

Prelim Bits 06-09-2019

Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)

- Indian Prime Minister attended the 5th 'Eastern Economic Forum' (EEF) in Vladivostok, Russia.
- PM announced India would extend a \$1 billion line of credit towards the development of the Russian Far East.
- India was the first country in the world to open a consulate in Vladivostok.
- Engaging closely with East Asia was in line with India's policy goal of "Act East".
- This gives a new dimension to our economic diplomacy.
- Among the participants in the Summit are India, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, and South Korea.
- In the last five years as many as 17 different countries have invested in the Far East.
- The region has its investment-friendly approach and vast reserves of natural resources.
- With this, it has the potential to strengthen India-Russia economic partnership in areas like,
 - Energy, tourism, agriculture, diamond mining and alternative energy.
- Lack of manpower is one of the main problems faced by the Far East.
- Given this, Indian professionals like doctors, engineers and teachers can help in the region's development.
- For India, there is immense potential for mid-sized and small businesses.
- The two countries agreed for the Chennai-Vladivostok sea route.

EEF

- **EEF** was established by a decree of the President of the Russian Federation, in 2015.
- It aims to support economic development of Russia's '**Far East**'. and to expand international cooperation in Asia-Pacific region.
- It takes place each year in Vladivostok.
- It serves as a platform for the discussion of key issues in,
 - World economy, regional integration and the development of new industrial and technological sectors.

- The '**Far East**' is the easternmost part of Russia.
 - The macro-region borders 2 oceans, the Pacific and the Arctic, and 5 countries,
1. China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States and the N.Korea.
 - The Far East is rich in natural resources like diamonds, stannary, gold, tungsten, fish and seafood.
 - About 1/3rd of all coal reserves and hydro-engineering resources of the Russia are available here.

Chennai to Vladivostok Sea route

- A Memorandum of Intent was signed to open a full-fledged maritime route between Russia's eastern port city and Chennai.
 - This would allow India access to Russia's Far East in 24 days, compared to 40 days taken by current route via Suez Canal.
 - This would also open new opportunities for India, like the India-Russia-Vietnam trilateral cooperation.
 - In Russian, 'Vladivostok' is 'Ruler of the East', located on the Golden Horn Bay to north of North Korea and a short distance from Russia's border with China.
1. It is the largest port on Russia's Pacific coast.
 - Automobiles are a major item of import at the port, from where they are often transported further inland.
 - India is building nuclear power plants with Russia's collaboration in Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu.
 - The opening of a sea route is likely to help in the project.
 - A vibrant sea route will help in the upscaling of trade relations between the two nations.
 - It will also increase India's presence in the Indo-Pacific, and especially the South China Sea.

Lightning Report

- The 'Mid-Monsoon 2019 Lightning Report' released by 'Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council' (**CROPC**).
- **CROPC**, a non-profit organisation works closely with India Meteorological Department (**IMD**).
- It also convened, 'Lightning Resilient Campaign'.
- The report is prepared using IMD's lightning forecasts including Nowcast, IITM-Pune's lightning network data, NRSC, ISRO inputs and ground-based

impacts reports.

- For the first time, a report has mapped lightning strikes across the country, and the lives they have claimed.
- This is part of effort to prepare a lightning risk map of India and identify lightning hotspots.
- Lightning strikes have caused at least 1,311 deaths between April to July this year.
 - UP accounted for 224 of these deaths, followed by Bihar (170), Odisha (129) and Jharkhand (118).
- It counted 65.55 lakh lightning strikes in India during April to July period, of which Odisha recorded over 9 lakh incidents.
- IMD-installed sensors across India, have been giving alerts.
- It is possible to predict, 30-40 minutes in advance, when a lightning strike heads towards Earth.
- Location-based SMS services is available, State governments should take the data and start an emergency response system.
 - But this is not done in many states, resulting in high casualties.
- Timely dissemination of this information can save several lives.
- After receiving alerts from IMD, they send pre-fixed messages to the grassroots utilising their network.
- Vulnerable people have been trained how to respond after hearing the warning siren.
- Recent observations confirm that the Chhotanagpur plateau,
 - which is the confluence of Jharkhand, Odisha, part of Chhattisgarh and West Bengal inhabited by tribals.
 - It is the most lightning-prone area.
- The area is electrostatically and thermodynamically charged, resulting in lightning.
- The report also founds that areas prone to heatwaves were also prone to lightning.
- Pollution increases aerosols in the atmosphere, which in turn increases lightning.
- There have been at least 2 to 3 instances of lightning strikes without rainfall, killing persons in Jharkhand.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express



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