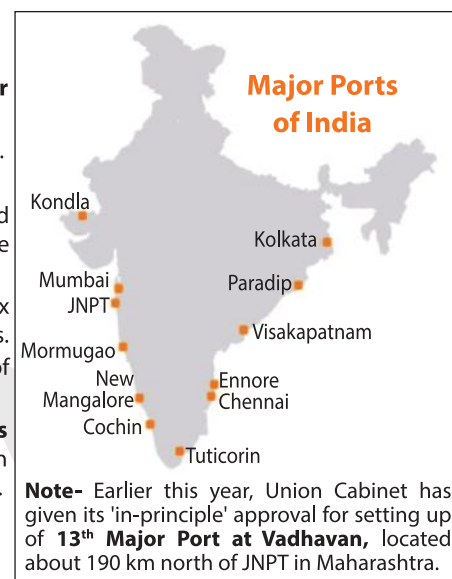


NEWS TODAY

LOK SABHA PASSES THE MAJOR PORT AUTHORITIES BILL, 2020

- It seeks to provide for **regulation, operation and planning of major ports and provide greater autonomy** to these ports. It will replace the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.
 - Bill aims at **decentralizing decision making** and to infuse professionalism in governance of major ports.
- Key features of Bill**
 - Board of Major Port Authority (BPA)** would be constituted for each major port, which will be vested with powers of administration, control, and management of such ports. These boards will replace the existing Board of Port Trusts.
 - Role of **Tariff Authority for Major Ports has been redefined**. BPA has now been given powers to fix tariff, which will act as a reference tariff for purposes of bidding for public private partnership projects.
 - Reorient the governance model to landlord port model** to bring transparency in operations of Major Ports.
 - In Landlord Port Model, **ownership of the port remains with port authority. Infrastructure is leased to private firms** that provide and maintain their own superstructure and install their own equipment to handle cargo. In return, landlord port gets a share of revenue from the private entity.



MINISTRY OF POWER ISSUES STANDARD BIDDING DOCUMENT (SBD) FOR DISCOMS' PRIVATIZATION

- Recently, under Atmanirbhar Bharat package, **Centre announced that electricity distribution companies (discoms) in all UTs will be privatised** to improve operations and finances of discoms.
 - Power sector follows a federal structure**, wherein distribution is a state subject and the Centre has a guiding role. However, generation and transmission come under the central government.
 - Currently, only a few **cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Agra, have private discoms**.
- SBD will be the guiding document for state governments** that want to offer their discoms to private companies.
- Need for privatization of Discoms**
 - Higher outstanding dues** owed by distribution firms (Rs 1.33 lakh crore in June 2020).
 - Operational inefficiencies** due to huge technical and commercial losses (AT&C), which are primarily caused by power theft, poor payment collection procedures etc.
 - Lack of progress in earlier initiatives** such as UDAY.
- Privatization will help in **reducing AT&C losses** (reduced to 8% from 52% in Delhi), **eliminating operational efficiency** (such as payment delays, curtailment, power cuts), **better services for consumers** etc.

ABOUT 40% OF CESS RECEIPTS PARKED IN CFI INSTEAD OF RELEVANT RESERVE FUNDS: CAG

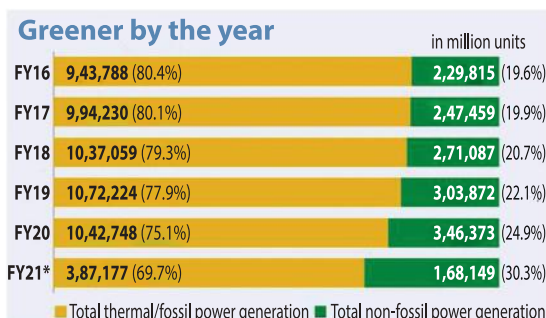
- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) pointed out lack of transparency and disclosures, by centre, with regard to accounting of cesses and levies.
- In FY19, Centre had collected **Rs 2.75 lakh crore from 35 cesses/levies**. However, only 60% of the proceeds were transferred to the relevant reserve funds.
- The cess, an additional tax levied by the government**, is collected by the central government under the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI). The collected fund is then transferred to the respective funds under different ministries, who utilise the funds for the specified purposes.
- Non-creation/non operation of Reserve Funds** makes it difficult to ensure that cesses have been utilised for the specific purposes intended by the Parliament.
- Article 270 allows the Centre to levy cess** which the Centre need not share with state governments.
- In recent years, **the Centre's cess receipts have surged due to hike in rates and new imposts**.
- This has helped it to cushion the blow from the **higher transfers to the states (from 32% to 42%)** from the divisible pool of taxes under the 14th Finance Commission recommendations.

OTHER REPORTS PRESENTED BY CAG

- CAG report on the **construction of toilets in schools, by central public sector enterprises (CPSEs)**, under Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan of Ministry of Education highlighted issues such as:
 - 72% of constructed toilets had no running water facilities inside.
 - 27% of the schools had only one functional toilet whereas the Right to Education Act's mandate that all schools must have separate toilets for boys and girls.

LED BY RENEWABLES, NON-FOSSILS' SHARE IN ENERGY BASKET SURGE

- Share of clean energy in India's total power generation has risen to 30% in first 5 months of FY21 compared to 24.9% in FY20 (Also see chart)
- Three States, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat**, together account for 46 % of India's installed renewable capacity of 88,793 MW.
- Reasons behind surge**
 - Higher capacity addition** in renewable sector
 - Cost of renewable energy has seen a progressive decline** over years.
 - Awarding of 'must run status'** to procure power from clean energy segment.
 - Must run status ensure that electricity from these plants shall not be curtailed for any commercial reasons. This has supported higher generation by these power sources despite fall in consumption during lockdown.
 - Thermal projects are facing uncertainties** due to financial stress and lack of PPAs (power purchase agreements).
 - Government Initiatives** such as PM-KUSUM, Grid-Connected Rooftop Solar (RTS) Programme, Green term ahead market, National wind-solar hybrid policy.



*up to August Source: Submission in Lok Sabha

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR ALLIED AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS BILL, 2020

• Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha by Ministry of health and family welfare **to regulate and standardise education and practice of allied and healthcare professionals.**

➤ Allied health service lacks an overarching regulatory body similar to Medical Council of India and standard curricula and training mechanisms.

• **Key feature:**

➤ **Defines 'allied health professional' (AHP)** as an associate, technician, or technologist trained to support the diagnosis and treatment.

➤ A **'healthcare professional' includes** a scientist, therapist, or provides health services like preventive, curative, rehabilitative.

➤ Sets up **National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions** for

➤ framing policies for regulating education and practice

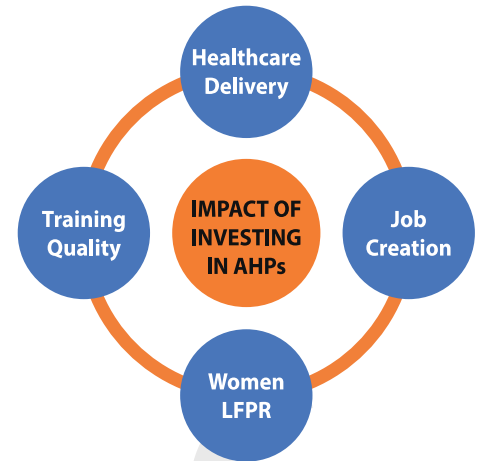
➤ creating Central Register of all registered professionals

➤ **Professional Councils to be constituted** by Commission for every category of allied and healthcare professions. Commission to delegate functions to it.

➤ **State Councils to be constituted by state governments** within six months from passage of Bill to enforce professional conduct and maintain state registers.

➤ **Prior permission of the State Council will be required** to establish a new institution, or open new courses

➤ Only **persons enrolled in State Register or National Register** are allowed to practice.



ALSO IN NEWS

<p>CURIE (Consolidation of University Research for Innovation & Excellence in Women Universities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a special initiative, of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), to support 8 women universities in the country for improving R&D infrastructure and enhance research facilities. • It resulted in a significant increase of student enrolment at undergraduate, postgraduate, and Ph.D. levels in CURIE supported Universities. It has also enhanced the number of NET/GATE qualified students. • In 2019, DST established an Artificial Intelligence (AI) lab in 6 CURIE beneficiary universities with the goal of fostering AI innovations.
<p>PM YUVA (PM Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the flagship scheme of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on entrepreneurship education and training, advocacy and easy access to entrepreneurship support network to over 14 lakh youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It focuses on students/trainees and alumni coming out of the skilling ecosystem such as Industrial Training Institutes, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, etc. • It helps in connecting entrepreneurs to network of ideas, mentors and funding; coordinating and supporting governmental entrepreneurship schemes and in social entrepreneurship.
<p>State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister announced that States can spend 50% of SDRF for COVID-19 relief. Earlier limit was 35%. • SDRF, constituted under Disaster Management Act, 2005, can be used only for meeting expenditure for providing immediate relief to victims during any notified disaster. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Home ministry had decided to treat COVID-19 as a "notified disaster" for purpose of providing assistance under SDRF.
<p>KRITAGYA Hackathon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is planned to promote potential technology solutions for enhancing farm mechanization with special emphasis on women friendly equipments. • It has been planned by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NAHEP is to support participating agricultural universities and ICAR in providing more relevant and higher quality education to Agricultural University students.
<p>Brucellosis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute has developed a Brucella abortus S19Δ per vaccine for Brucellosis. • Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that mainly infects cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs. • Brucellosis is one of the most important zoonotic diseases worldwide and also endemic in India causing huge economic losses to dairy industry. • Humans can get impacted by coming in contact with animals or having contaminated animal products (meat, milk etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Human to human transmission is rare.
<p>Lok Sabha passed the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill seeks to include Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi as the official languages in the newly created UT of Jammu and Kashmir. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Earlier, only English and Urdu were the official languages in the former State. • Part XVII (Article 343 to 351) of the Constitution deals with the official languages. Article 343 states that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.

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