



January 2020 | Vol. IV, Issue 1

On behalf of the entire team at ICRIER, I extend warm wishes to each of our well-wishers for a happy and successful new year! I am pleased to share the January 2020 issue of the Newsletter, which provides a quick recap of ICRIER's research and policy engagements during December 2019.

An ICRIER study on cost-reduction strategies for electric vehicle batteries in India was released by the Secretary Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Shri CK Misra on November 14, 2019 which is now available on our website (see below). We also organized several consultation workshops, dissemination and outreach events during the month. Articles bearing the ICRIER imprint were published in leading newspapers and other media platforms on a variety of current issues such as economic growth, agriculture, trade, RCEP and issues relating to India's political economy, among others. We sincerely hope that you will take out some time to glance through these updates and engage further with anything that interests you. We hope you enjoy the newsletter's new format. As always, we welcome your constructive feedback.

Books, Reports, Working Papers and Policy Briefs



Exploring Cost-reduction Strategies for Electric Vehicle (EV) Batteries

Rajat Kathuria, (et al).

Transport sector is among the highest emitters of greenhouse gases globally. The decarbonisation of transport sector has become an integral part of the global climate change mitigation measures to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial levels. It is now widely accepted that increasing the adoption of cleaner modes of transportation, such as electric vehicles (EVs), are crucial to limit the emission of greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere. However, the total cost of ownership remains a big hurdle in their mass adoption. The battery in an EV is its major cost component and making batteries affordable will help in overcoming the cost barrier. This study focuses on EV batteries and explores the strategies that shall help to reduce their overall cost and cost of EVs.

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Seminars, Conferences and Workshops



Regional Meetings on Broadband Readiness Index

24 Dec 2019

ICRIER organised a regional meeting on Broadband Readiness Index 2019 in Chandigarh on December 24, 2019 to motivate why creation of the Index by State serves both the objectives of cooperative and competitive Federalism. Along with representatives from Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), and Tower and Infrastructure Provider's Association (TAIPA), ICRIER set the

context for the second regional interaction with ten northern states and three union territories, namely Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Rajasthan.

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Workshop on India's Labour Markets: Opportunities and Challenges in a Changing Global Environment

20 Dec 2019

ICRIER, in collaboration with Kingston University, London (UK) organised a consultative workshop on "India's Labour Markets: Opportunities and Challenges in a Changing Global Environment" on December 20. The workshop was moderated by Dr. Homagni Choudhury, Head of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Kingston University, London. The objective was to discuss with a wide group of stakeholders including academics and government officials the current opportunities and challenges in India's labour markets and to chart out a policy-focused research agenda to help strengthen labour market institutions. The discussion centred around issues such as data on labour markets, codification of labour laws, supporting the informal sector, skills mismatch and development.

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21st Annual Neemrana Conference

13-15 Dec 2019

The Neemrana Conference is a tripartite partnership between the *National Bureau of Economic Research* (NBER), Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and the *National Council of Applied Economic Research* (NCAER). The two Indian partners take turns to host the conference every year. This year's Conference was organised by ICRIER as the 21st Annual Neemrana Conference from December 13-15, 2019. The objective of this closed-door conference is to facilitate discussions on current issues related to economic policy and research and to flag-off ideas for further study. It provides an opportunity for intensive and frank dialogue between leading experts and practitioners from India and the United States to engage on these issues in a substantive manner. The Conference was preceded by an interaction with the Hon'ble Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman at her residence.

A tribute was paid to one of the pillars of American economics: Professor Martin Feldstein (1939-2019), who besides being a world-renowned scholar, teacher and policy maker, was the guiding force behind the institution of the Neemrana Conference. This year the conference focused on Banking and Finance, Health and Economic Growth, Urbanisation, Public Finance and the Macroeconomy, Labour Market and the Challenge of Job Creation, Education and Skill Development, and Growth, Inequality and Inclusion. Some key speakers N.K. Singh, Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Subramanian, Uday Kotak, Anne O. Krueger, Rakesh Mohan, Surjit Bhalla, Indu Bhushan and Pramod Bhasin.

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IHC – ICRIER Urban Conversations Series: Air Emergency: What is the Way Ahead?

12 Dec 2019

On December 12th, ICRIER organized a discussion on "Air Emergency: What is the Way Ahead?" as part of its Urban Conversation Series. Dr. Sunita Narain who has been a prominent environmental campaigner and a member of the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) for the National Capital Region (NCR) spoke on the need for comprehensive measures such as fast-tracking BS-VI fuel for vehicles, drastically improving public transport with last mile connectivity, and bringing down industrial pollution to improve air quality. For this, Delhi government, municipal authorities and the civil society must be ready to take bold measures in the coming years.

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Panel Discussion on Values in Foreign Policy

11 Dec 2019

ICRIER, with support from Tata Trusts organised a Panel Discussion on the theme of "Values in Foreign Policy" on December 11. Panellists at the discussion included Amb. Preeti Saran (Former Indian Diplomat, New Delhi and Member, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UN OHCHR); Dr. Sanjaya Baru (Distinguished Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi); Prof. James Mayall (Emeritus Professor, University of Cambridge, UK) and Amb. Rajiv Bhatia (Distinguished Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies at Gateway House, Mumbai). Shri Shakti Sinha (Former Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi) chaired the discussion. The book *Values in Foreign Policy: Investigating Ideals and Interests* edited by Krishnan Srinivasan, James Mayall and Sanjay Pulipaka and published by Rowman & Littlefield International was also released at the event.

The event witnessed the participation of academicians, diplomats, senior policymakers, and journalists. The event generated substantive discussion on the role that values, principles, interests and ideals play in the formulation of foreign policies of nations around the world.

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Lecture on Global Spillovers, Multilateral Cooperation and WTO Reform

4 Dec 2019

In a special lecture organized by ICRIER on December 4, Prof. Bernard Hoekman, Director of the Global Governance Programme at the European University Institute, Florence spoke on the challenges confronting the global trading system (including the increasing use of trade-distortive policies and rising geopolitical tensions), the significance of and need for multilateral cooperation (including in important spillover areas like climate

change) and a possible agenda for reform going ahead (including how India could contribute to such an agenda).

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Society 5.0 and Artificial Intelligence with a Human Face

3 Dec 2019

ICRIER organised a dissemination seminar on the study titled “Society 5.0 and Artificial Intelligence (AI) with a Human Face” on December 3 commissioned by the Department of Economic Affairs and Department for International Development (DFID). The event focused on the importance of Artificial Intelligence in addressing social challenges. Dr. B.K Murthy, Senior Director & Group Head (R&D in IT), MeitY and Mr. Arnab Kumar, Program Director from Niti Aayog discussed some of the recent initiatives that India is undertaking to enhance the AI ecosystem in India.

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Stakeholder Consultation on India's Domain Name Market and ICANN66 Readout

2 Dec 2019

ICRIER hosted a stakeholder consultation on India's Domain Name Industry on December 2 with a view to bring together domain industry stakeholders and discuss the ongoing research being conducted on the Domain Name Market in India funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under the MeitY Chair for Internet Policy in ICRIER. Richa Sekhani and Gangesh Varma outlined the key findings on the current market size, the competitive landscape of the market, existing challenges and future growth strategies. The discussion that followed was rich and insightful and witnessed participation from MeitY, ICANN, '.in' Registry (NIXI), Registrars as well as other industry stakeholders. Their discussion was free flowing and there was consensus on the immense potential of the market. The challenges identified were lack of consumer awareness, limited local language content causing slow uptake of IDNs, and lack of a favourable ecosystem among others.

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OUR MONTHLY MEDIA RECAP

The Endless Winter that Liberal Democracy has been staring at...

Alok Sheel | LiveMint | December 31, 2019

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Unravelling India's Growth Story

Alok Sheel | Business Standard | December 29, 2019

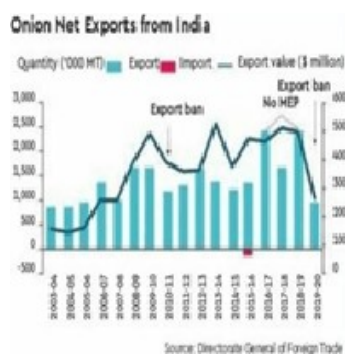
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PM Kisan: Tenant Farmers, Tillers Left High and Dry

Siraj Hussain | The Hindu Business Line | December 24, 2019

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From Plate to Plough: A Case of not Knowing one's Onions

Ashok Gulati & Harsh Wardhan | The Financial Express | December 23, 2019

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अधिक पैदावार के साथ निर्यात ही रास्ता

Siraj Hussain | Patrika.com | December 20, 2019

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How the Deadlock in the WTO Appellate Body Affects ...

Arpita Mukherjee | Moneycontrol.com | December 16, 2019

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Table 2: Tariff Profiles of Select RCEP Countries

RCEP Countries	Year	Average Tariff Rate (%)		Products with No Import Duty (% of Total)			Maximum Rate of Duty
		Non-agricultural	Agricultural	Non-agricultural	Agricultural	Non-agricultural	
India	2018	12.6	38.8	1.8	8.1	129	100
Australia	2018	2.7	1.2	46.9	76.8	5	25
China	2018	8.8	15.2	7.2	7.2	18	185
Indonesia	2018	8.0	8.6	12.8	8.3	14.4	180
Japan	2018	2.5	15.7	88.8	85.7	107	128
Republic of Korea	2018	4.7	27.5	76.5	5.5	184	187
Malaysia	2017	5.0	1.8	54.5	74.7	18	1200
New Zealand	2018	2.1	1.4	83.7	72.8	46	5
Philippines	2018	9.8	9.8	12.6	12.9	38	185
Singapore	2018	0.0	0.0	100.0	99.8	100	18
Thailand	2017	7.0	24.0	48.0	12.4	75	185
Vietnam	2018	8.4	14.5	38.6	13.0	28.8	128

India and RCEP: The Withdrawal and Way Forward

Arpita Mukherjee & Angana Parashar Sarma | Vocal.org | December 12, 2019

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Why Neglect Exports?

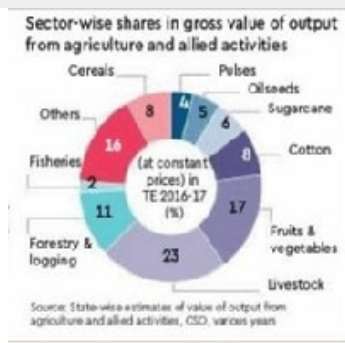
Shankar Acharya | Business Standard | December 12, 2019

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Pawar-ing up Maharashtra's Agri Policy

Ashok Gulati & Shyma Jose | Financial Express | December 9, 2019

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India Needs to Invest in Storage Infrastructure & Find Technological Solution to Prolong the Storage Period

Siraj Hussain | CNBCTV18 | December 3, 2019

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The Rise of Counter-Revolution

Alok Sheel | The Business Standard | December 1, 2019

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