

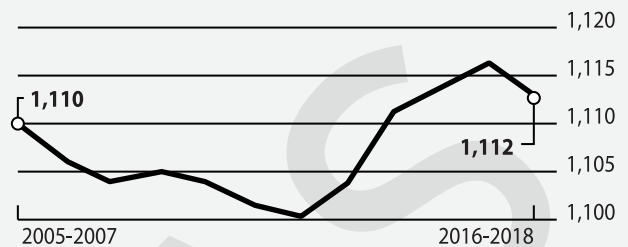
NEWS TODAY

INDIA'S SEX RATIO AT BIRTH (SRB) IMPROVES AFTER FOUR CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF DECLINE

- As per **Sample Registration System (SRS)**, in 2016-2018 period, 1,112 male kids were born per 1,000 female births in India. This was 1,116 during 2015-2017.
 - SRS is **demographic survey** for providing annual estimates of various indicators (birth rate etc.) conducted by **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner**.
 - While **Kerala and West Bengal** have shown improvement, Bihar (mostly rural) and Delhi (almost fully urban) have shown deterioration in SRB.
- This is **better than China** (1,126) and Vietnam (1,118).
- However, this is worse than **naturally occurring ratio between 1,030 and 1,050**, and global average of 1,068.
 - Human births are naturally male biased at 51.3% of total births** during any period, due to more gestational risks to female foetuses.
- Reasons for poor SRB:** Meta-preference for sons, Declining fertility rates linked to driving up the rate of sex-selective abortions.
- Steps taken:**
 - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**, including nation-wide awareness and advocacy campaign.
 - Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (**PCPNDT**) Act 1994.
 - Sukanya Samridhi Account:** small deposit scheme for the girl child with a higher interest.

POSITIVE CHANGE, ALBEIT SLOW

Male births per 1,000 female births



TIME TO END IMPORT RELIANCE FOR SOLAR EQUIPMENT: PRIME MINISTER (PM)

- While dedicating **750 MW Rewa Solar Project (Asia's largest)** to Nation, PM called on domestic manufacturers to increase production of solar cells and modules for self-sufficiency.
 - Developed by Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited, it is **first solar project** in country to break **grid parity barrier**.
 - Grid parity happens when **alternative energies – like solar – costs less than, or equal to, the electricity from conventional energy** forms like coal.
- India has an annual solar cell manufacturing capacity of about 4 GW** while the average annual demand is 10-15 GW.
- China accounted for around 77.5% of total imports of solar cells and modules to India between 2019-2020.
- In 2019-20, **India's exports of solar products nearly doubled compared** to previous year.
 - While this number is small compared to imports, the **trend is significant** as with government help this industry can take on China in overseas market.
- Initiatives supporting Domestic Solar PV Manufacturing-** Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme for electronic manufacturing facility, Setting up of **Solar PV Manufacturing Capacities in India linked with assured offtake** in form of PPAs for Solar Power Plant etc.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION AND PROMOTION OF FARMER PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS (FPOs) RELEASED

- Total 10,000 FPOs are to be formed till 2023-24.
- FPO is a legal entity** (company, a cooperative society etc.) formed by farmers, for the purpose of leveraging collectives through economies of scale in production and marketing of agricultural and allied sector.
- Objective**
 - Enhance productivity** through efficient, cost-effective and sustainable resource use.
 - Provide **handholding and support to new FPOs** up to 5 years.
 - Provide effective **capacity building** to develop agriculture entrepreneurship skills.

Key guidelines:

- Eligibility:** FPO with a **minimum farmer-members' size of 300** in plains, while **100 in North-Eastern and Hilly areas** (including such other areas of UTs).
- Formation and promotion of FPO is based on **Produce Cluster Area (PCA)**. PCA is a geographical area where produce of almost similar nature is grown.
- National Project Management Agency** will be set up for providing overall project guidance, monitoring etc.
- Implementing Agencies:** Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium, National Cooperative Development Corporation and NABARD. Also, State/UT can have its own implementing agency.
- Cluster- Based Business Organizations** at the State/Cluster level to form and promote FPOs.
- Provision for Equity Grant from government** to strengthen financial base of FPOs.

EXPERT PANEL CALLS FOR OVERHAUL OF FACTORY SAFETY NORMS

- High Powered Committee which probed the styrene gas leak at the LG Polymers plant in Visakhapatnam gave **following recommendations:**
 - Setting up of **factory safety boards at the Central and State levels** which will bring under its ambit each and every factory safety law.
 - Currently these laws such as Factories Act, Indian Boiler Act, Explosives Act, Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, etc. come under the ambit of different departments and ministries.
 - Central factory safety board** should set major standards with different verticals for different kinds of factories.
 - A **special investigation wing** to probe all major industrial accidents.
 - Appoint competent auditors** to carry out annual safety and environmental audits.
 - Central Pollution Control Board** could be notified as **competent authority** under Environment (Protection) Act and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification to ensure compliance after environment clearance is given.
 - Currently, there is **no monitoring and regulatory mechanism** to ensure compliance after environmental clearance is given.
- Suggestions become significant as there have been **at least 30 industrial accidents, killing at least 75 people** after the resumption of work post COVID-19 lockdown.

TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION, FORECASTING AND ASSESSMENT COUNCIL (TIFAC) RELEASES WHITE PAPER ON “FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS FOR ‘MAKE IN INDIA’: POST COVID 19”

- Paper captures **sector-specific strengths, market trends, and opportunities in five sectors**, critical for economic recovery in post COVID-19 period to make India atmanirbhar.
- These are Medical and Health; Machinery & Manufacturing; Information and Communication Technology; Electronics and Agriculture & Food Processing.
- Paper **identifies policy options** primarily for Public health system, MSME sector, Global relations: FDI, recalibrated trade alignments, new-age technologies, etc.
- **Key recommendations:**
 - **Technology clusters in champion segments across India** be established for homogenous job creation
 - Promote import substitution, indigenous innovation.
 - **Evolve technology platforms in solar technologies**, e -vehicle, and innovative agri-processing, in association with Israel, Japan and Germany.
 - **Affordable Technologies development** for rural areas
 - Special **focus on high value medical products/technologies that are currently majorly imported** and facilitation of clinical trials and regulatory compliance.
 - Creating **Technology Start-up Exchange**,
 - Identifying, supporting, and piloting **ten blockbuster technologies** of mass impact etc.

POST COVID-19 WORLD

- Shift towards localisation
- 'Digital' gets a real push
- 'Cash is king' for businesses
- Move towards variable cost models
- Building sensing and control tower capabilities
- Supply chain resilience is key
- Building agility

About TIFAC: Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) is an **autonomous organization under Department of Science & Technology** to look ahead in technology domain, assess the technology trajectories, and support innovation.

ALSO IN NEWS

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| Draft Aids to Navigation Bill 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Shipping has issued this draft Bill for public suggestions. • Draft bill is proposed to replace the Lighthouse Act, 1927 to incorporate best global practices, technological developments and India's International obligations in the field of Aids to Marine Navigation. • This is part of the initiative adopted by the Ministry to replace archaic colonial laws and replacing them with contemporary and modern needs of the maritime industry. |
| Aatamanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched ASEEM portal and App to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities. • It is Artificial Intelligence-based platform which will map details of workers based on regions and local industry demands and will bridge demand-supply gap of skilled workforce across sectors. • It is developed and managed by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in collaboration with Bengaluru-based company Betterplace. |
| Fish Cryobanks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has announced setting up of fish cryobanks. This would be the first time in the world when "Fish Cryobank" will be established. • It will facilitate all time availability of fish sperms of desired species to fish farmers. • This will enhance fish production and productivity and thereby increasing prosperity among fish farmers. • National Fisheries Development Board in collaboration with National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources will take up the work to establish Fish Cryobanks. |
| Going Online As Leaders (GOAL) Project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar for sensitization on GOAL Project was organised by Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA). • GOAL is a digital skilling and mentorship initiative that will engage renowned leaders and experts in their respective domains—from business, education, health, politics, arts and entrepreneurship among others, to personally mentor scheduled tribe youths across India. • The core areas of mentorship program are Digital Literacy, life Skills and Leadership & Entrepreneurship. • GOAL project was launched by MoTA in partnership with Facebook. |
| Mongolian Kanjur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Culture has taken up project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM). • Mongolian Kanjur is Buddhist canonical text which is held in high esteem by Mongolian Buddhists and they worship Kanjur at temples. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It is a source of providing a cultural identity to Mongolia. • NMM under Ministry of Tourism and Culture has mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in manuscripts. |
| Hagia Sophia, Turkey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Hagia Sophia, an iconic Istanbul museum has been converted into mosque. • It was originally built as the cathedral for the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire in the sixth century, and became a mosque in 1453 with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. • In 1934 it became a museum and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. |
| Bhashan char, Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an uninhabited island in Bay of Bengal where the Bangladesh has made shelter houses for one lakh Rohingya refugees. • It falls in an ecologically fragile area prone to floods, erosion and cyclones. • Recently, Bangladesh has refused to move the Rohingyas settled on the Bhashan char island amid Corona pandemic. |

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