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Monthly Policy Brief

June & July 2023

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01 Union Health Ministry Launches '75/25' Initiative

Non-communicable diseases are defined as diseases that are not spread through pathogens but are primarily caused by genetic or lifestyle factors. These include chronic conditions like Cancer, Cardiovascular issues, Diabetes, arthritis etc. Non-communicable diseases are the primary cause of deaths the world over.

As per WHO, the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) kill 41 million people each year, equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally and each year, more than 15 million people die from NCDs between the ages of 30 and 69 years; 85% of these "premature" deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Non-communicable diseases mostly manifest in adulthood but their causes and risk factors can be impacting an individual from childhood and adolescence such as diet, environmental pollution, physical inactivity etc.

To address this burden the Global NCD Action Plan was devised in 2013 with a vision of "a world free of the avoidable burden of noncommunicable diseases". It put in place global targets in place regarding NCD prevention, identification of NCD risk factors, and easier and equitable access to treatment.

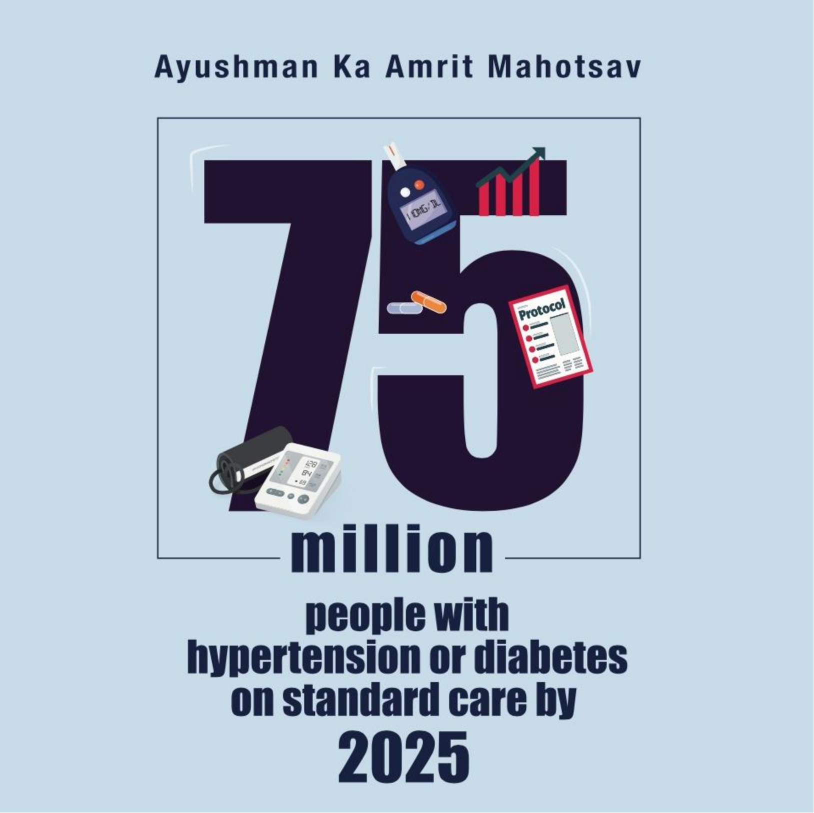
In response to this India was one of the first countries to put in place the National Action Plan on NCDs, aimed at reducing the number of deaths due to NCDs by 25% by 2025. In an effort to fulfil India's obligations and address the NCD burden in the country, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare announced the ambitious goal of screening and treating 75 million people suffering from Hypertension and Diabetes on the 'Standard Care' protocol by 2025.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

The Standard Care protocol provides specialised treatment for specific diseases at Primary Health Care Centres across the country. The 75/25 initiative thereby would be one of the largest expansions of primary treatment for not just hypertension and diabetes but for non-communicable diseases in general.

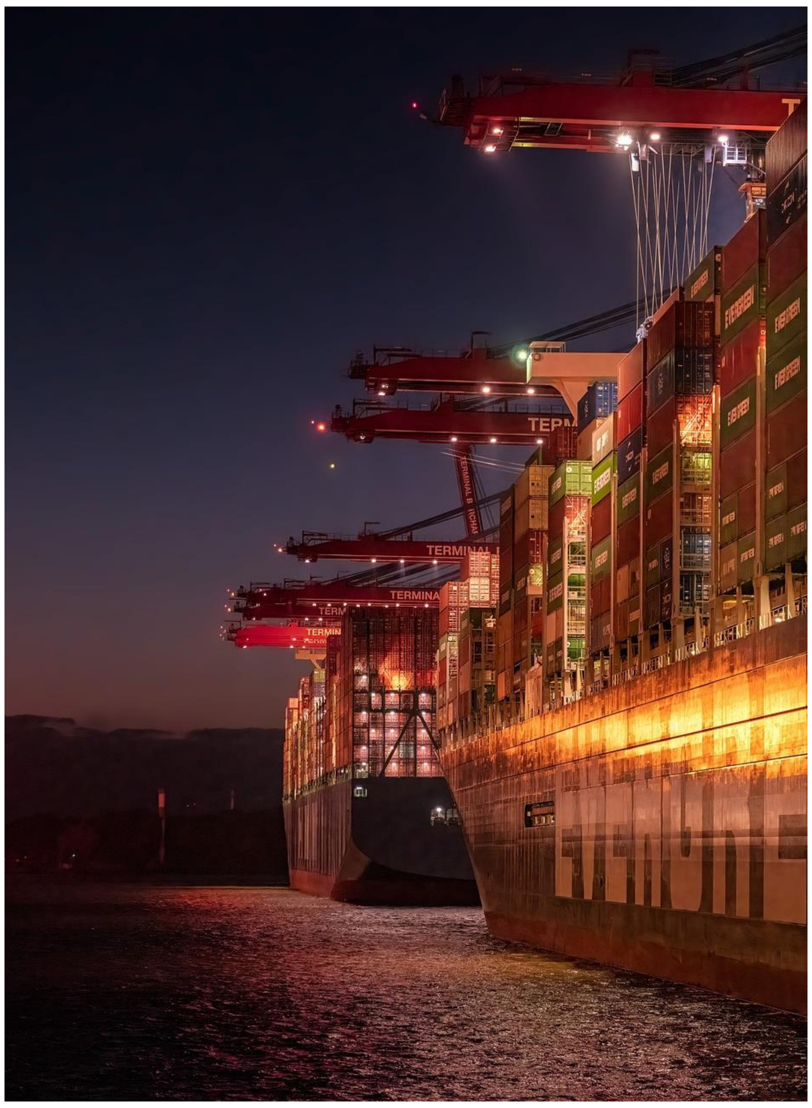
While screening for these diseases is an extremely crucial step towards reducing their impact, it will be essential to also take preventive measures to ensure NCDs do not occur in the first place. NCDs cannot be halted simply by treatment, but rather focus will need to be on the root causes.

The goals of the Global Action Plan and India's National Action Plan on NCDs is not solely designed for disease management but mainly on disease prevention. And this can only be achieved with the full partnership of individual citizens prioritising their well-being through inculcating healthy habits.



02 Harit Sagar Guidelines

India's Blueprint for Environmentally Friendly Port Operations and Marine Conservation



The Government of India launched the "Harit Sagar Guidelines 2023" in May 2023. "Harit Sagar" is Sanskrit for Green Ocean. The guidelines focus on making India's ports more environment-friendly and sustainable to protect and manage the country's coastline and marine resources. In addition, these align with the broader vision of achieving the Zero Carbon Emission Goal and reflects a commitment to revolutionize port development, operation, and maintenance in line with Prime Minister Modi's Panchamrit commitments.

The Harit Sagar Guidelines are a set of broad guidelines that can act like guardrails to foster sustainable development by providing a comprehensive framework to enable major ports in India to create an action with specific targets and timelines for achieving quantifiable reductions in carbon emissions.

The guidelines highlight innovative and game-changing ideas such as:

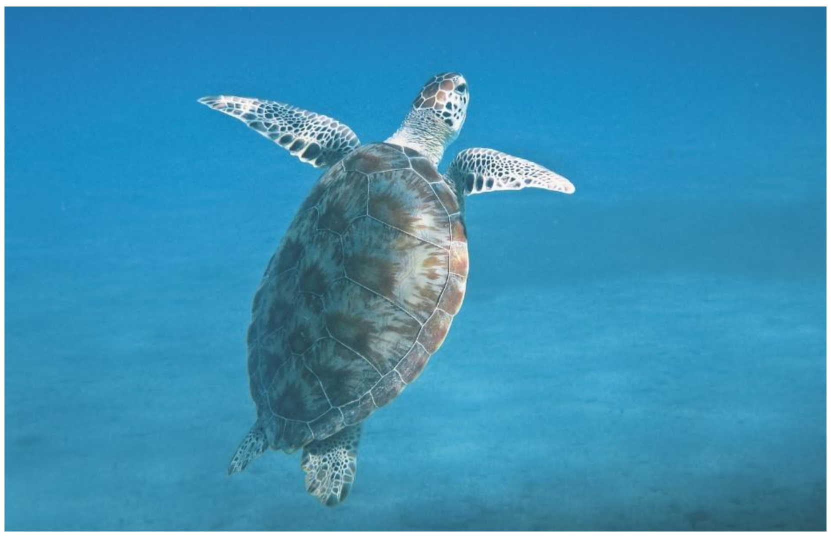
- Adoption of best practices and technologies for green port development and operations. These include using renewable energy, focusing on water conservation, protection of biodiversity, and climate resilience.
- Minimize waste through Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle to achieve zero waste discharge.
- Establishment of a rating system to assess and benchmark the environmental performance of all ports in India based on pre-defined parameters.
- Incentivise ports that achieve high standards in operation and development.
- Facilitate the integration of green port principles into the planning, design and construction of port infrastructure and services.

Moreover, the guidelines come at a momentous juncture as India looks to achieve its commitments under the Paris Agreement (2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals. These are actively supported by the National Action Plan on Climate Change and the Swachh Bharat Mission. The guidelines will also leverage India to pull new opportunities towards itself – investment, talent, employment, or innovation. Furthermore, the guidelines bring out certain challenges, like,

- Implementation might face roadblocks due to a lack of resources, difficulties in collaboration between various agencies and departments of the Government, and even some resistance from existing players.
- The primary focus is on promoting sustainable practices, but there is limited emphasis on enforcement mechanisms to ensure regulatory compliance.
- Regulations proposed by the Guidelines may impact the livelihoods of fisherfolk and other stakeholders who depend on marine resources for their income.

02 Harit Sagar Guidelines [1] (contd.)

India's Blueprint for Environmentally Friendly Port Operations and Marine Conservation



Our Take - Why is this Important?

While the Harit Sagar Guidelines 2023 have several positive objectives, it is crucial to consider these potential downsides and address them through effective implementation and stakeholder engagement.

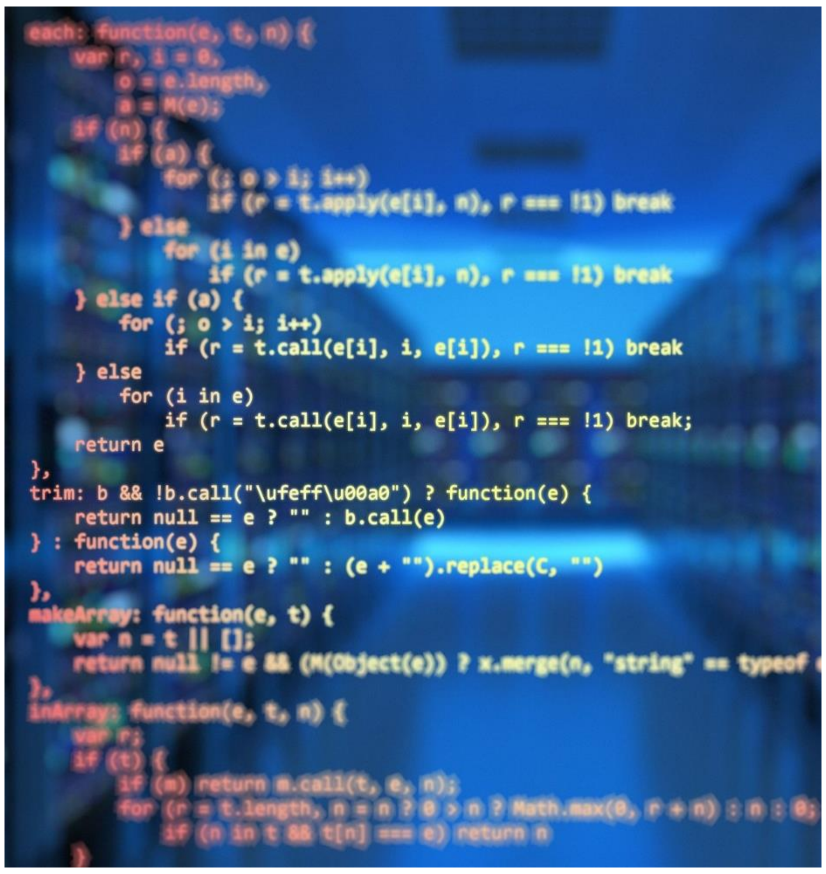
The Harit Sagar Guidelines 2023 mark an essential step in the right direction. The Guidelines shall help position Indian ports worldwide by focusing on efficiency, reliability, and quality. It shall help bring down operational costs and focus on new revenue generation. However, the Guidelines will only be successful if the Government ensures improved data collection, real-time analysis, and enhanced public participation. Further, the Government would have to allocate sufficient resources to build capacity among stakeholders focusing on local communities and government officials. In addition, another area that indirectly benefits from these Guidelines is tourism. The conservation of marine life and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities will be a driving force in building parts of the Indian coastline. This will be directly proportional to increasing tourism.

In conclusion, the Harit Sagar Guidelines 2023 promise India a bright future – focused on sustainability and development. The future, however, will depend on the implementation of these guidelines.

03 Performance Linked Incentives Scheme 2.0 for IT Hardware

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Hon. PM on 17th May, has approved the IT Hardware PLI Scheme 2.0 with an expected budgetary outlay of INR 17,000 Cr. The duration of the scheme shall be six years. The scheme covers laptops, tablets, all-in-one PCs, servers and ultra-small form-factor devices. While laying down the contours of the scheme, the Government expects that it will lead to benefits such as:

- Incremental of INR 3.35 Lakh Cr.
- Incremental investment of production INR 2,430 Cr.
- Incremental direct employment generation of about 75,000 people



Our Take - Why is this Important?

The new PLI scheme is important as India is slowly emerging as a Tech manufacturing hub. The same can be gauged from the fact that –

- India has seen continued growth in the Electronics manufacturing segment. It has witnessed a 17% CAGR in the last eight years.
- This year, electronics manufacturing crossed USD 105 billion USD (about Rs 9 lakh crore) in production.
- India is today the world's second-largest manufacturer of mobile phones.
- Exports of mobile phones exceeded USD 11 billion this year.
- Multiple prominent players have announced/started new plants in India, with the latest being Foxconn (HonHai Precision) announcing a USD 500 million plant in Telangana.
- This space would be a significant contributor to job creation. India is expected to add 1.5 Lakh new jobs in phone manufacturing this year.
- With the digital wave around us, the need for IT Hardware will increase in days to come. While India has done tremendously well in hardware manufacturing recently, it is still a net importer of IT hardware. Therefore, the need and timing for this PLI are just right.

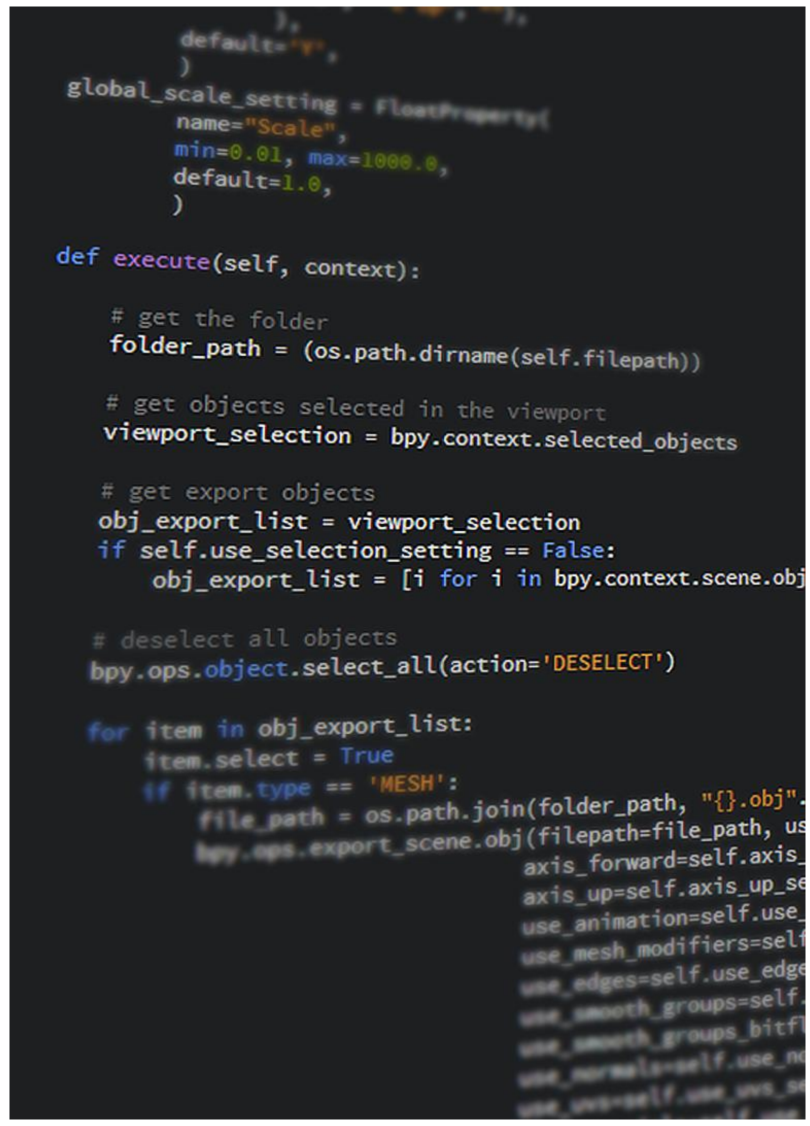
[3] Foreign Trade Policy-2023; Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce, https://www.dgft.gov.in/CP/

03 Performance Linked Incentives Scheme 2.0 for IT Hardware (contd.)

Our Take - Why is this Important?

The hardware PLI scheme is expected to strengthen India's position in IT manufacturing further. While India has taken significant strides in this space recently, the country is still a net importer of hardware. Therefore, the timing of this scheme is apt. With the right thrust and focus on IT hardware manufacturing, as expected from this PLI scheme, India can be propelled into a hardware manufacturing powerhouse. This would ensure that more jobs are created, more value is added to the GDP, and the country becomes increasingly self-sufficient in hardware. The need for hardware components increases daily across many devices; hence, self-reliance in hardware manufacturing is essential.

The PLI scheme may also boost competition amongst States to bring in investment, which is in the right spirit of cooperative and competitive federalism. Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, UP, and Haryana are among the many states doing well in this space and can propel others.



04 New Accreditation Reforms for IITs and HEIs

As per the All-India Survey on Higher Education Report (AISHE) 2020-21, 1,113 universities and 43,796 colleges are nationwide. However, out of these, only 30 per cent, including affiliated colleges, are presently accredited by NAAC. A recent government panel report on accreditation and rankings in higher education institutes (HEIs) has put forth a comprehensive proposal to simplify the evaluation and assessment processes and bring harmony between the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF).

The primary objective of the new framework, anticipated to be fully implemented in January 2024, is to get more HEIs into the accreditation and ranking system. One positive recommendation towards including all HEIs is collecting the data once a year under the 'One Nation One Data' process and validating it through a crowdsourcing mechanism. The HEIs may also be categorized into six distinct categories based on their orientation, vision, specialization and heritage/ legacy for the ease of collecting data.

The proposed framework also discusses a more holistic assessment approach to provide a standardized evaluation criterion for HEIs. It suggests a binary Accreditation System that classifies institutions as 'Accredited,' 'Awaiting Accreditation' (on the threshold for accreditation), and 'Not accredited' (far below the standards for accreditation) instead of the eight–point grading system in use. The report proposes replacing the manual collection of data with a technology-driven assessment system which will rely on genuine data validation and feedback from students, teachers, alums, industry partners, and other stakeholders, thereby eliminating subjectivity and bias.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

With the implementation of NEP 2020, the Government of India is taking massive steps towards revolutionizing higher education in the country. They have set an ambitious target of increasing the GER in higher education to at least 50% by 2035. Thus, it becomes vital for our HEIs to rise to the occasion and become institutes of repute and excellence through accreditation.

The challenge of the low willingness of HEIs to go for the NAAC accreditation process will need to be addressed soon. The 'one-size-fits-all model' currently being used to collate information (keeping in mind the diverse categories of HEIs) and subjective processes make it very cumbersome for the HEIs to collect data across various parameters of the NAAC process. The technical intervention may help enhance transparency and credibility with a single point data entry by HEIs with provision for yearly updates as suggested by the report.

To encourage more participation, the HEIs also need handholding and mentoring, especially the institutions falling under 'Not Accredited' or those applying for the first time. IITs and other accredited HEIs may be encouraged to become mentors and support these institutions so that maximum HEIs join the accreditation process. This will be a big step towards the successful implementation of NEP 2020.

05 Amnesty Scheme for one-time settlement of default in export obligations by Advance and EPCG authorization holders

Current AA and EPGC Schemes

The schemes' key objective is to reduce manufacturing costs, increase export competitiveness, attract investment for export production, and create employment generation.

The Advance Authorisation allows duty-free input import, which is physically incorporated into an export product. However, imports under the AA Scheme shall be subject to an Export Obligation (EO) to be fulfilled in 18 months or the prescribed time as notified by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

The Export Promotion Capital Good (EPCG) Scheme, on the other hand, facilitates the import of capital goods for producing quality goods and services. The scheme allows the import of capital goods for preproduction, production, and post-production at zero customs duty. However, imports under EPCG Scheme are subject to an Export Obligation (EO) equivalent to 6 times of duties, taxes and cess saved on capital goods, to be fulfilled in 6 years reckoned from the date of issue of Authorisation.

The authorization holders who have taken export obligation but have not been able to fulfil the same ***have to pay customs duties plus interest proportionate to the unfulfilled value*** as a penalty prescribed by the Customs authority.

New Amnesty Scheme

DGFT has recently notified the New Amnesty Scheme for one-time settlement of default in export obligations by Advance and EPCG authorization holders. The scheme aims to relieve exporters who cannot fulfil their Export Obligations against the Advance and EPCG authorizations.

All variants of authorization issued under Advance Authorization (AA) and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Schemes

- issued under Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2009-14 till 31st March 2015
- issued under Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2004-09 and before, provided the EO period (original or extended) is valid beyond 12th August 2013.

Highlights of the Scheme

- All pending cases of the default in meeting the Export Obligation (EO) of authorization mentioned in para above (i.e., coverage of the schemes") can now be regularized by the authorization holder on payment of all the customs duties that were exempted in proportion to the unfulfilled Export Obligation.
- Interest Payable is capped at a maximum of 100% of duties exempted on which interest is payable.
- No interest is payable on the portion of Additional Customs Duty and Special Additional Customs Duty.

05 Amnesty Scheme for one-time settlement of default in export obligations by Advance and EPCG authorization holders (contd.)

Our Take - Why is this Important?

The recently notified Amnesty Scheme by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) provides an opportunity to the authorization holder for a one-time settlement of default in export obligations. The key takeaways of the scheme are mentioned below.

1. The scheme is expected to reduce pending litigations and all pending cases of default in the export obligation.

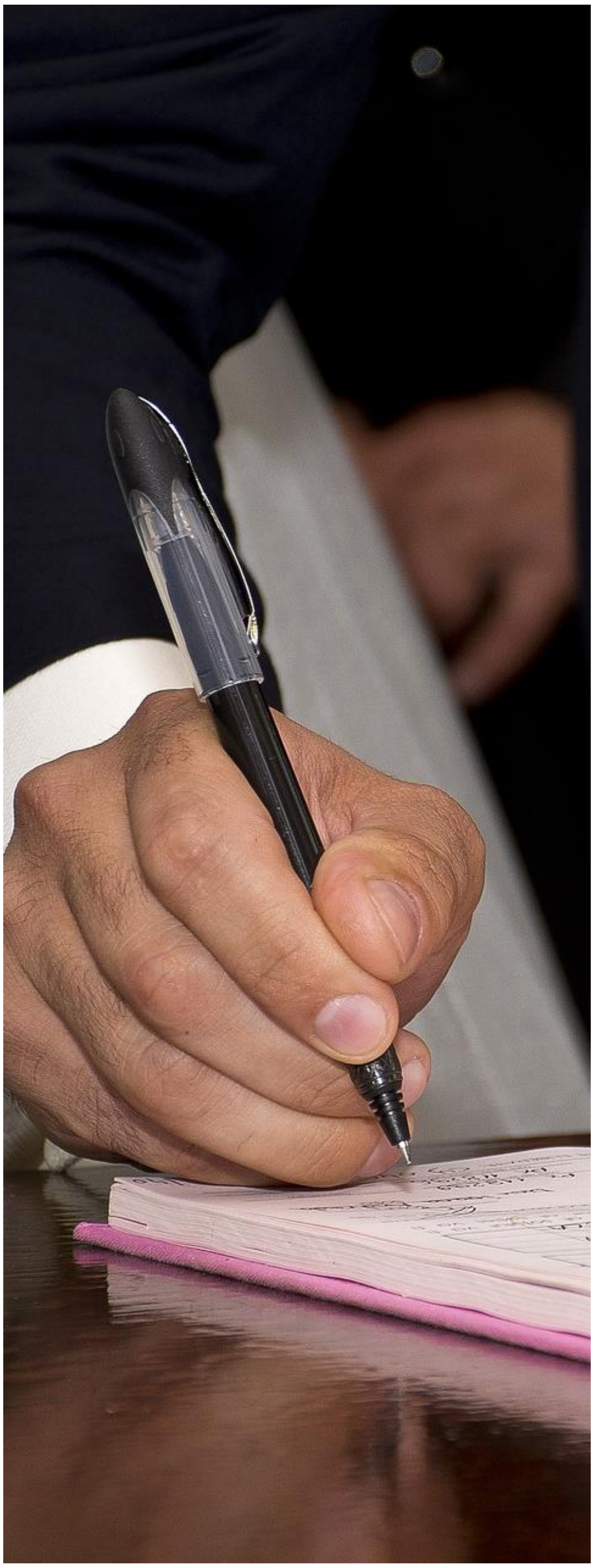
2. The scheme will reduce the financial burden on exporters who have defaulted on their export obligation by relaxing the penalty conditions as below.

   a) Interest payable is capped at a maximum of 100% of duties exempted on which interest is payable.

   b) No interest is payable on the portion of additional customs duty and special additional customs duty.

3. The scheme shall benefit SMEs and individual exporters encountering challenges concerning complex taxation and procedural processes.

4. The scheme shall help negate the global economic slowdown by boosting export trade.



06 Expanding the scope of PMLA

Strengthening the anti-money laundering framework in India

The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was introduced in India in 2002 to prevent criminals from concealing the origins of money obtained illegally and introducing it into the banking system. The PMLA provides the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to conduct investigations in money laundering cases. Under the act, every reporting entity must maintain a record of all transactions performed on behalf of clients, such as

- Buying and selling of any immovable property
- Managing of client money, securities or other assets
- Management of bank, savings or securities accounts
- Organization of contributions for the creation, operation or management of companies
- Creation, operation or management of companies, limited liability partnerships or trusts, and buying and selling of business entities.

Reporting entities refer to banking institutions, financial institutions and intermediaries.

In May of 2023, the Government decided to expand the PMLA to include entities such as chartered accountants, company secretaries, cost and works accountants, directors, secretaries of cos, partners of firms, intermediaries in casinos and crypto or virtual digital assets, trustees of express trusts, nominee shareholders, people arranging addresses, trustees for businesses and Individuals helping in the formation of a company. **The Union Finance Ministry clarified that any activity these entities do would be recognized under the PMLA if these professionals carry out financial transactions of the abovementioned types.** These entities will need to perform KYC before each specified transaction's commencement and examine the transaction's purpose and the client's source of funds. Failure to meet these requirements could invite investigations and penalties from the Enforcement Directorate.

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06 Expanding the scope of PMLA (contd.)

Strengthening the anti-money laundering framework in India

Our Take - Why is this Important?

There have been rising frauds involving the formation of shell companies in India -

Many illegal Chinese loan apps have cropped up in India over the last five years. These lending apps have deployed illegal extortion methods to recover loans from individuals, applying an interest rate of almost ~2,000% in some cases. Many of these apps have Indian companies as a front, and entities such as CAs and CSs have signed off on their incorporation documents and annual returns. This has enabled such apps to operate in India and conduct scams worth crores. While authorities have charged down on many such apps and individuals behind it, the problem had to be addressed at source.

Increasing the ambit of the PMLA may also lead to an increase in the price of services offered by these entities due to increased compliance requirements -

Widening the definition of PMLA to include the above entities will force them to improve their due diligence methods when conducting financial transactions on behalf of their clients. It will push these entities to maintain proper records of transactions and updated KYC documents to avoid the commencement of investigations against them by the ED. However, the requirements under the PMLA are stringent and might increase the legislative and documentation burden. This may translate into higher prices for these professionals' services, such as returns filing, company incorporation, etc. It will, however, come down to implementation and enforcement by the authorities, which will control costs and fraudulent transactions at the source.

While the decision has been in the right direction in curbing such scams, more is required on similar lines to reduce them permanently. These include further increasing the ambit to include legal professionals, improving digital accountability and wallet systems and increasing financial literacy among individuals, especially easy targets in rural areas.

07 Liberalization of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Export Policy

All types of drones/ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) were earlier restricted for export under the category 5B of the SCOMET (Special Chemicals Organisms Material Equipment and Technology) list. The list includes items that are subject to specific regulations due to their potential dual-use nature - both civilian and military applications. A SCOMET license was required to export such items and the industry faced multiple challenges to export drones that are only meant for civilian use.

To simplify the policy of UAVs/drones under SCOMET list, a draft policy amendment of the Category 5B of SCOMET List and the General Authorization for Export of Drones/UAVs (Excluding Software and Technology) for specific types of drones/UAVs was proposed and circulated on 30th August 2022 for feedback and comments from the industry and public at large.

Based on the feedback received from stakeholder consultations, the SCOMET policy of drones/UAVs has been amended vide DGFT Notification No. 14 dated 23rd June 2023 to simplify and liberalize the policy for export of drones/UAVs meant for civilian use. The export of Drones/UAVs not covered under the specified categories in SCOMET list and capable of range equal to or less than 25 km and delivering a payload of not more than 25 kgs (excluding the software and technology of these items) and meant for only civilian end-use, will now be subject to General Authorization for Export of Drones (GAED), a onetime general license valid for 3 years.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

Drones have been identified as an emerging technology and have drawn interest from manufacturers, technology providers, the government and public alike. The drone service market in India, which was valued at US$ 130.4 million in 2020, has been gaining traction, and is expected to reach US$ 4,918.9 million by 2030 at CAGR of 44.4%. Recognizing the vast potential for employment generation and value creation across industries, the government has earlier announced the PLI scheme, Drone import policy, Drone Shakti, monetary grant program for agricultural drones, etc.

This policy change will not require the Drone Manufacturers/Exporters with GAED authorization to apply for a SCOMET license for every similar export shipment meant for civilian purpose, within the validity period of 3 years, thus reducing the compliance burden as well as facilitating ease of doing business and promoting exports from India. This is also a welcome move to promote India as a global manufacturing hub of drones/UAVs and would allow Indian drone manufacturers to access larger markets and compete on a global scale, eventually boosting economic activity. We expect to see similar positive initiatives encouraging R&D innovation and technological advancement in the drone/UAV industry soon.

08 Maharashtra IT/ITeS Policy, 2023

Making Maharashtra India's IT Hub

Making Maharashtra "the tech capital of India" is the ambitious goal of the recently announced Maharashtra IT-ITES policy 2023, which aims to foster the growth and development of the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology-enabled Services (ITeS) sectors in the state. The policy sets out a comprehensive framework to attract investments, promote innovation, and create a conducive business environment for IT/ITeS companies. It seeks to position Maharashtra as a global IT hub and generate employment opportunities for the state's residents.

The primary objective of the Policy is:

- Export | The state hopes to accomplish its export goal of INR 10 lakh crores.
- Investments | INR 95,000 crores in the IT-ITES and IR 4.0 sectors with the new IT strategy.
- Employment | For 3.5 million individuals, the initiative is expected to result in the creation of technology-related jobs.
- Skill Development | Increase the skill development by 15% per annum for developing highly employable, talented, and quality manpower .

Key Elements of the Policy:

- Infrastructure Development | The policy emphasizes the creation of state-of-the-art infrastructure, including IT parks, incubation centers, and data centers. It encourages public-private partnerships to develop these facilities and ensure their availability across various regions of Maharashtra.
- Skill Development | The policy recognizes the importance of a skilled workforce and aims to bridge the skill gap in the IT/ITeS sectors. It promotes initiatives for skill development, vocational training, and re-skilling programs in the areas of skills of the future like AI research scientists, optical scientists, embedded solution engineers etc. to enhance the employability of the local workforce.
- Start-up and Innovation Ecosystem | The policy supports the growth of start-ups and encourages innovation in the IT sector. Maharashtra Hub (M-Hub) will be set up to promote innovation in emerging technologies and establish Maharashtra as the knowledge led economy.
- Ease of Doing Business | The policy focuses on creating a business-friendly environment for IT/ITeS companies. It aims to streamline regulatory processes, simplify licensing requirements, and reduce bureaucratic hurdles to attract investments and promote entrepreneurship.
- Incentive Ecosystem | Incentives for occupiers on stamp duty reduction, power tariffs, property tax, etc. have been announced, besides reimbursement of certain capex costs .

Our Take - Why is this Important?

Overall, the Maharashtra IT/ITeS Policy, 2023 is widely seen as a proactive initiative to position the state as a prominent IT destination and foster the growth of the IT/ITeS sectors, while also addressing key concerns such as infrastructure, skills, and ease of doing business.

The Policy serves as a blueprint of how the government should approach the promotion of industry rather than treating it separately. The incentives are effective and will produce substantial value for market occupants in the technology sector in West India. It is quite noteworthy to take a professional approach to helping developing industries like AVGC and IR 4.0 through the first CAPEX cycle and talent development. Commercial development could widen to newer geographies within existing tier-I cities as well as in prominent tier-II cities.

09 Draft Master Directions on Cyber Resilience and Digital Payment Security Controls

The Reserve Bank of India ("RBI") has issued draft Master Directions on Cyber Resilience and Digital Payment Security Controls for Payment System Operators ("DPSC Directions") on 2nd June 2023 and invited comments from stakeholders. The same has been issued under Section 10 (2) read with Section 18 of Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (Act 51 of 2007)

The aim of the Directions is to -

- To ensure safety and security of payment systems.
- To ensure that authorized non-bank Payment System Operators (PSOs) are resilient to traditional and emerging information systems and cyber security risks.
- To drive robust governance mechanisms for identification, assessment, monitoring and management of risks associated with cyber security.

The Directions also cover baseline security measures for ensuring:

- System resiliency
- Safe and secure digital payment transactions
- PSOs shall look at migrating to the latest security standards.

The existing instructions on security and risk mitigation measures for payments made using cards, Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) and mobile banking continue to be applicable and are not getting replaced.

The Directions have been divided into 4 sections and 33 overarching principles or guidelines. The Directions apply to all authorized non-bank PSOs. The Directions make the Board of Directors responsible for the oversight of this implementation. Making the Board responsible for oversight shows that RBI considers these directions with extreme seriousness.

The Directions will come into effect from the day they are placed on the RBI website. However, time would be given for PSOs to adhere to the same and comply. Presently, the proposed timelines are –

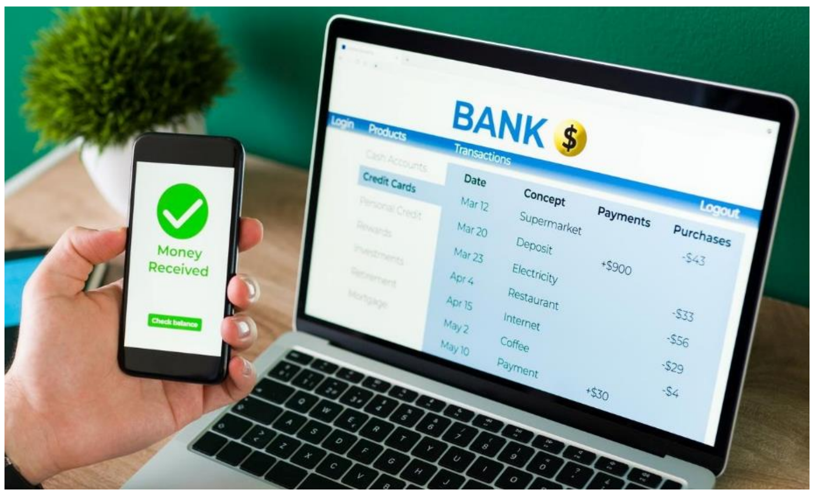
- Large non-bank PSOs – 1st April 2024
- Medium non-bank PSOs – 1st April 2026
- Small non-bank PSOs – 1st April 2028

Our Take - Why is this Important?

Cyber security, including building cyber resilience is a critical aspect of any payment system. With the predominance of digital technologies in this space, it is imperative that PSOs focus a lot more on cyber security and build resilience. Therefore, this draft direction issued by RBI is a welcome step.

Considering the importance of cyber security in the current world, and especially in the payments space, it is important that RBI brings about the final direction quickly and, in a time-bound manner. While RBI is giving adequate time for medium and small non-bank PSOs to implement these best practices and directions, RBI may also consider making certain digital solutions available, which can be used by these organizations (as some of them may not have the technical wherewithal and capacity to implement these solutions on their own).

Also, it should be noted that cyber security is an ever-evolving segment and organizations need to update and upgrade themselves constantly. While these suggestions and directions are apt and a welcome step, however the same should be updated periodically. PSOs should take these as a base and may need to look at various additional aspects as per their requirements.



10 Mineral Security Partnership – India's Entry into Critical Minerals Group

India's inclusion is crucial in this partnership because a key aspect of New Delhi's growth strategy is a shift to electric vehicles along with indigenous electronics and semiconductor manufacturing. India and Australia have already signed the Critical Minerals Investment Partnership — a major milestone in building new supply chains underpinned by critical minerals processed in Australia that will help India's plans to lower emissions from its electricity network and become a global manufacturing hub, including for electric vehicles.

A key goal of this partnership is to reduce the dependence on China to secure critical minerals. The critical minerals that the MSP is likely to focus on include Cobalt, Nickel and Lithium which are used in manufacturing batteries of electric vehicles and wind turbines along with 17 'rare earth' minerals that are key components of semiconductors. Rare earth minerals are classified into light and heavy Rare Earth Elements (REEs). The former is more abundantly available while the latter are rarer in nature and consequently more expensive. Most countries are dependent on China for REEs not only because the country has developed a mineral processing infrastructure but also because China has acquired mines in Africa to source cobalt. It dominates roughly *60% of global RE production. Additionally, geopolitical uncertainties, unfavourable rising of prices, COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war have resulted in the supply chain disruptions across the globe for these critical minerals.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

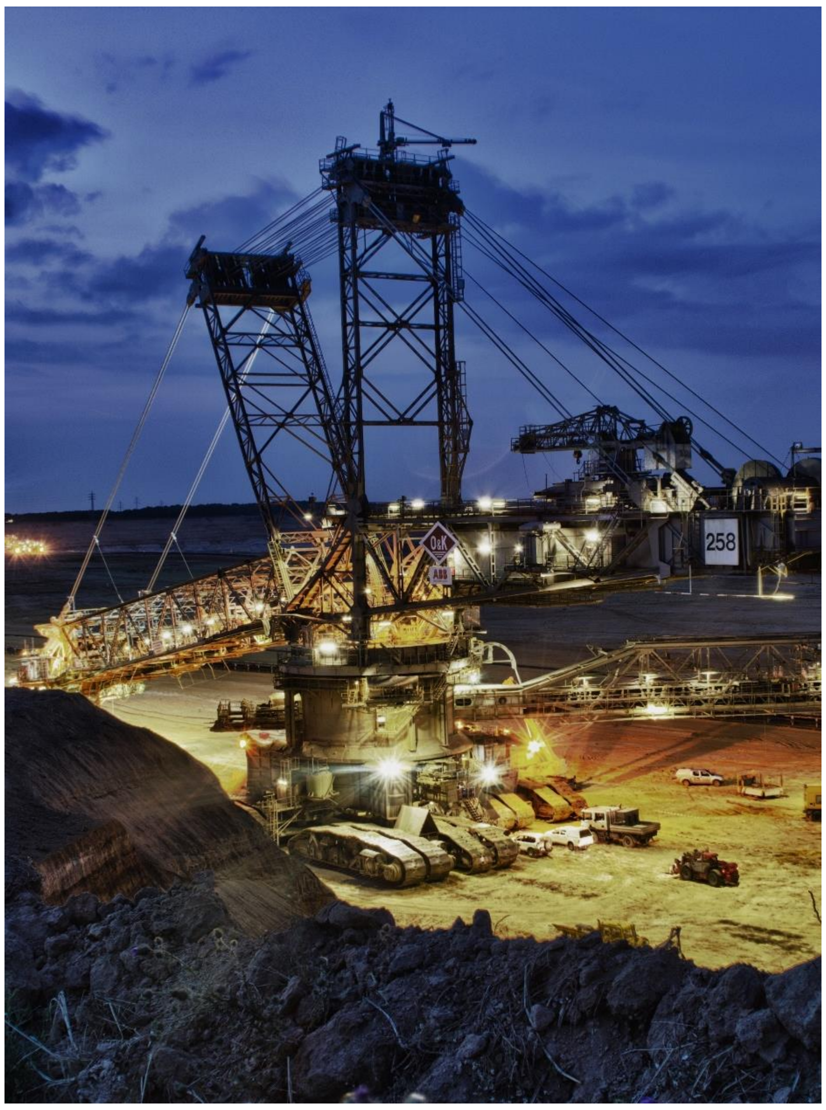
- With this more companies are now accredited for exploration in India, the challenge is in finding the minerals immediately because it may take up to a decade to start the mine production. India needs to double down on prospecting and exploration efforts to find critical minerals in India given its huge geological potential

- Even globally, many of the countries including Congo, Australia, Chile, Argentina end up exporting or historically exported these minerals to countries where processing or raw material manufacturing capabilities exist, and hence being part of this conversation is important.

- With India being the dominant voice of the global south, it's a huge opportunity to drive some of these discussions that developing countries face, talking about on the ground challenges and increasing collaboration with developed countries, who have the technology and financial resources.

- The year 2023 could be an inflection point for battery technology – With several potential improvements to the Li-ion technology, and alternatives to this combination in various stages of commercialization. This can help in India's ambitious shift towards e-vehicles and its associated battery requirements. The MSP has shortlisted several projects to collaborate in sharing of expertise, developing battery materials and jointly developing a minerals processing facility in South America.

- MSP and the critical mineral list could ensure India in ensuring self-reliance and addressing vulnerability in the supply chain of minerals. Getting into alliances like MSP, along with policy initiatives like critical minerals list is so crucial for India's energy security.



11 Empowering India's Maritime Sector

Sagar Samriddhi's Revolutionary Dredging Monitoring System

Sagar Samriddhi, an innovative online dredging monitoring system, was recently developed by National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways, and Coasts (NTCPWC) – the technical arm of the Ministry of Port, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW). This state-of-the-art technology aims to transform and empower the maritime sector by providing real-time monitoring and management of dredging activities in India's ports and waterways.

Sagar Samriddhi is a collaborative effort between the Indian government and leading technological experts in the field. The technology facilitates a wholesome approach to dredging as the system utilizes advanced sensors, satellite imagery, and data analytics to monitor dredging operations, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and environmental sustainability.

With the implementation of Sagar Samriddhi, stakeholders in the maritime industry, including port authorities, dredging companies, and regulatory bodies, will have access to accurate and up-to-date information on dredging activities. This will enable better decision-making, enhanced operational planning, and effective utilization of resources, leading to increased productivity and cost savings.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

The launch of Sagar Samriddhi is a significant step towards revolutionizing India's maritime sector. The introduction of this online dredging monitoring system addresses several critical challenges faced by the industry.

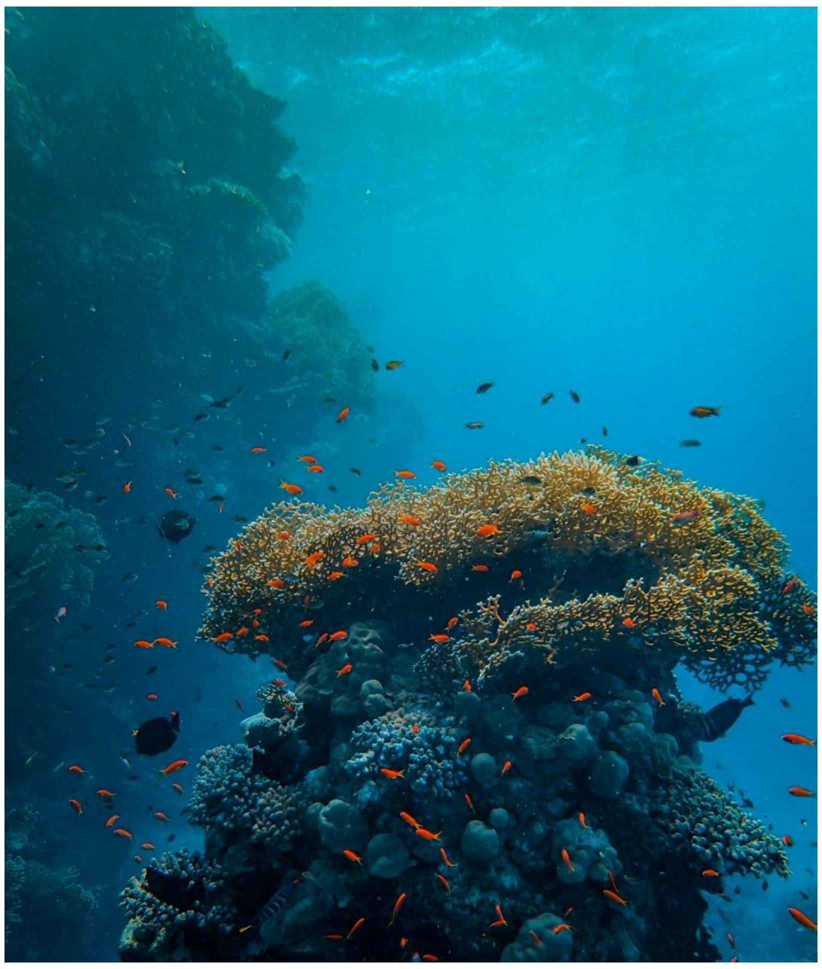
First and foremost, Sagar Samriddhi promotes transparency and accountability in dredging operations. By providing real-time data and insights, it reduces the scope for malpractices, unauthorized activities, and environmental damage. This aligns with the Indian government's commitment to promoting sustainable and responsible maritime practices.

Moreover, the system's ability to monitor and manage dredging activities in real-time enhances operational efficiency. It enables stakeholders to identify and resolve bottlenecks promptly, optimizing dredging schedules and reducing downtime. This streamlined approach translates into significant cost savings and improved overall productivity.

Additionally, Sagar Samriddhi contributes to the overall digital transformation of the maritime sector. By leveraging advanced technologies such as sensors, satellite imagery, and data analytics, the system sets a benchmark for leveraging data-driven insights in the industry. This digital revolution will undoubtedly pave the way for future innovations and advancements.

While Sagar Samriddhi holds tremendous potential, there may be challenges during its implementation. Some potential challenges include ensuring seamless integration with existing port infrastructure, data security, and stakeholder training. However, with a proactive approach and collaboration between the government, industry players, and technology providers, these challenges can be effectively addressed.

In conclusion, Sagar Samriddhi is a game-changer for India's maritime sector. It empowers stakeholders with real-time monitoring and management capabilities, promotes transparency and sustainability, and drives operational efficiency. By embracing this revolutionary online dredging monitoring system, India is taking a significant stride towards becoming a global leader in maritime technology and practices.



12 Sustainable Green Airports Mission

Transitioning Indian Airports towards a Greener Future

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched a publication in June titled 'Sustainable Green Airports Mission (SUGAM)' in the presence of Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel to highlight AAI's initiatives to contribute to India's carbon neutral goals and align AAI's efforts towards sustainability with Panchamrit Goals declared by Hon'ble Prime Minister at COP26.

SUGAM serves as a platform to track progress, encourage knowledge sharing, and seek cooperation for enhancing efficient and sustainable airport operation. The report highlights the roadmap devised by AAI to achieve the target of carbon neutrality for Indian Airports. AAI has categorized the report content into four types i.e., Airport Design and Infrastructure, Technology, Operations, Accreditation and Certification. Under these categories, AAI has undertaken initiatives such as adopting green buildings, adopting renewable energy technologies, installing energy-efficient HVAC systems, and replacing normal light fixtures with LED fixtures. AAI is also focusing on inducing operational efficiency by introducing performance-based navigation systems and collaborative decision-making that will augment the operational energy efficiency of Indian Airports.

As per the publication, AAI is already meeting 30% of its energy requirements through renewable sources and has a total installed solar capacity of 40 MW as of March 2022.

Policies need to be further defined for sustainable and green airport operations

While AAI is adopting green initiatives to optimise the existing process and reduce carbon emissions, there is a lack of clear policies and regulations to adopt green practices at Indian airports. For example, policies to adopt Electric Ground support equipment at Indian airports is not uniform. The policies should also focus on carbon pricing schemes and CO2-based costs for route configurations and charges for noise pollution.

Forming a committee to ensure effective policy creation and implementation for sustainability at airports

In order to ensure effective implementation of the initiatives and monitoring operational success, there is a need for a dedicated committee comprising of experts from various fields such as sustainability, Operations etc. who will create a detailed roadmap, define policy initiatives and coordinate with relevant ministries for implementation.

Case study: Netaji Subhash Chandra Airport, Kolkata

Kolkata airport, boasting a solar capacity of 17 MWp, generates around 22 MU of renewable energy each year, leading to the reduction of approximately 18,000 tCO2 emissions. This endeavour has become a notable achievement for the Airports Authority of India (AAI), as they consistently pursue the adoption of innovative technologies and approaches to transition towards clean energy and carbon neutrality.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

SUGAM will help airport operators pan-India create a roadmap for transition to greener energy

Although every airport has its unique set of challenges, the initiatives undertaken by AAI will bring about uniformity across all Indian airports in terms of adopting green practices and achieving carbon neutrality targets. The booklet will inform all stakeholders of the activities being undertaken by AAI, help adopt technology recommendations and operational best practices and seek cooperation wherever necessary.

PRIMUS RESEARCH

13 Green Credit Programme by MOEFCC

In July 2023, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change released the draft Green Credit Programme Implementation Rules. The aim is to implement a competitive market-based mechanism to promote the concept of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), which is envisaged as a mass grassroots movement that promotes a sustainable way of living by encouraging traditional practices of conservation and moderation.

Green Credits can be generated or acquired by practicing a host of environmentally conscious activities in sectors such as Air Pollution Reduction; Waste Management; Sustainable Agriculture; Water; Tree Plantation; Mangrove Conservation and Restoration; Sustainable Building and Infrastructure and Eco-mark based Green Credit. The credits can be availed by Individuals, Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs), Cooperatives, Forest & Agricultural Enterprises, Urban and Rural Local Bodies etc. Thus, the program aims to incentivize behavioural shift not just amongst individual/community members, but also encourage private sector entities and companies to fulfil their existing obligations under various legal environmental frameworks/treaties.

Main Features

Administration and Governance: The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education has been designated as the administrator of the programme whereas the governance will be vested with the Steering Committee, which will have representatives from ministries, concerned departments, domain experts and other stakeholders.

- The administrator will accredit eligible agencies to establish a Trading Platform for the exchange of green credit and to act as Green Credit Verifiers to verify and submit reports for grant of green credits as per the stipulated guidelines.
- Technical/Sectoral Committees will be constituted by the administrator for developing the methodology, reporting mechanism and verification processes for registration of green credit activities and grant of credit.

Standards Benchmarks: Dedicated thresholds and methodology will be developed for the issuance of Green Credits.

Green Credit Registry: Accredited agency shall maintain a digital database which contains information relevant to the issuance, transfer, holding, and acquisition of green credits by the relevant stakeholders, in addition to essential security protocols.

Knowledge and Data Platform: It will be developed for providing transparent information on the various activities, sectoral progress and best practices being undertaken under the programme.

Climate co-benefits: Activity generating Green Credits may also be eligible to get Carbon credits for the same activity.

Phased Implementation: The programme will be implemented in a phased and iterative manner, and it will focus on piloting key activities from selected sectors in the initial phase.

Our Take - Why is this Important?

The green credit programme is a significant step in encouraging behavioural change towards environmentally sustainable practices and development. It showcases India's commitment towards a net-zero future and promote activities that are instrumental in combating climate change beyond just carbon reduction. It is critical for steering individuals, communities and enterprises alike, towards mindful and calculated utilization of natural resources and doing their fair bit for preserving the environment.

However, some concerns and challenges need to be addressed for the successful implementation of these rules. It is feared by experts that entities may engage in superficial/token activities to acquire and trade the credits without making any substantial on-ground difference. Also, devising standard procedures for a diverse range of environmental activities that will be eligible for green credits is going to be a challenging task and there are concerns about how verification and rigorous monitoring can be done for the same.

PASSION

for providing solutions to help clients achieve their goals

RESPECT

for all and alternate viewpoints

INTEGRITY

of thoughts and actions

MASTERY

of our chosen subject to drive innovative and insightful solutions

US

representing the Primus collective, where each individual matters

STEWARDSHIP

for building a better tomorrow

About Primus Partners

Primus Partners has been set up to partner with clients in 'navigating' India, by experts with decades of experience in doing so for large global firms. Set up on the principle of 'Idea Realization', it brings to bear 'experience in action'. 'Idea Realization'— a unique approach to examine futuristic ideas required for the growth of an organization or a sector or geography, from the perspective of assured on ground implementability. Our core strength comes from our founding partners, who are goal-oriented, with extensive hands-on experience and subject-matter expertise, which is well recognized in the industry. Our core founders form a diverse cohort of leaders from both genders with experience across industries (Public Sector, Healthcare, Transport, Education, etc.), and with varied specialization (engineers, lawyers, tax professionals, management, etc.).

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