

Headlines at a Glance - 16th October 2020

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India and France get re-elected in ISA

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has informed that India has been re-elected as President while France as the Co-President of International Solar Alliance (ISA) at the virtual meeting of ISA's Third Assembly. The tenure will be for a time period of two years. As per the official release, the President of ISA Assembly, RK Singh, India's Power, and New and Renewable Energy Minister, appreciated the members of the alliance coming together to work on climate change. Mr. Singh also encouraged the 7th initiative on heating and cooling introduced for the discussion in the ISA's Third Assembly. The Third Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) was attended by 34 ISA Member Ministers. 53 member countries and 5 signatory and prospective member countries also participated in the assembly. The Third Assembly of ISA approved the initiatives of the ISA Secretariat in institutionalizing the International Solar Alliance's engagement with the public and private corporate sector through the Coalition for Sustainable Climate Action (CSCA).

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

India contributes 1 million dollars to UNRWA for Palestine Refugees

The Indian government on October 14, 2020, contributed USD 1 million to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian refugees in the Near East.

The contribution which has also been hailed by the UN body is for the Palestinian refugees who have been facing extreme challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Indian government had handed over the cheque to the United Nations Agency through Sunil Kumar, it's representative in Palestine. UNRWA- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East has thanked India for its timely help. As per the authorities, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency has been facing a huge budgetary deficit with a majority of 5.6 million refugees who have been living under the poverty line. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has broken down the backbone of the infrastructure in the areas they live in. The UN Agency has been facing increased demand in the services which results from growth in the number of registered Palestinian refugees, the extent of their deepening poverty, and vulnerability.

SOURCE: *The New Indian Express*

Dr Harsh Vardhan chairs Inter-ministerial Meeting to boost 'Whole of Government' approach for FSSAI's 'Vision 2050'

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare today presided over an inter-ministerial meet with FSSAI and senior officials of various ministries to build a 'Whole of Government' approach to achieve 'Vision 2050' of the eat Right India Movement. The Union Minister took note of the fact the economic cost of food borne diseases in India is estimated to be a whopping \$15 billion. While Wasting (21%), Underweighting (36%), Stunting (38%) are common among children, with 50% of women and children suffering from anaemia; prevalence of Obesity has doubled in the decade (2005-2015) from 9.3% to 18.6% among males and from 12.6% to 20.7% among females with a corresponding rise in deaths due to NCDs. Thus, to move from Food Security to Nutrition Security, these line ministries are expected to come together to form a common platform to determine common goals and strategy and synergize their actions accordingly. Noting that 50% of India's 1.3 billion does not meet the Recommended Dietary Allowance for critical micronutrients, he championed the move for an approach of 'Food Security to Nutrition Security. Representatives of various ministries presented their views and actions taken on the critical areas of convergence with the goals of the movement.

SOURCE: *PIB*

Graded Response Action Plan comes into force in Delhi

The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EPCA) has directed the Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) states to implement air pollution control measures listed under the “very poor” and “severe” category of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). These measures will come into force from October 15, 2020 to improve the air quality of the Delhi-NCR region. As per the directions given by the EPCA, the diesel generators will no longer be used in Delhi and NCR towns including Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurgaon and others with effect from October 15. The generators will only be used for emergency and essential services. Moreover, the Pollution control authorities will carry out the night patrolling to investigate dust, industrial emissions and burning of waste. The pollution monitoring body has also directed the authorities to undertake frequent sprinkling of water on roads.

SOURCE: *Livemint*

Govt chalks out plan for storage of Covid-19 vaccine

With several experimental vaccines against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) reaching late-stage trials, the government has started making logistical arrangements for procurement, storage and distribution to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of a vaccine, when one becomes available. The Centre has begun identifying both government and private facilities to create hubs for vaccine storage. The focus is on maintaining cold storage as most vaccines require to be stored and distributed at a fixed temperature, failing which the vaccine becomes ineffective. Under the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 that is chaired by Dr VK Paul, member (health), Niti Aayog, there are subgroups looking into various aspects of vaccine development, procurement and distribution, including one that looks at cold chain requirements. Real-time tracking of vaccine movement- from procurement to storage, to delivery and distribution is being planned using the electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) that is used for the immunisation programme. This cloud-based application tracks realtime stock positioning and supply route based on the information fed by ground staff.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*