

NEWS TODAY

1 CRORE TREATMENTS PROVIDED UNDER AYUSHMAN BHARAT PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA (AB-PMJAY)

• New initiatives launched:

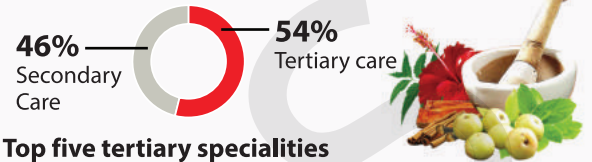
- > **Ask Ayushman chat bot on WhatsApp:** Provides 24*7 information about AB-PMJAY such as its benefits, process of making an e-card, etc.
- > **'Hospital Ranking Dashboard':** To rank empanelled hospitals on basis of beneficiaries' feedback.
- > **Arogya Dhara:** Series of webinars for discussion on topical issues of public health.

• AB was launched in 2018, as recommended by National Health Policy 2017, to achieve Universal Health Coverage. AB comprises of two inter-related components:

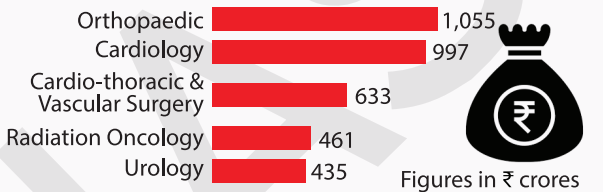
- > **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs):** for disease prevention and health promotion through creation of 1,50,000 HWCs by transforming existing Sub Centres and Primary Health Centres.
- > **PM-JAY**
 - ➔ It provides a cover of **Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year** for **secondary and tertiary care hospitalization** across public and private empanelled hospitals.
 - ➔ Over **10.74 crore poor and vulnerable entitled families are eligible** (No restriction on family size).
 - ➔ **Benefits of scheme are portable across country.**
 - ➔ PM-JAY is fully funded by Government and cost of implementation is shared between Centre and State.
- > **National Health Authority (attached office of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)** is apex body responsible for implementing AB-PMJAY.

WIDENING COVERAGE

Total **1 crore** treatments worth over **₹13,412 crore** provided under Ayushman Bharat in last 20 months



Top five tertiary specialities



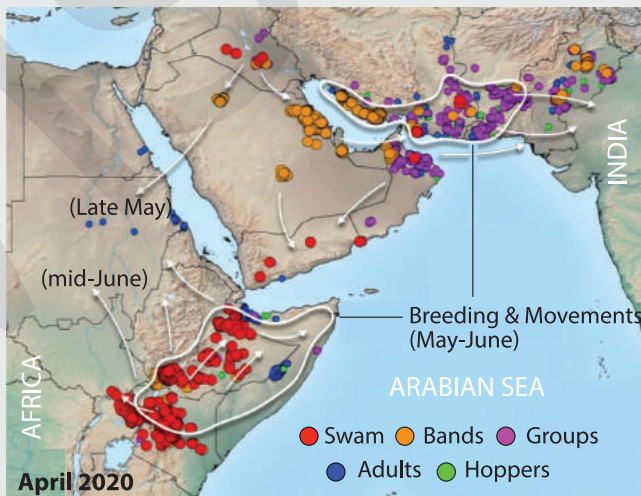
- Over 1 lakh people have availed portability scheme to avail treatment worth ₹ 248 crore
- 12,46,72,529 E-cards issued 1,00,42,690 Hospital admissions, 21,520 Hospitals Empanelled.
- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Rajasthan have emerged as the top performing states, providing the highest number of treatments.

LOCUSTS FROM PAKISTAN THREATEN STANDING CROPS ON 2 LAKH HECTARE

- Locusts have **entered Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh from Pakistan** because of favourable wind conditions and in search of food.
- **Climate change is a key driver** of current outbreak.
 - > In the wider East Africa region, **unusual above average rainy season** in March and April created favorable conditions for locusts to breed – increasing their number and areas they could spread to.
 - > These abnormal rains **were caused by Indian Ocean dipole**, a phenomenon accentuated by climate change.

• Locusts

- > Locusts belong to family of **grasshoppers** called **Acrididae** that multiply rapidly.
- > They migrate long distances in destructive swarms (up to 150km in one day).
- > Four species found in India: Desert locust, Migratory locust, Bombay Locust and Tree locust.
- > They **eat up every bit of vegetation** on the way including leaves, flowers etc, and also **destroy plants** by their weight as they descend on them in massive numbers which **threaten food security** of countries.



• Treatment: Insecticides such as **Malathion**.

- **Locust Warning Organisation** under Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, is responsible for monitoring, survey and control of Desert Locust in Scheduled Desert Areas mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

70% POWER PLANTS WON'T MEET EMISSION STANDARDS BY 2022 DEADLINE: CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT (CSE)

• As per CSE estimate, Coal based Thermal power plants (TPPs) are responsible for -

- > **70% of total freshwater withdrawal** by all industries
- > Over 60% of total industrial emissions of particulate matter (PM), 45% of SO₂, 30% of NO_x and more than 80% of mercury.

• In 2015, MoEFCC notified new environmental norms for PM, sulphur oxides (SO_x), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and mercury and water use for coal based TPPs. From initial deadline of 2017, it was extended to 2022.

- > Compliance required **retrofitting existing TPPs with auxiliaries to control emissions** such as Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD), Selective Catalytic Reduction(SCR) etc.

• Status of implementation-

- > **Centre-owned plants** are leading in implementation of SO₂ norms, followed by privately-owned ones.
- > **State-owned units have made no progress** - only one plant has awarded tenders so far.
- > **2022 deadline is unachievable** even if tenders are awarded now as units are still at preliminary stages.

- **Some recommendations:** Issuing High penalties/closure notices, decision regarding older plants which cannot meet emission standards, improvement in monitoring framework, deadline should be non-negotiable etc.

STATES EXPRESS DESIRE TO EXPEDITE EARLY NOTIFICATION OF ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA (ESA) OF WESTERN GHATS (WG)

- Six states, which form WG, asked **centre to expedite the process to notify the ESAs** in the global biodiversity hotspot for clarity.
 - > In 2018, Centre issued a draft notification mentioning 56,825 sq km of WG in six states as ESA.
 - > Six states **seek modifications to the notification** as it would create adverse effect on state's economy.
- Also, earlier two committees had recommended about ESA in WG, however both were rejected:
 - > **K Kasturirangan committee** in 2012 recommended 37% of WGs to be declared ESAs.
 - > **Madhav Gadgil Commission**, formed in 2010, recommended 64% of WG to be declared ESAs.

About Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZ)/ ESA

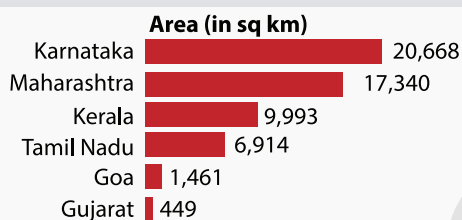
- These are areas notified under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 to be protected from industrial pollution and unregulated development.
- It seeks to provide **special protection** to landscape, biodiversity, wildlife, historical value, **regulate developmental activities** and ensure sustainable development in the ESA.

Eco-sensitive area remains on paper

WESTERN GHATS

Spread over six states: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala (covers distance of 1,500km along the western coast)

Proposed eco-sensitive area (ESA) to stop polluting activities and deforestation **56.825 sq km**



Centre keeps on issuing draft notification

First | Mar 10, 2014

Second | Sep 4, 2015

Third | Feb 27, 2017

Fourth | Oct 3, 2018

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES IF ESA IS FINALISED

- Mining
- Thermal power plants
- 'Red' category (High polluting) of Industries
- Building, construction and township (of built up areas of 20,000 sq metres and above)
- Area development projects (area of 50 hectares and above)

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>India - Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second addendum to PIWTT was signed with inclusion of new routes and declaration of a new Ports of Call. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ports of call are intermediate stops for a ship on its scheduled journey for taking on supplies or fuel. • PIWTT was signed in 1972 and was renewed in 2015 for five years under which inland vessels of one country can transit through specified routes of the other.
<p>Decade on Ecosystem Restoration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2021–2030 as Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. • It aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Showcase successful government-led and private initiatives to halt ecosystem degradation > Enhance knowledge exchange > Connect initiatives working in the same landscape, region, or topic, to increase efficiency and impact • Ecosystems addressed: Forests, grasslands, croplands, wetlands, savannahs, inland water, coastal and marine ecosystems, and urban environments. • Land Target: Restoration of at least 350 million hectares of degraded landscapes by 2030. • A target for coasts and oceans has yet to be set.
<p>Dibru-Saikhowa National Park & Biosphere Reserve, Assam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil India Ltd's decision to drill seven wells inside this Park has raised concerns. • Park is bounded by Lohit and Brahmaputra river on the north and by the Dibru river on the southern side. • Largest Salix swamp forest of North East India is also located inside this reserve. • Forests: semi-evergreen forests, deciduous forests, littoral and swamp forests and patches of wet evergreen forests. • Fauna: Tiger, Elephant, Leopard, Small Indian Civet, Gangetic Dolphin, Slow Loris, etc. • It is identified as Important Bird and Biodiversity Area.
<p>Sonic boom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a thunder-like noise heard on ground when an aircraft or other type of aerospace vehicle flies overhead faster than the speed of sound, or "supersonic." • Recently, it was heard in Bengaluru, emanating from an Indian Air Force test flight.
<p>SpaceX Demo-2 Mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program (CCP) to certify if SpaceX's crew transportation system can be used to ferry crew to and from International Space Station (ISS) regularly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > CCP has worked with several American aerospace industry companies with aim of developing reliable and cost-effective access to and from ISS. • By encouraging private companies to provide crew transportation services to and from low-Earth orbit, NASA can focus on building spacecraft and rockets meant for deep space exploration missions.

