

NEWS TODAY

GOVERNMENT WORKING TO ENABLE MICRO FINANCE INSTITUTION (MFI) TO HELP SMALLEST OF BUSINESSES

- Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises said that government is working on a policy to enable a MFI fund even the smallest of businesses.
 - It is aimed **to increase liquidity in the market** which will create more employment potential and increase growth rate.
 - This will also help to **decrease pressure on the banking system and NBFC** which are under a lot of stress presently amid liquidity crisis in the country.
- **MFIs** is an organization that **offers financial services** like providing micro credit; collection of thrift; remittance of funds; providing pension or insurance etc. **to low income populations.**
- MFIs groups are registered as NBFCs, societies, trusts and co-operatives.
 - **First registered MFI in India was Self Employed Women 's Association (SEWA)** at Ahmedabad in 1974.
- **Benefits of MFIs:** easy access to credit, serves under-financed section of the society, generation of employment opportunities, better credit management practices, absence of collaterals etc.
- **Challenges:** financial illiteracy, lack of information among borrowers, inability to generate funds, heavy dependence on banks for funding, regional imbalances etc.

UNIVERSALIZATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE (ISA)

- A recent amendment made in **ISA agreement has now allowed all 192 member countries of the United Nations to join the Alliance.**
 - **Earlier,** the alliance was only open to the **solar resource-rich countries situated between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn.**

About ISA

- It is a multilateral forum launched jointly by India and France on the side-lines of the 21st Conference of Parties (CoP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- It aims:
 - To increase the use of solar power to **curtail the carbon footprint levels** and help countries become less dependent on conventional energy sources especially fossil fuels.
 - To **tackle climate change & contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement** with exchange of ideas, technology and capacity building between the countries that are a part of the alliance.
 - To **provide needy member countries with support and access to solar technologies.**
- It was **jointly launched by India & France** and presently have 87 countries who have signed it and 67 countries had ratified.
 - Nicaragua, a Central American country is the 87th country to sign the agreement.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, India.

ELECTRONIC VACCINE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK (eVIN) ENSURED ESSENTIAL IMMUNIZATION SERVICES DURING COVID

- eVIN is an an indigenously developed technological solution **aimed at strengthening universal immunization by providing real-time information on vaccine stocks and flows**
- **It combines:**
 - **Technology:** to facilitate evidence-based decision-making
 - **Governance:** to ensure efficient vaccine logistics management
 - **Human Resources:** to empower state cold chain network by capacity building of government cold chain handlers;
- eVIN helps to create a **big data architecture** that generates actionable analytics encouraging data-driven decision-making and consumption-based planning leading to cost savings.
 - It also provides the potential to be leveraged for any new vaccine.
- At present, **eVIN has reached 32 States and UTs** (Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Ladakh and Sikkim are remaining).
 - At present, 23,507 cold chain points across 22 States and 2 UTs routinely use eVIN
 - Vaccine availability at all times has increased to 99% in most health centers.
- Presently, many states are using the eVIN application with 100% adherence rate to track State-specific Covid-19 material supplies, ensure availability and raise alerts in case of shortage of 81 essential drugs and equipment.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE RELEASES DRAFT DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND EXPORT PROMOTION POLICY (DPEPP) 2020

- DPEPP is a guiding document to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production capabilities of country for self-reliance and exports.
 - Share of domestic procurement in overall defence procurement is about 60%

Objectives

- To **achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores including export of Rs 35,000 Crore in Aerospace and Defence goods and services by 2025.**
- To **develop a dynamic, robust and competitive Defence industry.**
- To **reduce dependence on imports.**
- To **promote export of defence products** and become part of the global defence value chains.
- To **create an environment that encourages R&D, rewards innovation,** creates Indian Intellectual property ownership.

Key feature

- **Negative list of weapons or platforms for imports** has been proposed to expand the domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem.
 - Also, Government released draft of the Defence Procurement Procedure, 2020, recently for this
- **Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti's effort** would be scaled up **for promoting creation of Intellectual Property in sector** and its commercial utilization.
- **Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Ordinance Factory Boards** would be mandated to have at least 25% of their revenue from exports.
- To **move away from licensed production** to design, develop and produce.

NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE (NBWL) NOD NOT REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CATEGORY OF PROJECTS

- Railway projects, small-scale development works involving construction over less than 20,000 square metres, and under-25 MW capacity hydropower plants will not require approval from NBWL even if they are located within eco-sensitive zones (ESZs) of national parks or wildlife sanctuaries.
 - > As per the provisions of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, any non-forestry activity inside a Sanctuary or National Park requires clearance from Standing Committee of NBWL.
 - > **NBWL is a statutory body** under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which adjudicates on industrial projects, road diversions or the like that could encroach into Protected Areas (PA) or ESZ of forests.
 - > NBWL is chaired by Prime Minister and its Standing Committee is chaired by the Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **ESZs or Ecologically Fragile Areas (EFAs)** are areas within 10 km around PA, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
 - > They are meant to be **shock absorbers and transition zones** from areas of high to low protection for wildlife and biodiversity.
 - > It is **notified by the MoEFCC under the Environment Protection Act 1986** and Wildlife Conservation Strategy, 2002.
 - > Sensitive corridors, connectivity and ecologically important patches i.e. area beyond 10 km width can also be included in ESZ.

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>SpaceX Dragon Capsule return to Earth surface</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is SpaceX (private company) spacecraft which can transport astronauts to and from orbit. • It was launched to the International Space Station on a Falcon 9 rocket carrying two NASA astronauts. • It is part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program (CCP). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > CCP aims to develop reliable and cost-effective access to and from ISS
<p>Covishield</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given approval to Serum Institute of India, Pune to conduct Phase II+III clinical trials of COVISHIELD in India. • It is developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca. • Presently, other vaccines like Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Zydus Cadila's ZyCov-D are also in trial phase.
<p>Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Bank accounts opened under PMJDY crossed 40-crore mark. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > UP accounted for maximum number of accounts (6.69 crore), followed by Bihar (4.63 crore). • PMJDY under National Mission for Financial Inclusion was launched in 2014 initially for a period of 4 years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Later program was extended beyond 2018 with the change in focus on opening accounts from every household to every adult. • Accounts opened under PMJDY are Basic Savings Bank Deposit accounts with additional features of RuPay debit card and overdraft.
<p>Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan 2020-21 launched</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a national programme for popularizing science among school students of Class 6th to 11th. • It was designed to identify the bright minds with a scientific aptitude among the student community. • Initiative by: Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA), Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous organization under Department of Science and Technology and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
<p>Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Commercial Coal Mining</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre has clarified that any FDI in commercial coal mining from an entity of a country that shares land border with India will be allowed only after government approval. • Presently, 100% FDI is permitted under automatic route in coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It was allowed to allow opening up commercial coal mining for the private sector and to attract global miners to invest in India.
<p>Women Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (WEE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is India's First of its kind social, national initiative by IIT Delhi and supported by Department of Science and Technology. • It aims to strengthen women entrepreneurship in the country and promote an ecosystem that enables creation and sustenance of such enterprises by women. • It helps women ranging from college going students to middle-aged housewives to take up entrepreneurship as a viable, fulfilling career option. • It connects women entrepreneurs from all across India to potential investors and buyers for their products so that they can take their business idea to a financially sustainable enterprise.

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