

20 – 11 – 2021

News: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its approval for continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-I and II (PMGSY-I and II) upto September, 2022.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is a scheme launched by **Ministry of Rural Development** intended to **consolidate state roads**.
- It was launched as a **one-time special intervention to provide rural connectivity**, by way of a single all- weather road, to the eligible unconnected habitations of **designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-Eastern States, Himalayan States and Himalayan Union Territories as per 2001 census)**.
- In the **critical Left Wing Extremism affected blocks** (as identified by Ministry of Home Affairs), additional relaxation has been given to connect habitations with **population 100 persons** and above as per 2001 census.
- Under the 3rd phase of PM Gram Sadak Yojana, **1,25,000km of roads are expected to consolidate**.
- The first **two phases saw a consolidation of 5,99,090km of roads**.

- The funds would be shared in a **60:40 ratios between Centre and States**, except 8 North Eastern States, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (here it would be 90:10).
- The new guidelines for PMGSY **encourage locally available materials and the use of green technologies for the construction of roads** under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).
- State governments are required to propose a **minimum 15% of total length of annual proposals under new technologies** such as Cement stabilization, Lime stabilization, Cold Mix, Waste Plastics, Fly ash etc.
- Out of this, **5% of roads are to be constructed using Indian Road Congress (IRC) accredited technology**. The IRC has now **accredited coir Geotextiles for the construction of rural roads**. Thus, a 5% length of the rural roads under PMGSY-III will be constructed using coir geotextiles.
- Recently, the **National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA)** (a non-statutory agency under Ministry of Rural Development) has announced that **coir geotextiles will be used for the construction of rural roads** under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-III).

News: Migration and Development Brief

- Recently, World Bank came up with the report Migration and Development Brief.
- According to the report, India has become the world's largest recipient of Remittances, receiving USD 87 billion (a gain of 4.6 % from previous year) in 2021.
- India is followed by China, Mexico, the Philippines, and Egypt.
- The United States being the biggest source, accounting for over 20% of all Remittances.

Factors for Remittance Growth

- Migrants' determination to support their families in times of need, aided by economic recovery in Europe and the United States which in turn was supported by the Fiscal Stimulus and employment support programs.
- In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Russia, the recovery of outward remittances was also facilitated by stronger oil prices and the resulting pickup in economic activity.
- The severity of Covid-19 caseloads and deaths during the second quarter (well above the global average) played a prominent role in drawing substantial flows (including for the purchase of oxygen tanks) to the country.

- Flows from migrants have greatly complemented government cash transfer programs to support families suffering economic hardships during the Covid-19 crisis.

World Bank

- With **189 member countries**, the World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of **five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries**.
- The Bank Group works with country governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, regional development banks, think tanks, and other international institutions on issues ranging from climate change, conflict, and food security to education, agriculture, finance, and trade.
- To become a member of the Bank, under the IBRD Articles of Agreement, a country must **first join the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- Membership in IDA, IFC, and MIGA are conditional on membership in IBRD.
- Membership in ICSID is available to IBRD members, and those which are a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on the invitation of the ICSID Administrative Council by a vote of two-thirds of its members.
- The World Bank, in October 2019, launched a new global target to **reduce learning poverty by half by 2030**.

- World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) uses GDP in the comparative analysis of its member nations.
- The World Bank classifies the world's economies into four income groups — high, upper-middle, lower-middle, and low.
- This assignment is based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (current US\$).
- The classification is updated each year on July 1st.
- India and China have both transitioned from low-income countries to middle-income countries.
- India currently falls in the World Bank's lower-middle income category while China currently falls in the upper-middle income category.

- World Bank along with Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Interpol; and World Customs Organization (WCO) forms International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC).
- Global Wildlife Programme (GWP) is an initiative led by World Bank and funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Asian Development bank

(ADB) that promotes wildlife conservation and sustainable development by combating illicit trafficking in wildlife.

- **Securing Livelihoods, Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of High Range Himalayan Ecosystems project (SECURE Himalayas)**, launched by **MoEFCC and UNDP**, is a project under Global Wildlife Programme (GWP).
- **First official Green Bond was released by the World Bank in 2009**. The World Bank is a major issuer of Green Bonds.
- The **Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition (CPLC)**, launched at COP 21, is under the aegis of World Bank.

The World Bank Group has set two goals for the world to achieve by 2030:

- End extreme poverty by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than \$1.90 a day to no more than 3%.
- Promote shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40% for every country.

A Group of Institutions

- Together, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA) form the World Bank, which

provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. While the World Bank Group consists of five development institutions.

- **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** provides loans, credits, and grants. **India is a founding member.**
- **International Development Association (IDA)** provides low- or no-interest loans to low-income countries. **India is a founding member.**
- The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** provides investment, advice, and asset management to companies and governments. **India is a founding member.**
- The **Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)** insures lenders and investors against political risk such as war. **India became the member of MIGA in 1994.**
- The **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)** settles investment-disputes between investors and countries. **India is not a member of ICSID.**
- All of these efforts support the Bank Group's **twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity of the poorest 40% of the population in all countries.**

Reports / Indices published by World Bank

- **Ease of Doing Business Index:** World Bank recently announced that it would discontinue the practise of issuing "Doing Business Report" following an investigation reported “data irregularities” in its 2018 and 2020 editions (released in 2017 and 2019, respectively) and possible “ethical matters” involving bank staff.

News: Operation “Molten Metal”

Operation “Molten Metal”

- Operation “Molten Metal” is an **intelligence operation conducted by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).**
- Under it, **several Indian and foreign (Chinese, Taiwanese, and South-Korean) nationals suspected to be indulging in smuggling gold into India from Hong Kong using the air cargo route, were identified.**
- The intelligence indicated that the **gold smuggled in the form of machinery parts was being melted and moulded into bar/cylinder shapes** before being disposed of in the local market.
- DRI officers examined an import consignment at Air Cargo Complex, **Indira Gandhi International Airport.**

- During the examination, the consignment was found to contain electroplating machines fitted with transformers.
- The 'EI' laminates of the transformers were found to have been made of gold coated with nickel, essentially to hide the identity of the gold.
- Approximately 1 kg of gold was recovered from each of the 80 imported electroplating machines.