

NEWS TODAY

GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS SHEKATKAR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CREATING BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE

• **Three recommendations** were related to **speeding up road construction**, leading to **socio-economic development in border areas**.

> **Outsource road construction work** beyond optimal capacity of Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

⇒ **Engineering Procurement Contract (EPC) mode is made mandatory** for execution of all works **costing more than Rs 100 crore**.

> In EPC mode, private player is paid to lay roads and it has no role in road's ownership, toll collection or maintenance (it is taken care of by government).

> Introduction of **modern construction plants, equipment and machinery** by delegating **enhanced procurement powers** from Rs 7.5 crore to Rs 100 crore to BRO, for domestic and foreign procurements.

> **Land acquisition and all statutory clearances** like forest and environmental clearance are made **part of approval of Detailed Project Report**.

⇒ Work can be awarded only after at least 90% of statutory clearances have been obtained.

• Presently, Centre is implementing various projects, under **umbrella scheme of Border Infrastructure and Management**, to meet special development needs of people living in 17 states having international borders.

> It includes- construction of roads, schools, primary health centres, border tourism, etc.

SHEKATKAR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER IMPLEMENTATION



Shekatar Committee was constituted to recommend measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of armed forces. It submitted its report in 2016.

- Better utilisation of Supply and Transportation echelons and Animal Transport Units
- Enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army
- Improving the efficiency of the National Cadet Corps
- Restructuring of repair echelons in Army to include base workshops, advance base workshops and static/station workshops in field Army
- Optimisation of Signals Establishments
- Redeployment of Ordnance divisions and streamlining inventory control mechanisms
- Closure of Military Farms and Army Postal Establishments in peace locations
- Defence budget should be in range of 2.5 to 3% of the GDP, keeping in mind possible future threats.

ODISHA, WEST BENGAL BRACE FOR SUPER CYCLONE AMPHAN

• **Amphan, a tropical cyclone, moving at a speed of 220 to 230 kilometers** per hour, is forecast to be the worst storm over the Bay of Bengal since 1999 super cyclone that hit Odisha.

> India Meteorological Department has categorized **Cyclone Amphan as a super cyclone**.

• The rapid intensification of Cyclone Amphan from a cyclone to a super cyclone is seen as a sign of a warming Bay of Bengal (BoB), **a consequence of anthropogenic global warming**.

• About Tropical Cyclones

> They are violent storms that **originate over oceans in tropical areas** and move over to coastal areas bringing about large scale destruction caused by violent winds, very heavy rainfall and storm surges.

> Favourable conditions

⇒ Large Sea Surface Temperatures (SST) higher than 27°C

⇒ Presence of Coriolis force

⇒ Small variations in vertical wind speed

⇒ A pre-existing weak-low-pressure area

⇒ Upper divergence above sea level system.

> BoB is more prone to cyclone than Arabian Sea because it gets high SST, low vertical shear winds and enough moisture in middle layers of the atmosphere.

INDIAN METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT Tropical Cyclone Intensity Scale

Type of Disturbances	Wind Speed in Km/h
Low Pressure	Less than 31
Depression	31-49
Deep Depression	49-61
Cyclonic Storm	61-88
Severe Cyclonic Storm	88-117
Very Severe Cyclone Storm	119 to 221
Super Cyclone	More than 222

PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA (PMUY) COMPLETES FOUR YEARS

• It is a centrally sponsored scheme launched by Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas in 2016.

> Under the scheme, 5 Crore LPG connections **(later increased to 8 Crore by March 2020)** are to be provided to BPL households.

> It aims to **safeguard the health of women & children** by providing them with a clean cooking fuel.

> LPG connection is **released in the name of adult woman** of poor family, subject to condition that **no LPG connection exists in the name of any family member** of household.

> Cash assistance up to Rs 1600/- for providing new LPG connection is provided by Central Government.

> It also provides an **optional loan facility to cover** the cost of stove and first refill.

• According to a **CAG audit report on PMUY** submitted in December 2019

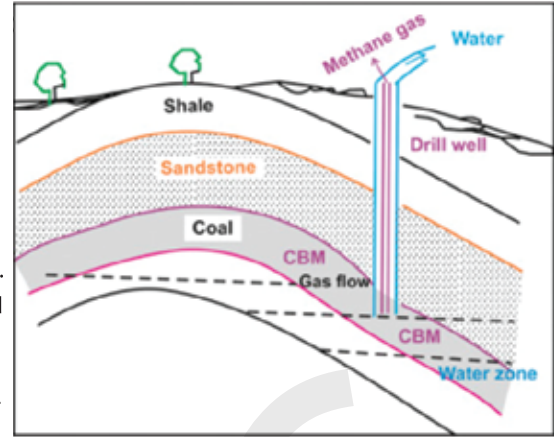
> 7.19 crore connections have been issued till March 2019 against a target of 8 crores.

> **LPG coverage has increased** from 62% in May 2016 to 94% in March 2019.

• Recently announced **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana is also providing free gas cylinders for 3 months to PMUY beneficiaries**.

COAL INDIA LIMITED (CIL) BEGINS PROCESS OF DEVELOPING COAL BASED METHANE (CBM) PROJECTS

- CIL has decided to auction **CBM extraction rights on revenue sharing basis** for all new mines holding economically viable reserves.
 - > Government under Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan allowed CIL to auction CBM extraction rights.
 - > **Central Mine Planning and Design Institute** is principal **implementing agency for all such projects.**



About CBM

- **CBM is an unconventional form of natural gas found in coal deposits** or coal seams.
 - > CBM is **formed during coalification process**, by transformation of plant material into coal.
 - > Methane held underground within coal is **extracted by drilling into coal seam and removing groundwater.**
 - > Resulting **drop in pressure causes methane to be released** from coal.
- **It can be used for** power generation, as compressed natural gas auto fuel, as feedstock for fertilisers, etc.
- **CBM Policy, 1997** offers blocks for exploitation of CBM through open competitive bidding system.
 - > **Gondwana sediments of eastern India** host bulk of India's coal reserves and all current CBM producing blocks.
 - > Other CBM projects include: **Raniganj** coalfield, **Jharia** coalfield, **East and West Bokaro** coalfields etc.

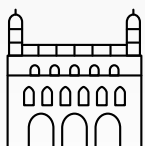
ALSO IN NEWS

Smiling Buddha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is observing the 46th anniversary of its first nuclear test in Rajasthan's Pokhran on May 18, 1974 codenamed the 'Smiling Buddha'. • It was the first confirmed nuclear test by a nation that was not a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. • After the 1974 tests, explosions of nuclear devices were conducted by India on May, 1998, codenamed 'Operation Shakti'.
Diamer-Basha Dam in PoK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China and Pakistan signed an accord to construct this Dam in Gilgit-Baltistan region. • It is to be constructed on the River Indus with a capacity of 4,500 MW. • India had objected to the construction of the dam repeatedly as it falls into the Indian territory of northern Gilgit-Baltistan region. Also, it can cause water shortage in Ladakh.
Solar Minimum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is being reported that Sun has gone into Solar Minimum phase. • Sun goes through 11-year cycles of activity that peak & trough with a Solar Maximum and a Solar Minimum. • At Solar Maximum, Sun's surface is peppered with sun spots, solar flares and clouds of electrified gas are thrown into space. • At Solar Minimum, Sun can go without sun spots or other signs of activity for days at a time. This may cause health risks to astronauts travelling through space as the sun's magnetic field weakens and provides less shielding from these cosmic rays.
Less invasive surfactant administration (LISA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a medical technique for treatment of lung disease among premature babies. • Started at J.K. Lon Government Children's Hospital Jaipur, initially for newborn children with birth weight less than 1,500 grams has yielded encouraging results.
Pinanga andamanensis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a critically endangered rare palm, endemic to South Andaman Island. • Its entire population naturally occurs only in a tiny, evergreen forest pocket in South Andaman's Mount Harriet National Park.
Zero FIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Zero FIR has been filed in a migrant worker's death case. • Zero-FIR means that a FIR can be filed in any police station (irrespective of place of incident/jurisdiction) and same can be later transferred to the appropriate police station.

8468022022, 9019066066
www.visionias.in



DELHI



LUCKNOW



JAIPUR



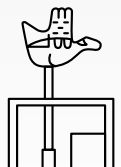
HYDERABAD



PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH