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National Technical Textiles Mission

- Union Ministry for Finance & Corporate Affairs has announced a proposal to set up a National Technical Textiles Mission.
- It will have a four-year implementation period from 2020-21 to 2023-24 at an estimated outlay of Rs. 1480 crore to position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles.
- Technical textiles are material and products manufactured primarily for their technical properties and functional requirements rather than for aesthetic characteristics.
- The scope of use of technical textiles encompasses a wide range of applications such as agro-textiles, medical textiles, geo-textiles, protection-textiles, industrial-textiles, sports-textiles and many other usages.
- Use of technical textiles have benefits of increased productivity in agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture fields, better protection of military, para-military, police and security forces, stronger and sturdier transportation infrastructure for highways, railways, ports and airports and in improving hygiene and healthcare of general public.
- In India, technical textiles hold immense growth opportunities both for the industry as well as across various applications.

Commonwealth Nations

- The Commonwealth of Nations is a political association of 54 member states, mostly former territories of the British Empire.
- The chief institutions of the organization are the Commonwealth Secretariat, which focuses on intergovernmental aspects, and the Commonwealth Foundation, which focuses on non-governmental relations between member states.
- The Commonwealth dates back to the first half of the 20th century with the decolonization of the British Empire through increased self-governance of its territories.
- The current Commonwealth of Nations was formally constituted by the

London Declaration in 1949, which modernized the community and established the member states as "free and equal".

- Member states have no legal obligations to one another, but are connected through their use of the English language and historical ties.
- The Maldives recently re-joined the Commonwealth; 3 years after the nation quit the association amid mounting criticism of its human rights record then.
- India is a member of Common Wealth Countries

IORA

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is a dynamic inter-governmental organization.
- It is aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region.
- It has 22 Member States and 10 Dialogue Partners.
- IORA's apex body is the Council of Foreign Ministers (COM) which meets annually.
- IORA remains committed to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation through a consensus based evolutionary and non-intrusive approach in the rapid changing environment faced by the region.
- India is a member of IORA

CRZ Regime

- Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the 2019 Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms, replacing the CRZ norms of 2011.
- The CRZ was issued under of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, it aims to promote sustainable development based on scientific principles.
- **Two separate categories for CRZ-III (Rural) areas:**
- **CRZ-III A** - The A category of CRZ-III areas are densely populated rural areas with a population density of 2161 per square kilometre as per 2011 Census.
- Such areas have a No Development Zone (NDZ) of 50 meters from the High Tide Line (HTL) as against 200 meters from the High Tide Line stipulated in the CRZ Notification, 2011.
- **CRZ-III B** – The B category of CRZ-III rural areas have population density of below 2161 per square kilometer as per 2011 Census.
- Such areas have a No Development Zone of 200 meters from the HTL.
- **Floor Space Index Norms eased -** As per CRZ, 2011 Notification, the

Floor Space Index (FSI) or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) had been frozen.

- As per the latest notification, the government has decided to de-freeze the Floor Space Index and permit FSI for construction projects.
- **Tourism infrastructure permitted in coastal areas** - The new norms permit temporary tourism facilities such as shacks, toilet blocks, change rooms, drinking water facilities, etc. in Beaches.
- **Streamlining of CRZ Clearances** - The procedure for CRZ clearances has been streamlined.
- Now, the only such projects which are located in the CRZ-I (Ecologically Sensitive Areas) and CRZ IV (area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 Nautical Miles seaward) will be dealt with for CRZ clearance by the Ministry.
- The powers for clearances with respect to CRZ-II and III have been delegated at the State level.
- **No Development Zone of 20 meters for all Islands -** For islands close to the main land coast and for all Backwater Islands in the main land, No Development Zone of 20 meters has been stipulated in wake of space limitations and unique geography of such regions.
- **Pollution abatement -** To address pollution in Coastal areas, the treatment facilities have been made permissible in CRZ-I B area subject to necessary safeguards.
- **Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA) -** Sundarban region of West Bengal and other ecologically sensitive areas identified as under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 such as Gulf of Khambat and Gulf of Kutchh in Gujarat, Achra-Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, Karwar and Coondapur in Karnataka, Vembanad in Kerala, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu, Bhaitarkanika in Odisha and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh are treated as Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas.
- These Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas will be managed with the involvement of coastal communities including fisher folk.

CRZ 2011 and Kerala

- CRZ 2011 notification, which made special provisions for Kerala considering the “unique coastal systems of backwaters and backwaters islands along with the space limitation in the coastal stretches of the State of Kerala,” that the islands were identified.
- Within the 50 metre CRZ area of these islands, only the repair and reconstruction of existing dwelling units of local communities will be permitted.
- Beyond the 50 metre limit, the local communities could construct new

dwelling units with the permission of the local body, said the notification.
- However, the CRZ area of these islands has been reduced to 20 meters in the subsequent CRZ notification issued in 2019, allowing more land for construction towards the water body.

Paraquat Poisoning

- The VIMSAR, a major public healthcare center for western Odisha and parts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, has many deaths cases of farmers, since September 2017.
- The reason behind these deaths is the consumption of Paraquat — a herbicide used in agricultural fields.
- Paraquat is a toxic chemical that is widely used as an herbicide (plant killer), primarily for weed and grass control.
- "Paraquat consumption leads to pulmonary fibrosis and patients find difficulty in respiration, similarly kidney failures occur.
- Even if a person survives, he will not be fully fit as pulmonary fibrosis worsens with the passage of time and Paraquat does not have antidote.
- The vast majority of the population in western Odisha and its bordering districts in Chhattisgarh are dependent on agriculture. Crop failures and family disturbances often drive people to look for poison to commit suicide and Paraquat, which is easily available at homes as well as in neighbourhood shops, becomes an "obvious" choice.
- There have also been cases of people becoming accidental victims when they absorb Paraquat while sprinkling it in agricultural fields.

Tyler Prize 2020

- Established in 1973 by the late John and Alice Tyler, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is one of the first international premier environmental awards.
- This global environmental prize recognizes individuals who have contributed in an outstanding manner to the scientific knowledge and public leadership to preserve and enhance the environment of the world.
- Recipients encompass the spectrum of environmental concerns, including environmental policy, health, air and water pollution, ecosystem disruption and loss of biodiversity, and energy resources.

- The Tyler Prize 2020 is honored to recognize two remarkable individuals, both pioneers in illuminating and quantifying the economic value of our natural environment.

- Pavan Sukhdev, published The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) report in 2008 as an initiative the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- TEEB has since become a leading global initiative focused on “making nature’s values visible”.
- For the first time, this initiative quantified the economic value of ‘natural capital’ and how moving towards a green economy could be a source of new employment and a means to alleviate poverty.
- Sukhdev will be sharing the award with Gretchen C Daily, director of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University and co-founder of Natural Capital (NatCap).

Project (NatCap)

- Its stated mission is “pioneer the science, technology and partnerships that enable informed decisions for people and nature to thrive.”
- Daily’s NatCap is a leading global organization providing policy makers with information on the services provided by natural ecosystems.
- The organization enables governments to make the right policies directed towards conservation of nature and its value to human civilizations.
- The innovative software ‘InVEST’ created by NatCap assesses risks and costs associated with loss of biodiversity and estimates the return-on-investment in nature, under future scenarios.

NAFTA

- The North American Free Trade Agreement is an agreement signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, creating a trilateral trade bloc in North America.
- The agreement came into force on January 1, 1994, and superseded the 1988 Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Canada
- Recently USA has brought in changes to the NAFTA.

U.S.M.C.A.

- The Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada is a free trade agreement between Canada, Mexico, and the United States that has been ratified by each country except Canada.

Source: PIB, New York Times, the Hindu

