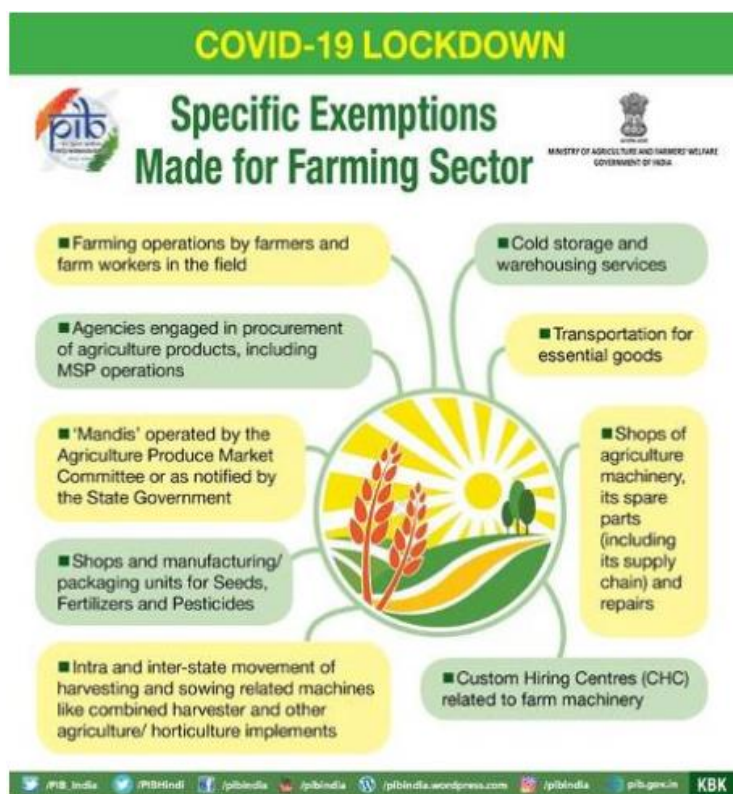


1. Exemptions to the farming community

Why in News?

- To ensure that there is no shortage of food grains in the country during the lockdown period, the Ministry has made certain exemptions to the Farming Community.



Highlights:

- The exemptions made for farming during the lockdown are:
- Farming operations by farmers and farm workers in the field;
- Agencies engaged in procurement of agriculture products, including MSP operations;
- 'Mandis' operated by the Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) or as notified by the State Government;
- Shops and manufacturing/packaging units for Seeds, Fertilizers and Pesticides;
- Intra and inter-state movement of harvesting and sowing related machines like combined harvester and other agriculture/horticulture implements;
- Cold storage and warehousing services;
- Transportation for Essential Goods;
- Shops of agriculture machinery, its spare parts (including its supply chain) and repairs;
- Custom Hiring Centres (CHC) related to farm machinery.

2. Anti-corruption Law

Why in News?

- Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has held that bribery and corruption in a deemed university can be tried under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

About:

- The SC has observed that the officials of a deemed university do not perform any less of a public duty than their counterparts in other universities.
- It has said that individuals, authorities connected to a deemed university come under the definition of ‘public servant’ and can be tried and punished under the anti-corruption law.

About Deemed University:

- This status is awarded in accordance with the Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956. Institutions that are ‘deemed-to-be-university’ enjoy academic status and privileges of a university.
- The institution under the Act has the same common public duty like a university to confer academic degrees, which are recognised in the society.
- An Institution of Higher Education, other than universities, working at a very high standard in a specific area of study, can be declared by the Central Government on the advice of the UGC as an Institution ‘deemed-to-be-university’.

About Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988:

- The Section 2(c)(xi) of the Prevention of Corruption Act states that a “public servant” includes “any person who is a vice-chancellor or member of any governing body, professor, reader, lecturer or any other teacher or employee, by whatever designation called, of any university.
- The main object of the Act is not only to prevent the social evil of bribery and corruption, but also to make the same applicable to individuals who might conventionally not be Considered Public Servants.

3. Raja Ravi Varma

Why in News?

- Recently, on 29th April is the birth anniversary of the famed Indian Painter Raja Ravi Varma is celebrated.

About Raja Ravi Varma:

- He has giving Indians their western, classical representations of Hindu gods and goddesses. He was born into an Aristocratic Family in Travancore (Kerala).
- At the age of 14, Varma was patronised by Ayilyam Thirunal, the then ruler of Travancore, and went on to receive training in watercolours from Ramaswamy Naidu, the royal painter.
- Apart from painting Hindu mythological figures, Varma also made portraits of many Indians as well as Europeans. He worked on both portrait and landscape paintings, and is considered among the first Indian artists to use oil paints.
- He mastered the reproduction of his work on the lithographic press– through which his paintings spread far and wide. Lithographic press is a method of printing based on the principle that oil and water do not mix.
- He set up his own printing press in Maharashtra – first in Ghatkopar and eventually in Lonavala in 1894, which helped the paintings travelled into the prayer and living rooms of working-class homes.
- His Famous works are Damayanti Talking to a Swan, Shakuntala Looking for Dushyanta, Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair, and Shantanu and Matsyagandha.
- He was awarded with the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal by the British colonial government in 1904. In 2013, a crater on the planet Mercury was named in his honour.

4. Electrostatic Disinfection Technology

Why in News?

- Electrostatic Disinfection Technology transferred for commercialization.

Highlights:

- CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO), Chandigarh, has designed and developed an innovative technology for effective disinfection and sanitization to fight the Coronavirus Pandemic.
- CSIR-CSIO has transferred this technology to a Nagpur-based company, Rite Water Solutions Pvt. Ltd., for commercialization and large-scale production.
- This technology has been found very efficient and effective to stop the spread of coronavirus and pathogens.

- Electrostatic Disinfection Machine is developed based on the electrostatic principle. It produces uniform and fine spray droplets of disinfectants in the size range of 10-20 micrometre to kill microorganisms and viruses.
- Due to the small size of droplets, the surface area of spray droplets increases thereby enhancing the interaction with harmful microorganisms and coronavirus.
- The machine uses very less disinfection material as compared to conventional methods, which helps to save natural resources with negligible increase of chemical waste in the Environment.

5. National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)

Why in News?

- The Task Force on National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) submitted its Final Report on NIP for FY 2019-25 to the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs.

Highlights:

- NIP is a first-of-its-kind, whole-of-government exercise to provide world-class infrastructure across the country, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- It aims to improve project preparation, attract investments (both domestic and foreign) into infrastructure, and will be crucial for achieving the target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by FY 2025.
- The NIP has been made on a best effort basis by aggregating the information provided by various stakeholders including line ministries, departments, state governments and private sector across infrastructure sub-sectors identified in the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure.
- To draw up the NIP, a bottom-up approach was adopted wherein all projects (Greenfield or Brownfield, Under Implementation or Under Conceptualisation) costing greater than Rs 100 crore per project were sought to be captured.
- The final report identifies and highlights recent infrastructure trends in India as well as global in all sectors of infrastructure
- It also captures sector progress, deficits and challenges. In addition to update existing sectoral policies, the Final Report also identifies and highlights a set of reforms to scale up and propel infrastructure investments in various sectors throughout the country.

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- The report also has suggested ways and means of financing the NIP through deepening Corporate Bond markets, including those of Municipal Bonds, setting up Development Financial Institutions for infrastructure sector, accelerating Monetisation of Infrastructure Assets, Land monetisation, etc.
 - The Task Force has recommended that three Committees be set up:
 - ✓ A Committee to monitor NIP progress and eliminate delays;
 - ✓ A Steering Committee in each infrastructure ministry level for following up Implementation; and
 - ✓ A Steering Committee in DEA for raising financial resources for the NIP.
 - The NIP project database would be hosted on the India Investment Grid (IIG) to provide visibility to the NIP and help in its financing with prospective investors; domestic and foreign, able to access updated project level information.
 - Each line Ministry/State would further add new projects and update their respective project details at pre-defined time intervals so that updated data is available to prospective Investors.

