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16 November 2018**Daily News Pedia****World Customs Organization**

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. The WCO was established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.

The WCO maintains the international Harmonized System (HS) goods nomenclature, and administers the technical aspects of the WTO Agreements on Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin. The WCO is noted for its work in areas covering combating counterfeiting in support of IPR, drugs enforcement, illegal weapons trading, integrity promotion, and delivering sustainable capacity building to assist with customs reforms and modernization.

In order to achieve its objectives, the WCO has adopted a number of customs instruments, including:

- International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS Convention) is used as the basis for customs tariffs and for the compilation of international trade statistics.
- International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs procedures (revised Kyoto Convention or RKC) promotes trade facilitation and effective controls through its legal provisions that detail the application of simple yet efficient procedures and also contains new and obligatory rules for its application.
- Arusha Declaration on Customs Integrity adopted in 1993 and revised in 2003 is a non-binding instrument which provides a number of basic principles to promote integrity and combat corruption within customs administrations.
- Columbus Program is a customs capacity building program works to promote customs modernization and implementation of their standards to secure and facilitate world trade.

Source: The Hindu.

Himalayan State Regional Council

NITI Aayog has constituted the 'Himalayan State Regional Council' to ensure sustainable development of the Indian Himalayan region. Recognizing the uniqueness of the Himalayas and the challenges for sustainable development, Five Working Groups were constituted by NITI Aayog on June 2, 2017.

The Council has been constituted to review and implement identified action points based on the Reports of five Working Groups, which were established along thematic areas to prepare a roadmap for action.

These Working Groups were tasked with preparing a roadmap for action across five thematic areas namely:

- Inventory and Revival of Springs in Himalayas for Water Security,
- Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region,
- Shifting Cultivation: Towards Transformation Approach,
- Strengthening Skill & Entrepreneurship (E&S) Landscape in Himalayas, and
- Data/Information for Informed Decision Making

The five thematic reports were released by the NITI Aayog in August, 2018 and framed the action points for the Terms of Reference of the Council constituted. *The HSRC will be the nodal agency for the Sustainable development in the Himalayan Region which consists of the twelve States and some selected districts (includes West Bengal and Assam as well).*

Source: PIB.

NITI Aayog organizes South Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure

NITI Aayog partnered with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to host a South Asian regional conference.

The Conference aims to review overall issues and assess the sustainability of PPPs and urban finance in South Asia, specifically India, while broadening the knowledge base and engaging on international best practices. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been one such option that enables governments to optimally share the risks associated with a project's life cycle.

The conference will emphasize the need to ensure adequate return on investments in infrastructure through properly structured Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) and de-risking of projects.

Source: PIB.

2nd Mega Food Park in Maharashtra

Union Minister for Food Processing Industries has inaugurated the second Mega Food Park in Maharashtra. The Paithan Mega Food Park has been set up in 102 acre of land at a cost of Rs. 124.52 crore.

A 3rd Mega Food Park has been sanctioned by the Ministry in Maharashtra and is under implementation in Wardha District while the first Park was inaugurated on 1st of March 2018 in Satara district.

Benefits of Mega Food Park: The Mega Food Park will leverage an additional investment of about Rs. 250 crore in 25-30 food processing units in the park and would eventually lead to a turnover of about Rs. 450-500 crore annually. The Park will also provide direct and indirect employment to 5,000 persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers in the CPC and PPC catchment areas. The modern infrastructure for food processing created at Park will benefit the farmers, growers, processors and consumers of Maharashtra and adjoining areas immensely and prove to be a big boost to the growth of the food processing sector in the State of Maharashtra.

Source: PIB.

'Cooperatives to Cooperative Trade' partnership in NEDAC

The general assembly of 22 prominent cooperative organizations from eight countries has decided to focus on C2C and capacity development to meet challenges of climate change as transformative cooperatives.

Its aim would be to bring about an increase in farmers income and raise their economic standard by bringing cooperative trade in the mainstream and enhance cooperative professionalism.

NEDAC was set up in 1991 by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). NEDAC is a unique organization encompassing mix of Government and non Government organizations created by FAO for synergizing policies and programmes of government and cooperative institutions at country level. NEDAC sensitizes Governments in the region on the role of agricultural cooperatives in promoting agricultural and rural development to ensure rural food and livelihood security for millions of people in Asia and Pacific.

Source: PIB.

Editorial

To read

The impact of World War I on India

The war linked India to global events in profound ways with far-reaching consequences. On the morning of 26 September, 1914, the Castilia and the Mongara sailed into Marseilles. On board the British India Company ships was the Lahore Division of the British India Corps. An article in The Times, published on 2 October that year, described the scene as the units disembarked and marched up the boulevards leading away from the port amid gathered crowds: "Women presented the troops with cigarette and fruits and girls presented flowers and pinned them to tunics and turbans. The enthusiasm reached fever heat when the Ghurkhas struck up the 'Marseillaise'... Many of the younger natives leapt... in the air waving the Union Jack and Tricolour."

The French had reason to be enthusiastic. When the Lahore Division and the Meerut Division entered World War I, they were the first Indian soldiers ever to take part in a war in Europe. By the time they sailed out from Marseilles 14 months later, they and their compatriots—138,608 Indians in all—had helped blunt Germany's Schlieffen Plan. Formulated by German Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen in 1905-06, the Plan envisaged a short war—a quick, decisive invasion and defeat of France via Belgium, forestalling the attritional war that would allow the superior strength of the probable Allied powers to be deployed. When hostilities kicked off, the British Expeditionary Force in France was a small, if seasoned, fighting force. Reinforcing it was essential; thus the deployment of the two Indian divisions. With the 100th anniversary of the Armistice last Sunday, and the inauguration of monuments to Indian soldiers in France, it is a contribution worth remembering.

The broader impact of the war on India suffers from a similar lack of attention, save perhaps for the political consequences—the surge of nationalism and rise of mass civil disobedience when the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms' failed to deliver on the expectation of home rule that had led to popular support for the British war effort. For instance, what of the army that had fought on the Western Front, and in East Africa, Mesopotamia and the Dardanelles campaign? Used as a border pacification and defence force in peacetime, it was not structured for the kind of

warfighting it had to endure. Its equipment was a generation old as a matter of policy, as David Olusoga has pointed out in *The World's War: Forgotten Soldiers of Empire*. Poor strategic planning by the British didn't help. The slaughter was immense—whether in France or during the disastrous attempt to push beyond Basra to Baghdad. This had two consequences.

First, soldiers writing home warned others not to join up. As the war dragged on, casualties mounted and recruitment methods grew more coercive, resentment grew. It is no coincidence, perhaps, that Punjab—which supplied a large proportion of the troops thanks to the British martial races theory—turned into an epicentre of nationalism after the war. Second, post-war military reforms to transform the Indian army into a modern force started a process that accelerated with the onset of World War II. By 1946, the Indian military was a potent enough force that the prospect of its rebellion, triggered by the Royal Indian Naval Mutiny that year, was a major contributor to the British decision to fold.

The war brought about socioeconomic changes as well. Oliver Vanden Eynde of the Paris School of Economics has “used information from census records to estimate the impact of military recruitment during the First World War in Punjab on the literacy rates”. He found that “between 1911 and 1921, literacy rates (as well as the number of literate individuals) increased significantly in heavily recruited communities. This effect is strongest for men of military age, which is consistent with the hypothesis that soldiers learned to read and write on their foreign campaigns.” The archived letters and diaries of Indian soldiers who served in Western Europe raise another question: did exposure to different societal and cultural norms, such as the role of women in society, contribute in any measure to societal progress in regions that saw heavy recruitment?

There is, of course, the economic impact of the war on India. A war economy is by definition a distorted one. The logic of empire exaggerated this. Requisitioning of food supplies, particularly cereals, led to rampant food inflation. Exports of cash crops like jute suffered due to the loss of the European market. Meanwhile, rising military demand for jute products compensated for the decline in civilian demand with jute mills in Bengal establishing monopolies; skewed income distribution grew even more so, shifting from jute farmers to capital. And as Amiya Kumar Bagchi has noted in “Indian Economy and Society during World War One”, the drain on the Indian economy in the form of cash, kind and loans to the British government came to about 367 million pounds.

That said, there were upsides as well. Domestic manufacturing sectors such as cotton benefited from the decline in British goods that had dominated the pre-war market. The steel sector—so crucial after independence—benefited as well. For instance, the ailing Tata steel mills were handed a lifeline in the form of a contract to supply rails to the Mesopotamian campaign. British investment was rerouted to the UK, creating opportunities for Indian capital. In short, the war economy boosted Indian capitalism in some ways at least.

The Indian national movement and the country's socio-economic development did not take place in isolation. World War I linked India to global events in profound ways with far-reaching consequences. It is history worth remembering.

Mains Question

Q: What is Credit Rating? Why Credit rating agencies failed to predict IL&FS crisis? Critically analyze.