

NEWS TODAY

APMCs (AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEES): THE GOOD AND THE BAD

- Under the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 (FPTC Bill, 2020) farmers **will have the option to sell their produce at other places in addition to APMCs** or mandis regulated by state laws.
 - > FPTC bill, 2020 **allows intra-state and inter-state trade of farmers' produce** beyond the physical premises of APMC markets.
- APMCs are the central points where **farm produce is pooled together (supply) and distributed to other parts (demand) of the country**.
 - > APMCs were created **to ensure price discovery and fair transactions** and were designed **to create infrastructure for auctions and storage** out of the cess paid by the buyers.
 - > Many APMCs used the funds to create rural marketing infrastructure.
- Issues with APMCs:**
 - > Small and marginal farmers face issues, such as **inadequate marketable surplus, long distance to nearest APMC markets, and lack of transportation facilities**.
 - > **Limited number of traders in APMC markets** thereby reducing competition.
 - > Cartelisation of traders.
 - > Undue deductions in the form of **commission charges and market fee**.

RECENTLY, PRESIDENT GAVE HIS ASSENT TO THE THREE FARM BILLS PASSED BY THE PARLIAMENT

Bill	Key Provisions
The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It allows intra-state and inter-state trade of farmers' produce beyond the physical premises of APMC markets. State governments are prohibited from levying any market fee, cess or levy outside APMC areas.
The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It creates a framework for contract farming through an agreement between a farmer and a buyer.
The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to deregulate agricultural commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onions and potatoes.

CLOSER SCRUTINY OF IMPORTS UNDER FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS (FTAs)

- FTAs **allow imports of most of the items at nil or concessional basic customs duty rate** thereby encouraging bilateral and multilateral trade.
 - > **India has entered into FTAs with various countries** - bilateral trade agreements with Japan, Singapore, etc. and multilateral trade agreements with ASEAN, SAARC countries etc.
- Recently, Finance Minister highlighted that **imports under FTAs are on the rise and benefits under FTAs were also being misused** which caused an adverse effect to the domestic industry.
- To address duty evasion through routing exports to India under FTAs, **government notified Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020 (CAROTAR, 2020)**.
- Under CAROTAR, 2020 **importers need to comply with stringent norms such as:**
 - > Requirement to provide not only **Certificate of origin, but also supporting documents** like reference number, date of issuance, along with a **declaration that the said goods qualify for FTA**.
 - > **Need to store information** related to country of origin, manufacturing process, product specific criteria etc. for 5 years.
- Also, **Powers of Customs authorities have been widened** for administration of rules.

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI NOTIFIED NEW GUIDELINES TO REGULATE EXTRACTION OF GROUNDWATER

- Guidelines aim to have **sustainable management of the scarce groundwater resources** in the country.
- Key guidelines**
 - > A no objection certificate (NOC) is **mandatory for new and existing industries, group housing societies, and private water supply tankers** for withdrawal of groundwater.
 - > **Projects falling within 500 m. from demarcated wetland areas shall mandatorily submit a detailed proposal** indicating that groundwater abstraction does not affect the protected wetland areas.
 - > **Installation of digital water flow meters is mandatory** for all users seeking NOC.
 - > **District authorities are authorized to take enforcement measures** like sealing of abstraction structures and prosecuting those violating the NOC conditions
 - > **5 categories are exempted from getting an NOC:** Individual domestic consumers in both rural and urban areas for drinking water and domestic uses, Rural drinking water supply schemes, Armed Forces Establishments and Central Armed Police Forces establishments in both rural and urban areas, Agricultural activities and Micro and small enterprises drawing groundwater less than 10 cubic metre/day.
 - > Non-compliance may attract a **penalty between Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakh**.

HEALTH IN INDIA REPORT RELEASED BY MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (MOSPI)

- Report is **based on data collected from July 2017 to June 2018**, as part of 75th round of National Sample Survey.
 - > **Total expenditure on health, by Centre and states, for FY20 was 1.29% of GDP**. Of total public expenditure, **Centre's share was 25%**. Centre spends less as **public health and sanitation are State subjects**.
- Key Findings**
 - > **Population availing treatment in Public hospitals:** About 42% (46% in rural areas, 35% in urban areas).
 - > **Population availing treatment in Private hospitals (excl. charitable, NGO run):** 55% (52% in rural areas, 61% in urban areas).
 - > **In rural areas, about 90% and in urban areas, about 96% childbirths were institutional** (in Government/private hospitals).
 - > About 14% of the rural population and 19% of the urban population had health expenditure coverage.
 - > On an average, about **Rs. 15,937 in rural India and Rs. 22,031 in urban India were spent as out-of-pocket medical expenditure** (payments made directly by individuals) for hospitalization.
 - > In rural India, about 72% (52% male and 90% female) and in urban India 67% (43% male and 87% female) **aged persons (60 and above) were economically dependent on others**.

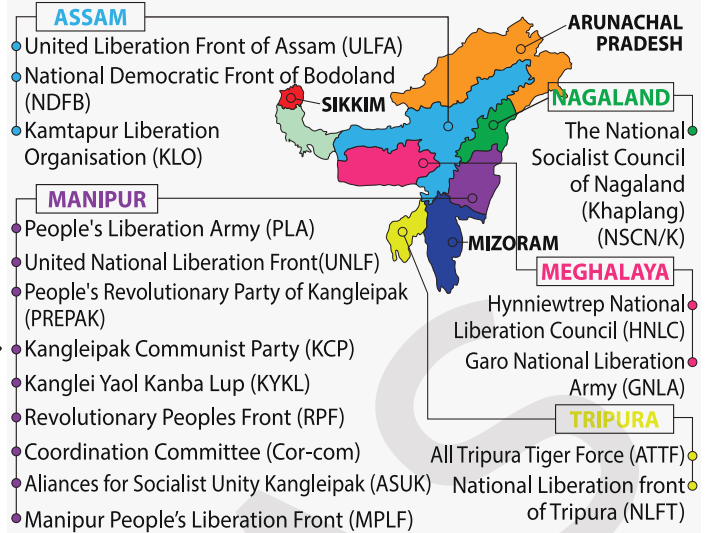
90%	75%	50%
of rural India's drinking water comes from groundwater	of agriculture is groundwater-based.	Of the water supply in urban India is groundwater-based

- Central Ground Water Board surveyed 6,584 groundwater units across India and found **1034 units over-exploited** (more extraction than recharge), **253 critical** (extraction is 90-100% of what's recharged) and **681 as semi-critical** (extraction 70-90% of what's recharged).

ISSUES OF ALL NORTHEAST REBEL GROUPS WILL BE SETTLED BY 2024: UNION HOME MINISTER

- Northeast region has been witnessing insurgency since 1950s. Demands of these groups range from **autonomy within the provisions of the Indian constitution to outright secession.**
- Reasons for rebellion:**
 - > **Ethnic conflict** as most ethnic groups in the region resent federal control or dominance by bigger ethnic groups.
 - > **Slow development has widened** the rift between Northeast region and mainstream India.
 - > **Influx of refugees** from former Bangladesh into Assam led to discontent amongst the people of the region.
 - > **Promulgation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** in Northeastern states portrayed as draconian by various Human Rights organisations and thus has been vilified by various insurgent groups.
 - > Long **border with hostile countries.**
- Initiatives taken by government**
 - > Peace talks initiated and **Peace accord signed with various insurgent groups.**
 - > **Enhanced focus on development** by increasing the annual budget for Northeast.
 - > **Act east policy which connects North East with the East Asian countries.** It will automatically increase the flow of men, materials, technology and ideas from and to the North East.
 - > **Continued Military Operations against Select Insurgent Groups.**

MAJOR INSURGENT/EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH EAST



ALSO IN NEWS

PM Modi's address at the 75th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session 2020	<p>Key Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought reforms in United Nations Charter. Highlighted India's contribution to peacekeeping missions. Mentioned India's initiation for 'International Day of Non-Violence' on 02 October and 'International Day of Yoga' on 21 June. India's efforts towards Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and the International Solar Alliance.
India-SriLanka Summit	<p>Key Highlights of the summit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement of India's grant assistance of US\$ 15 million for promotion of Buddhist ties between the two countries. Continue engagement to address the issues related to fishermen through regular consultations. Strengthen people-to-people ties by exploring opportunities in the field of civilizational linkages and common heritage such as Buddhism, Ayurveda and Yoga. Strengthen cooperation between armed forces and support to Sri Lanka in spheres of defence and security.
National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPPA capped prices of Liquid Medical Oxygen and Medical Oxygen cylinders to ensure availability at fair price amidst COVID-19 pandemic. NPPA is as an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices. It also implements and enforces the provisions of the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO). It is an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDII, an autonomous and not-for-profit institute, set up in 1983, is sponsored by apex financial institutions - IDBI Bank Ltd., IFCI Ltd., ICICI Bank Ltd. and State Bank of India. It aims to promote entrepreneurship, augment the pool of entrepreneurs in different sectors, assist in capacity building and training in entrepreneurship etc. EDII has been selected by Ministry of Education to establish Institution Innovation Council with an aim to systematically foster the culture of Innovation.
Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) Prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is given each year for outstanding contributions to science and technology. Disciplines covered are Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Medical Sciences and Physical Sciences. Eligibility: Any citizen of India up to the age of 45 years. Overseas citizen of India and Persons of Indian Origin working in India are also eligible. The award is named after the founder Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research.
System for Assessment, Awareness and Training for Hospitality Industry (SAATHI) Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an app to assist the hospitality industry to continue to operate safely and thereby instill confidence among the staff, employees and the guests about the safety of the hotel/unit. It involves elements like - Management Commitment, Hygiene and Sanitization etc. based on government guidelines for COVID-19. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism with Quality Council of India (QCI).

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