

**“Don't wish it were easier. Wish you were better.” Jim Rohn**

**INTERNATIONAL & BILATERAL****SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION-REGIONAL ANTI-TERRORIST STRUCTURE (SCO-RATS)**

Pakistan is hosting its first ever Shanghai Cooperation Organization-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) meeting in Islamabad. The participants of the meeting include the executive committee of the SCO and of RATS along with legal advisors from eight member states.

The main agenda is to talk over the issue related to terrorist threats in the region and how to overcome them.

**RATS:**

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

The Head of RATS is elected to a three-year term. Each member state also sends a permanent representative to RATS.

**MODEL CONTRACT FARMING ACT, 2018**

The government has released the Model Agriculture Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2018. It is drafted as a promotional and facilitative act and not regulatory in its structure.

With a view to integrate farmers with bulk purchasers including exporters, agro-industries etc. for better price realization through mitigation of market and price risks to the farmers and ensuring smooth agro raw material supply to the agro industries, Union Finance Minister in the budget for 2017-18 announced preparation of a “Model Contract Farming Act” and circulation of the same to the States for its adoption.

**Salient features of the Act:**

The act lays special emphasis on **protecting the interests of the farmers, considering them as weaker of the two parties entering into a contract. It brings contract farming outside the ambit of the APMC Act.**

It provides for a **“Registering and Agreement Recording Committee”** or an **“Officer”** at the district/block/taluka level for online registration of sponsor and recording of agreement. The contracted produce will also be covered under crop/livestock insurance in operation.

In a bid to allay the fears of individual farmers, the act explicitly states that no permanent structure can be developed on farmers’ land/premises under such contracts.

It gives no right, title of interest of the land to the sponsor. Similarly, no rights, title ownership or possession to be transferred or alienated or vested in the contract farming sponsor.

The act provides for the promotion of Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs)/Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) to mobilize small and marginal farmers. The FPO/FPC can also be a contracting party if so authorized by the farmers.

As per the law, the contracting party will be obliged to buy the entire pre-agreed quantity of one or more of agricultural produce, livestock or its product of contract farming producer as per contract.

It also envisages the setting up of Contract Farming Facilitation Group (CFFG) for promoting contract farming and services at village/panchayat level.

It also includes an accessible and simple dispute settlement mechanism at the lowest level possible for quick disposal of disputes.

The concept of Contract Farming (CF) refers to a system of farming, in which bulk purchasers including agro-processing/exporting or trading units enter into a contract with farmer(s), to purchase a

specified quantity of any agricultural commodity at a pre-agreed price.

Although varied forms of contract farming existed in pockets in the country, the formal contract farming is not, however, wide spread in India. By and large, cultivation of commercial crops like cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, tea, coffee, rubber and dairy have had some elements of informal contract farming for a long time.

Currently, contract farming requires registration with the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) in few states. This means that contractual agreements are recorded with the APMCs which can also resolve disputes arising out of these contracts. Further, market fees and levies are paid to the APMC to undertake contract farming. The Model APMC Act, 2003 provided for contract farming and was released to the states for them to use this as reference while enacting their respective laws. Consequently, 20 states have amended their APMC Acts to provide for contract farming, while Punjab has a separate law on contract farming. However, only 14 states notified rules related to contract farming, as of October 2016.

#### **KISHANGANGA HYDROPOWER PROJECT INAUGURATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER**

The 330 MW Kishanganga Hydropower Project was recently inaugurated by the Prime Minister in northern Kashmir's Gurez. The PM also laid down the foundation stone for Pakal Dul hydro power project.

#### **Kishanganga Hydroelectric project:**

It is an \$864 million dam which is part of a run-of-the-river hydroelectric scheme that is designed to divert water from the Kishanganga River to a power plant in the Jhelum River basin.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir would be provided with 12 percent of the power generated by the project.

Pakistan has raised several objections to the Kishanganga Project in the past. Pakistan has complained that the Kishanganga Project affects its own Neelum Jhelum Hydropower

Plant. However, India maintains that the project would not have any impact on rivers flowing into the neighbouring country.

Construction on the dam was temporarily halted by the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration in October 2011 due to Pakistan's protest of its effect on the flow of the Kishanganga River (called the Neelum River in Pakistan). In February 2013, the Hague ruled that India could divert a minimum amount of water for power generation.

Pakistan has been flagging concern over designs of India's five hydroelectricity projects – Pakal Dul (1000 MW), Ratle (850 MW), Kishanganga (330 MW), Miyar (120 MW) and Lower Kalnai (48 MW) – being built/planned in the Indus river basin, contending these violate the treaty.

#### **Pakal Dul hydro power project:**

The 1,000 megawatt Pakal Dul hydroelectric power project on Marusadar River, a tributary of Chenab River, in Jammu and Kashmir will provide 12% free power to the state. The project will not only be the largest hydroelectric power project in the state but also the first storage unit.

#### **NMCG ASKED TO EXPDIT YAMUNA RIVER FRONT DEVELOPMENT (RFD) PROJECT**

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has asked DDA to expedite "Asita", its Yamuna River Front Development Project.

#### **ASITA:**

Asita, also known as Yamuna River Front Development (RFD) project, aims to restore, revive and rejuvenate the river's floodplains and make them accessible to the people of Delhi. "Asita" is another name of river Yamuna.

A special focus of the project is on reviving the river's bio-diversity in the National Capital.

The project envisages creating a green buffer area approx. 300mts wide along the river edge with species of riverine ecology. Besides, a wide belt of 150mts along the peripheral roads will be developed as greenways for public amenities that will include a continuous trail of pathways and cycle tracks.

To revive the ecosystem of the floodplains, wetlands will be created to store the flood waters and also to improve the groundwater recharge which will eventually result in flourishing of biodiversity in the floodplains.

An environmentally conscious approach for integration of the river into the urban fabric of the city has been adopted. A people-friendly bio-diversity zone will be created for people to interact freely with the river's eco-system.

The Yamuna was declared a dead river. The dissolved oxygen level, which are crucial to life in the water, is negligible. The river usually flows with heavy toxic foam on its surface and often parts of the river actually catch fire. Ostensibly, in the last 22 years, over Rs. 2,000 crore has been spent on the clean-up of the Yamuna.

#### **Yamuna Action Plan:**

Government of India has sanctioned Yamuna Action Plant (YAP)-I and YAP-II schemes for river Yamuna in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and YAP-III in Delhi under financial assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for taking up works for sewerage/interception and diversion of drains, Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), low cost sanitation/community toilet complexes, electric/ improved wood crematoria, etc.

#### **BRAHMOS**

BrahMos, supersonic cruise missile was recently successfully test fired from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore, Odisha.

BrahMos is a joint venture between DRDO of India and NPOM of Russia.

The highly versatile BrahMos has been operationalised in the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.

BrahMos is the first Indian missile whose life has been extended from 10 years to 15 years. Life extension of the missile system is yet another step that helps in reducing the cost of BrahMos.

BrahMos became the first heavy missile system in the world to be integrated

successfully on a Sukhoi-30 MKI frontline fighter jet of the Indian Air Force (IAF). The missile can be fired from land, from ships (both vertical and inclined configuration), under-water, and from air.

BrahMos initially had a range of 300-km, but after India became a part of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the range was extended to 450-km.

BrahMos can attain a cruise speed of 2.8 Mach and can carry a conventional warhead of almost 300 kg.

#### **MTCR:**

Established in April 1987, the voluntary MTCR aims to limit the spread of ballistic missiles and other unmanned delivery systems that could be used for chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks.

The MTCR regime urges its members, which include most of the world's key missile manufacturers, to restrict their exports of missiles and related technologies capable of carrying a 500-kilogram payload at least 300 kilometers or delivering any type of weapon of mass destruction.

#### **INSV TARINI HAS COMPLETED HISTORIC GLOBAL CIRCUMNAVIGATION**

INSV Tarini has completed a historic global Circumnavigation. This is the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women crew.

The expedition titled 'Navika Sagar Parikrama' is in consonance with the National policy to empower women to attain their full potential. It has showcased 'Nari Shakti' on the world platform and helped change societal attitudes and mindset towards women in India by raising visibility of their participation in challenging environs.

During her 254 day long voyage, the vessel has covered over 22,000 Nautical miles, visiting five countries – Australia, New Zealand, Falkland Islands (UK), South Africa and Mauritius.

During the course of her voyage, the vessel has met all criteria of circumnavigation, viz. crossing the Equator twice, crossing all

Longitudes, as also the three great capes (Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn and Cape of Good Hope).

The expedition was covered in six legs, with halts at 5 ports: Fremantle (Australia), Lyttleton (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Falklands), Cape Town (South Africa) and Port Louis (Mauritius).

INSV Tarini:

INSV Tarini is a 56 foot sailing vessel built in India by M/s Aquarius Shipyard Pvt Ltd, Goa. It was inducted into the Indian Navy recently in February 2017. It has Raymarine navigation suite and an array of satellite communication systems for perfect navigation anywhere in the world. It showcases the 'Make in India' initiative on the International forum.

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