

NEWS TODAY

CABINET APPROVES SECOND PHASE OF GREEN ENERGY CORRIDOR (GEC) FOR INTRA-STATE TRANSMISSION SYSTEM

- GEC project **aims at synchronizing electricity produced from renewable sources**, such as solar and wind, **with conventional power stations** in the grid.
 - Purpose is **to evacuate large-scale renewable power**, by installing transmission lines and substations and improvement of grid in implementing states.
- GEC- Phase II will help supply 20 gigawatts (GW)** of renewable energy (RE) to national grid from Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
 - GEC- Phase I**, under implementation in 8 states (Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh), **will help supply around 24GW of RE by 2022.**
- Significance**
 - Will help in **achieving 450 GW installed RE capacity by 2030.**
 - Help in **long term energy security** and promote **ecologically sustainable growth by reducing carbon footprint.**
 - Generating opportunities for both **skilled and unskilled personnel** in power and other related sectors.
 - Huge injection of electricity into the national grid** from intermittent RE sources doesn't threaten the grid.
- Recently, India **achieved its 2030 milestone** (Committed at COP-21 in Paris) of **40% installed capacity of RE (157.32 GW out of 392.01 GW).**

MAHARASHTRA, TAMIL NADU AMONG 5 INDIAN STATES WITH DIRTIEST COAL POWER STATIONS: CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT (CSE) ANALYSIS

- Earlier Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MoEF&CC**) **released list of coal thermal power plants (TPPs) and their categorisation** in line with its earlier notification.
 - In April 2021, **MoEF&CC amended the 2015 notification to put coal TPPs under three categories** (refer infographic).
 - CSE analysis found that **61% coal thermal power capacity in Category A, 35% in Category B and 32% in Category C will not be able to meet deadlines even in 2022.**
- In 2015, MoEF&CC notified environmental norms** for particulate matter (PM), sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides and mercury and water use for **coal based TPPs.**
 - Coal TPPs **contribute to over half sulphur dioxide concentration, 30% oxides of nitrogen, 20% PM** in the ambient air
 - Initially deadline for implementation was 2017**, and it was extended to 2022.
- Compliance with the norms **requires retrofitting existing TPPs** with auxiliaries to control emissions such as Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD), Selective Catalytic Reduction etc.
 - FGD is a set of technologies **used to remove SO₂ from exhaust flue gases** of fossil-fuel power plants, and from emissions of other sulphur oxide-emitting processes.

Category	Criteria	Deadline and Action
A	Within 10 km radius of the National Capital Region (NCR) or cities having million-plus population.	End of 2022
B	Within 10 km radius of critically polluted areas or non-attainment cities (not meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards).	Comply with FGD norms by 2023
C	Remaining plants	To install Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrogen oxide control gears by 2024.

GOVERNMENT WORKING ON ESG RANKING FOR LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA (LIC) AHEAD OF PUBLIC OFFER

- It is being reported that **Ministry of Finance is working to obtain ESG (environment, social and governance) score for LIC** before filing for its mega initial public offer (IPO).
 - A good ESG score **will add to LIC's valuation** and will help **attract larger and responsible pool of capital**.
- ESG is a form of sustainable investing** that measures the impact of a **company's ethical contribution to its stakeholders**.
 - Most of the world's largest companies report their ESG performance as investors increasingly consider it **to identify companies that comply with inclusive growth factors**.
- Benefits of ESG**
 - Help investors to align their **investment goals to their personal values and beliefs**.
 - Increased Access to Capital** by attracting growing sustainability funds.
 - Results in **better operational performance, better stock performance and lowers cost of capital** to companies.
- Status of ESG in India**
 - Under **Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR)** by listed entities, SEBI has notified inclusion of **ESG** reporting.
 - BRSR shall be applicable to the **top 1000 listed entities** (by market capitalization). Reporting of BRSR shall be **mandatory from FY 2022-23**

ESG Criteria		
Environmental	Social	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy usage Carbon footprint Climate change Waste management Pollution monitoring Natural resource conservation Contaminated property Hazardous waste Toxic emissions Compliance with government environmental regulations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee welfare Vendor relationships Local social welfare programs Healthcare initiative Welfare initiatives Gender equality Race equality Religion equality Education initiative Clean environment initiatives Human rights monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent accounting methods Investor relationships Conflict of interest in Board decisions Business ethics Opportunity of being heard Political influence Legal practices Whistleblower policy

USE DRONES MORE EFFECTIVELY: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (MOCA)

- In a note to several ministers, MoCA has **suggested a range of uses to tap the benefits offered by drones** (refer infographic).
- Drone means an **unmanned aircraft system (UAS)**, i.e. an aircraft that can **operate autonomously** or can be **operated remotely** without a pilot on board.
- Drone Rules, 2021 classified drones under five categories:**

> Nano drone:

Less than or equal to 250 grams;

> Micro drone:

Greater than 250 grams and less than or equal to 2 kilograms;

> Small drone:

Greater than 2 kilograms and less than or equal to 25 kilograms;

> **Medium drone:** Greater than 25 kilograms and less than or equal to 150 kilograms; and

> **Large drone:** Greater than 150 kilograms

• Steps taken to promote drone use

- > **Liberalised Drone Rules** to make India global drone hub by 2030.
- > **PLI scheme** to promote **manufacturing of drones in India**.
- > **SOPs on use of drones in Pesticide Application** for Crop Protection and for spraying Soil and Crop Nutrients.
- > **Svmitva** (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) **scheme plans to use drones** to map thousands of villages.

Third eye in the sky

Ministries have been told to exploit drone applications in their domains

DEFENCE:

Surveillance, combat, counter drone solutions

HOME AFFAIRS:

VVIP security, crime control, raids and counter-terror operations

HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE:

Delivery of medicines, sample collection for tests

AGRICULTURE: Crop & soil health monitoring, anti-locust work, insurance claim survey

PANCHAYATI RAJ: Land records and property rights

ENVIRONMENT: Forest & Climate Change: Anti-poaching operations, monitoring wildlife

POWER: Real-time surveillance of assets and transmission lines

ROAD TRANSPORT: Project monitoring, incident response



PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA (PM-JAY) FAILED TO DELIVER DURING PANDEMIC

- After an earlier study, that found PM-JAY providing cushion to only 14.25% people hospitalised for COVID-19 between April 2020 and June 2021, **some recent studies highlighted that:**
 - > **Cash is still a must** for admission with hospitals not allowing its use for ICU.
 - > **Limited empanelled hospitals** to treat patients.
 - > Many **eligible beneficiaries still left out**.
- PM-JAY is **one of the two components under Ayushman Bharat**, a flagship scheme launched to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
 - > Other component is **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) to deliver Comprehensive Primary Health Care** bringing healthcare closer to the homes of people.
- Key features of PM-JAY**
 - > **Provide a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care** hospitalization across public and private empanelled hospitals in India.
 - > There is **no restriction on the family size, age or gender**.
 - > It covers over **10.74 crore poor and vulnerable entitled families** (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries, identified through **Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011**).
 - > **All pre-existing conditions are covered** from day one and **benefits of the scheme are portable** across the country.

JAPAN, AUSTRALIA SIGN RECIPROCAL ACCESS AGREEMENT (RAA)

- RAA is a new agreement to cooperate closely on defence to **bolster security ties against the backdrop of rising Chinese military and economic assertiveness.**
 - RAA will allow Australian and Japanese militaries to **work seamlessly with each other on defence and humanitarian operations.**
- RAA will also pave way for an **enhanced contribution** by Japan and Australia **to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.**
 - Earlier several nations including France, Germany and European Union also released their Indo-Pacific strategy.
- **Reasons for global shift towards Indo-Pacific**
 - **Important Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC):** Presence of key choke points, from Mozambique Channel and Bab-el-Mandeb in the west to Lombok Strait in the east.
 - **Trade and Economy:** Region includes 65% of the world population; accounts for 62% of world GDP; and contributes to 46% of the world's merchandise trade.
 - **Richness in Natural resources:** Including- Offshore Hydrocarbons, Methane hydrates, Sea Bed minerals, Rare earth metals, fisheries etc.
 - **China factor:** China's aggressive foreign policy, rapid economic expansion, military modernization and power projection has raised several red flags among regional and extra-regional countries.



INITIATIVES TAKEN BY INDIA

- **Separate divisions under Ministry of External Affairs** (Indo-Pacific Division and Indian Ocean Region Division).
- **Policies aligning with the vision of Indo Pacific:** Such as Act East Policy, SAGAR.
- **Partnerships** (QUAD, BIMSTEC, IORA etc).
- Expanding/maintaining India's naval presence.

ALSO IN NEWS



Election Expenditure Limit revised

- Election Commission has **enhanced the existing election expenditure limit** for candidates in Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies.
 - **Reasons cited:** substantial increase in the number of electors, Cost Inflation Index for the hike etc.
- **Expenditure limit for Lok Sabha constituencies** has been raised **from 70 lakh to 95 lakh rupees in bigger states** and 54 lakh to 75 lakhs in smaller states.
- **For Assembly constituencies**, expenditure limits have been enhanced **from 28 lakh rupees 40 lakh rupees in bigger states** and from 20 lakhs to 28 lakhs in smaller states.



Basel III Framework on Liquidity Standards

- Recently, **RBI issued a revised Basel III framework** on liquidity standards and net stable funding ratio (NSFR) **for small business customers to better align with Basel Norms** and manage liquidity risk.
- Launched in the backdrop of global financial crisis, the **Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) and NSFR are two minimum standards for funding liquidity:**
 - **LCR:** It refers to the **High Quality Liquid Assets** to be maintained by banks to meet 30 days net outgo under stressed conditions.
 - **NSFR:** The amount of available stable funding relative to the amount of required stable funding.




Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

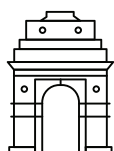
- According to a SBI report, **ECLGS has helped save almost 13.5 lakh units and 1.5 crore jobs** in MSME sector.
- ECLGS was announced as part of the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package **to provide fully guaranteed and collateral free additional credit** to MSMEs, business enterprises, individual loans for business purposes and MUDRA borrowers.
 - Since then **government has extended ECLGS to cover various industries** (till now four extended versions have come out).
- **ECLGS provides 100% guarantee coverage to Member Lending Institutions** (banks, financial institutions and Non-Banking Financial Companies) **on Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line.**



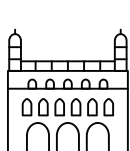
Polio

- UNICEF data shows that the **administration of the third dose of polio vaccine for children** (aged 12-23 months) **declined five percentage points** in 2020, compared to 2019 — **worst drop since 1991.**
- Polio is a **highly infectious viral disease** that largely affects children under 5 years of age.
- Virus is **transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route.**
 - It **infects a person's spinal cord, causing paralysis.**
- There are **two types of vaccines to prevent infection:** OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine) and Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV).
- **India received polio-free certification** in 2014.

 <p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released draft notification for regulations for EPR for waste tyres. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India discards roughly 275,000 tyres each year but does not have comprehensive plan for them. Over and above it, about 3 million waste tyres are imported for recycling. EPR is a policy approach under which producers are given a significant responsibility – financial and/or physical – for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. Objectives of EPR: Integration of environmental costs, Improved waste management, Reduction of disposal, Reduction of burden on municipalities, Design of environmentally sound products etc.
 <p>Mahakali River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Nepal for construction of a bridge over Mahakali River at Dharchula. Origin: At Kalapani in Pithoragarh district (Uttarakhand). Also known as Sharda/ Kali River. It joins Ghaghra River, a tributary of the Ganga. It serves as the boundary between Uttarakhand's Kumaon Division and Nepal.
 <p>India's First Open Rock Museum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was inaugurated at campus of CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad. Museum displays around 35 different types of rocks gathered from different states with ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years. Also, on the occasion, Union Minister of State for Science & Technology released the earthquake risk maps of Lucknow and Dehradun cities.
 <p>Species in news</p>	<p>Clouded Leopard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a first, elusive clouded leopard sighted in Nagaland mountains at an elevation of 3,700 metres. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are largely known to inhabit low elevation evergreen rainforests. It is the State animal of Meghalaya. IUCN status: Vulnerable Distribution: Across Southeast Asia and the Himalayas- southern China, Bhutan, Nepal, northeast India, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, and Bangladesh.  <p>Oriental Darter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ringling of oriental darters has been taken up to monitor seasonal fluctuations in birds' movements in the Bharatpur bird sanctuary (also known as Keoladeo National Park). IUCN status: Near Threatened. Distribution: Across Indian Subcontinent, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia. 
 <p>Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute in collaboration with ATR launched Scheduled Tribe Component (STC) project at Attagati in ATR for tribals. ATR, in TamilNadu, forms part of the Southern Western Ghats (lies South of the Palakkad gap). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATR is home to 6 tribes: Malasar, Malai malasars, Kadars, Eravallars, Pulayars and Muduvars. ATR supports diverse habitats- Wet evergreen forests, semi evergreen forests, moist deciduous, dry deciduous, dry thorn and shola forests. Important Fauna: Asiatic Elephant, Lion Tailed Macaque, Nilgiri Langur, Tiger etc



DELHI



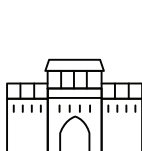
LUCKNOW



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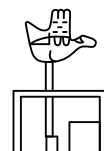
HYDERABAD



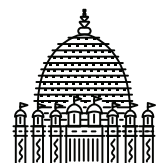
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