjudication before courts. It is the presiding officers of the two Houses who finally decide whether a question raised by an MP will be admitted for answering by the government.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Govt-says%2c-it-is-ready-to-reply-to-unstarred-questions-during-Monsoon-Session-of-Parliament&id=398915>

Priority Sector Lending

Context: RBI revises PSL guidelines; Bank loans to start-ups to get priority sector tag.

More information:



- The Reserve Bank of India has revised Priority Sector Lending guidelines. This move **is aimed at addressing regional disparities in the flow of priority sector credit.**
- In the revised guidelines, higher weightage have been assigned to incremental priority sector credit in identified districts where priority sector credit flow is comparatively low.
- Bank finance to start-ups up to 50 crores rupees, **loans to farmers for installation of solar power plants for solarisation of grid connected agriculture pumps and loans for setting up Compressed Bio Gas plants have been included as fresh categories eligible** for finance under priority sector.
- **Priority sector loans** refer to loans that banks need to mandatorily lend to economically weaker sections of the society.
- Also, the **targets** prescribed for “**small and marginal farmers**” and “**weaker sections**” are being increased in a phased manner.
- The RBI also said loan limits for **renewable energy have been increased** under the revised guidelines. For improvement of **health infrastructure, credit limit for health infrastructure** (including those under ‘Ayushman Bharat’) has been **doubled.**

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=RBI-revises-PSL-guidelines%3b-Bank-loans-to-start-ups-to-get-priority-sector-tag&id=399095>

Road network

Context: India now got world's 2nd largest road network

More information:

- India has now the second largest road network in the world being fuelled by the tremendous growth in construction of expressways and highways.
- The current rate of road building per day has averaged to 30 Kilometers a day, with the highest being 40 Kilometers per day of highways.
- The vehicle manufacturers have implemented regulations crucial to vehicle safety such as crash norms, airbags, seat belt reminder and reverse parking assist. These regulations have brought the auto industry in India at par with the global auto industry.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-now-got-world%e2%80%99s-2nd-largest-road-network%3a-Nitin-Gadkari&id=399072>