

# NEWS TODAY

## ASSAM FLOODS AFFECT OVER 16 LAKH PEOPLE, DEATH TOLL CLIMBS TO 34

• Assam sees **floods every year**. Last year floods affected more than 50 lakh.

• **Key contributory factors for floods in Assam:**

- > **Incessant rainfall** during monsoon
- > **Brahmaputra's dynamic and unstable nature:** It's among **world's top five rivers** in terms of discharge & sediment.
  - ⇒ It brings sediments and deposits it as river **slows down in Assam plains**.
  - ⇒ River's channels prove inadequate amid this siltation, leading to floods.

- > The region is **earthquake-prone**. Following earthquake of 1950, level of Brahmaputra rose by two metres in eastern Assam.
- > **Manmade factors:** deforestation, population growth in catchment areas leading to higher sedimentation.

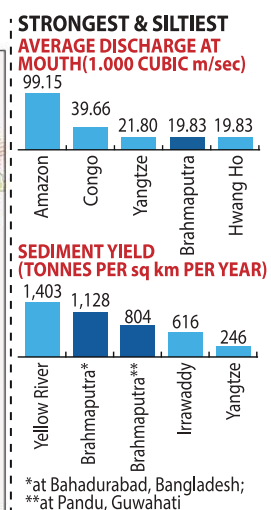
• **Till date only immediate and short-term measures are implemented** and no long-term measures have been implemented so far.

- > **Measures adopted:** Construction of Embankments and Flood walls, Anti erosion and town protection works, Flood forecasting and warning, River channelization with pro siltation device etc.

> **Long term measures needed**

- ⇒ **Basin-wide approach and "integrated basin management"** bringing in all the basin-sharing countries on board.
- ⇒ **Flood-plain zoning:** Dividing area depending on vulnerability and banning certain activities on it.
- ⇒ Brahmaputra Board had suggested **dams and reservoirs be built** to mitigate floods.

### AREA OF INFLUENCE



## INDIA CAN'T TRY ITALIAN MARINES, WILL FACE PROBE AT HOME: PCA

• Case (known as Enrica Lexie) dates back to 2015, when Italy filed case against India for detaining its two marines, accused of killing Indian fishermen.

- > Italy took the case to **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)**, independent judicial body under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
  - ⇒ UNCLOS is an international convention which stipulates a framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces.
  - ⇒ UNCLOS sections oceans & splitting marine areas into five main zones. (refer infographics)
- > ITLOS had later referred the matter to **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**.
  - ⇒ Established in 1899, **PCA is an intergovernmental organization** to facilitate arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution between states.

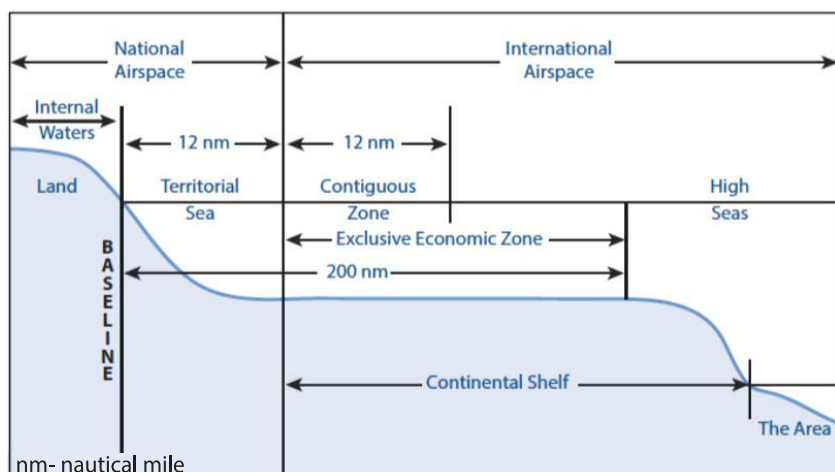
• India had claimed that the **marines had violated the freedom of navigation rights** under UNCLOS and should pay compensation.

- > India held that the incident occurred **within its contiguous zone**, and comes under its jurisdiction.

• Now, PCA has unanimously held that

- > **India is entitled to claim compensation** from Italy.
- > However, Italian Marines are **entitled to immunity** and India is not allowed to exercise its jurisdiction over the Marines.

### LEGAL BOUNDARIES OF THE OCEANS AND AIRSPACE



nm- nautical mile

## FISCAL DEFICIT (FD) TOUCHES 58% OF BUDGET ESTIMATE AT MAY-END

• FD denotes **difference between total revenue and total expenditure** of the government in particular time period.

- > FD situation occurs when the **government's expenditure exceeds its income**.
- > It is an **indication of the total borrowings needed** by the government.

• FD during **April-May 2020 is 58.6% of Budget estimate** compared to 52% in 2019-20 & 55.3% in 2018-19. This might indicate higher FD this year.

• **Impact of High FD:** Crowding out of private borrowing, manipulate capital structures and interest rates, decreasing net exports etc.

• **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM Act), 2003** establishes financial discipline to reduce FD and requires government to limit FD to 3% of the GDP by 31 March 2021.

- > A deficit is usually **financed through borrowing from either RBI or raising money from capital markets** by issuing different instruments like treasury bills and bonds.

> **States have their own FRBM Acts**, which sets 3% of Gross State Domestic Product cap on their annual budget deficits.

- ⇒ Recently, Govt allowed states to borrow extra by amending their FRBM laws.

# EXTENDED DISTRIBUTION OF GRAINS UNDER PMGKAY TO EASE FCI'S STORAGE BURDEN

- Recently, PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) were extended by five more months.
  - > Scheme provides **5 kg free wheat/rice per month along with 1 kg free whole chana** to each family per month through National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- Due to the scheme, **total allocation under NFSA** (Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Priority Household, Mid-Day Meal Scheme etc) **is set to increase sharply**.
- This additional allocation might help **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** to utilise large stock carried forward from last year and **easing the shortage of storage space for FCI**.
  - > **Usually, FCI faces shortage space** during kharif and it **ends up storing wheat in CAP (covered and plinth) storages** where the risk of spoilage is high.
- FCI is responsible for the procurement & storage of food grains** to meet the requirements of Public Distribution System and Other Welfare Schemes undertaken by Centre.
  - > Total storage capacity with FCI is about 41.2 mt. If the capacity of 35 mt with State agencies is added, the **total storage space available is 75 mt**.
- Earlier Shanta Kumar committee** had recommended measures to address storage issues of FCI like outsource stocking operations to various agencies, adopting Silo bag technology etc.
- This is expected to make **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** utilise large stock carried forward from last year which will **ease shortage of storage space for FCI**.

## Demand vs supply of grains (in lakh tonnes)

### Allocation of food grains in 2020-21

A. TPDS (NFSA allocation)	587.32
B. Other welfare schemes	1.64
C. Additional allocation under PMGKAY (5 kg/month for 5 months, for 81 crore people for Apr-Nov)	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>908.96</b>
<b>Procurement</b>	
Wheat	389.3
Rice*	433.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>822.5</b>

Source: Department of Food and Public distribution

\*Author's assumptions based on last three years' average

## ALSO IN NEWS

<b>Postal ballot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election Commission (EC) allowed those above <b>65 years of age or those affected by or suspected to have covid-19 to use the postal ballot</b> facility to cast their votes.</li> <li><b>Postal voting</b> is a type of voting in elections whereby Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot Papers (ETPB) are distributed to electors and returned by post.</li> <li><b>Representation of the People Act, 1951</b> provides for any person to be given the postal facility by the EC in consultation with the government</li> </ul>
<b>NAFTA is now the USMCA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2018, the United States, Mexico, and Canada renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The new deal is now called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>NAFTA was created in 1994</b> to generate economic growth and helping to raise the standard of living for the people of all three member countries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>USMCA enters into force on 1st July 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Chabahar port to be integrated with Free Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iran approved the <b>integration of the port with the Free Zone operating in the area</b> which is expected to <b>boost cargo through Chabahar port</b>.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Free zone is an area within which goods may be received and stored without payment of duty.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Chabahar port is <b>located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on Iran's southern coast</b>.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; It was developed by India as part of <b>tripartite agreement</b> signed by India, Afghanistan, and Iran. It <b>commenced operations since December 2018</b>.</li> <li>&gt; It <b>helps India to bypass Pakistan</b> to access Central Asia, Afghanistan.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved deals worth Rs. 38,900 crore</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deal provides for <b>capital acquisition of various platforms and equipment</b> required by the Indian Armed Forces.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Deals include <b>procurement and upgradation of MiG-29s</b>, acquirement of Su-30 MKI aircraft, <b>Pinaka ammunition, Long Range Land Attack Missile Systems</b> etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>DAC, <b>headed by Defence Minister, is highest decision-making</b> body for <b>deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions</b> for three services and Indian Coast Guard.</li> </ul>
<b>Drug Discovery Hackathon 2020 (DDH2020)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a <b>joint initiative of Ministry of Human Resource Development, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)</b> for supporting drug discovery process.</li> <li>Objective is to <b>identify drug candidates against SARS-CoV-2 by in-silico (computational) drug discovery</b> through the hackathon and <b>follow up by chemical synthesis and biological testing</b>.</li> <li>Competition is <b>open to all Indian students and researchers from India and abroad</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Health &amp; Family Welfare has identified list of critical medical equipments for COVID-19 management and has requested NPPA to ensure availability of the same in the country.</li> <li>NPPA is as an <b>independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability</b> and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.</li> <li>It also <b>implements and enforces the provisions of the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO)</b>.</li> <li>It is an <b>attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals &amp; Fertilizers</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>India-Bangladesh agreement for Joint Venture Company (JVC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement was signed between <b>subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation</b> and a LPG company of Bangladesh.</li> <li>The 50:50 JVC will help <b>reduce the cost of import of LPG</b> for Bangladesh.</li> </ul>

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DELHI



LUCKNOW



JAIPUR



HYDERABAD



PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH