



PLUTUS ACADEMY

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1.Kerala wins United Nations Award for Control of Non-Communicable Diseases

Kerala won the United Nation Interagency Task Force Award for its outstanding performance in controlling non-communicable diseases related to Sustainable Development Goals.

Highlights

The award recognised achievements of the state during 2019 in the prevention and control of Non communicable Diseases and mental health. The State has facilities at all levels to treat lifestyle diseases starting from public health centres to hospitals. The State was able to control the death rate of COVID-19 as it focused on Non-Communicable Diseases.

Kerala is one among the seven ministries of health from all over the world to receive the award. The other programmes of the state such as Cancer Treatment Programme, Lung Disease Programme and Paralysis Control Programme were also considered for the award.

United Nations Inter Agency Task Force on Non-Communicable Diseases

The task force reports to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) once a year. After adopting the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Agenda, the scope of work of UNIATF was expanded to include “Non Communicable Diseases” related Sustainable Development Goals. They are mental health, injuries, violence, environmental issues and nutrition issues. These are the major factors that impact Non-Communicable Diseases. Around 70% of deaths in the world are due to Non-Communicable Diseases.

Efforts of India on NCDs

India has launched the National Programme to control NCD. In the past four years, the programme has been scaled up four times. Today all the 36 States and Union

Territories in India have adopted the programme. The programme provides free diagnosis, follow-up, treatment, referral.

Non-Communicable Diseases in India

The main NCDs in India are cancers, heart attacks, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. The 2030 Agenda of SDG includes a target of reducing the number of premature deaths due to NCDs by one-third by 2030.

In India NCDs are closely related to poverty.

2.FAME Scheme: 670 new electric buses and 241 charging stations sanctioned

The Government of India recently sanctioned 670 Electric buses and 241 charging stations under phase II of FAME scheme. FAME is Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles. It was launched to promote electric mobility in the country.

Key Features

The scheme aims on electrification of public transportation. It provides incentives for three wheelers and four wheelers, especially those used for public transport. The second phase of the scheme was launched in 2019.

Under the scheme, the benefits are extended only to those vehicles that are fitted with advanced batteries such as Lithium Ion batteries. The scheme aims to establish 2,700 charging stations in metro cities and also in smart cities and other cities with population more than 1 million. Under the scheme, charging stations will also be established on major highways that are connecting city clusters.

The FAME Scheme was launched to achieve the goals of National Electric Mobility Mission Plan, 2020

Objective

The scheme was launched to address the issue of environmental pollution and fuel security. The second phase of the scheme intends to increase the demand of electric vehicles, work on charging station infrastructure, and provide a platform for technology.

FAME II

Under the second phase, Rs 10,000 crores were allocated. It is to be implemented between 2019 and 2022. Of this allocated budget, Rs 1,000 crores have been set aside for setting up of charging stations. Also, the Gol has planned to incentivize 5 lakh three wheelers, 35,000 four wheelers and 7,000 electric buses.

National Electric Mobility Mission Plan, 2020

It was launched in 2013 to achieve a target of 6 to 7 million sales of electric and hybrid vehicles by 2020. It aims to make hybrid and electric vehicles the first choice of the citizens while purchasing vehicles.

Controversies

The GOI recently allowed the sale of electric vehicles without batteries. The battery could be provided separately. This was done to make the Electric Vehicles more affordable. Batteries account to almost half the cost of the Electric Vehicles. Now the question arises how will the subsidies under the Electric Vehicle Adoption Policy be determined.

3. Finance Minister allows five states to raise financial resources through Open Market Borrowings

The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman recently allowed five states to raise additional financial resources of Rs 9,913 crores such as Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tripura and Goa.

Highlights

The states were granted permission as they have successfully implemented One Nation One Card System. The Central Government has been helping the states largely post pandemic. COVID-19 was declared a “notified disaster” under the Disaster Management Act. This was done to allow the state government to use the State Disaster Response Funds. Also, the Central Government allowed additional borrowing of the states by increasing their borrowing limit to 2% of their Gross Domestic Product. Andhra Pradesh can now borrow Rs 2,525 crores, Goa Rs 223 crores, Telangana Rs 2,508 cores, Tripura can borrow Rs 148 cores respectively.

What is Open Market Borrowing?

Open Marketing is the buying and selling of government securities in open market operations. This is currently being done only by the Reserve Bank of India. The GoI has now allowed the states to undertake open market operations.

RBI uses the open market to control liquidity in the economy. In other words, when the reserve bank wants to infuse money into the economy, it purchases Government Securities. By this, it gives money to the commercial banks and thus the money flow in the country increases.

There are two types of Open Market Operations. They are outright Purchase and Repurchase Agreement. Outright Purchase Is permanent and involves absolute

(complete) buying and selling of government securities. On the other hand repurchase agreements are short-term and shall be repurchased.

One Nation One Card

The scheme was launched to provide food security to the Indian citizens under National Food Security Act, 2013. It is an upgraded scheme of Subsidised Public food Distribution System. Under the upgraded scheme, a person can avail food security benefits at subsidised prices in public distribution shops (ration shops) irrespective of his location.

4.Saubhagya Scheme completes three years: Key Facts

On September 25, 2020, the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijili Har Ghar Yojana completed three years of success. It was launched in 2017 to ensure electrification of all households in both rural and urban areas of the country.

Highlights

The scheme was begun with a budget of Rs 16,320 crores. Out of this, Rs 14,000 was allocated for rural households and the rest for the urban. The households were identified under the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011. Under the scheme the eligible households are currently getting free electricity. The beneficiaries under the scheme are provided with LED lights, DC power plug.

As of June, 2019, over 91% of Indian households have been electrified under the scheme.

Key Features

- Under the scheme, the DISCOMs including those in the private sector are eligible for financial assistance.
- The unelectrified houses not covered under SECC are also included in the scheme. However, these households will have to pay Rs 500

Shortfalls in the scheme

The scheme does not address the structural issues of the power sector. It also failed to address the illegal connections taken by the households.

Legislation

Under Electricity Act, 2003, both the central and state governments have joint responsibility to provide electricity to the rural areas. Under the act, the central government in consultation with the state government should provide a national policy on electrification and local distribution in rural areas and stand-alone power systems for rural areas.

The Rural Electricity Policy, 2006 was brought in under the above legislation. Also, in 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Grameed Vidyutikaran Yojana was launched. In 2014, the Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana was launched.

Way Forward

The GoI should integrate renewable power into the national grid widely. Currently, India produces 73.35 GW of renewable energy.

India ranks third in terms of electricity generation globally and fifth in terms of installed renewable energy.

5.RBI releases Cyber Security Vision Framework for Urban Cooperative Banks

The Reserve Bank of India released Cyber Security Vision Framework for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs). The apex bank has taken four different guiding principles in order to formulate the framework. This is because the heterogeneity of UCBs in India in terms of regions, size, digital depth and financial health is huge. A “one size fits all” approach would not be appropriate while prescribing cyber security in the country.

The framework has been released under the title Technology Vision for Cyber Security' for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) – 2020-2023

Highlights

The framework aims to achieve its objective through a five pillared strategic approach which is as follows

- **Governance Oversight:** Under this framework, a RBI board will overview cyber security measures being implemented and will create IT Vision Documents based on the progress and gaps
- **Utile Technology Investment:** Under this plan, funds are to be created for cyber security projects. To manage business IT Assets and banking service availability.
- **Appropriate Regulation and supervision:** Under this a supervisory reporting framework will be created. Also appropriate guidance will be provided in implementing secure practices.
- **Robust Collaboration:** A forum to discuss practical issues and challenges and to share best practices is to be created. Cloud services are to be adopted to implement the framework successfully.
- **Developing IT and Cybersecurity Skills Set:** The technical skills are to be provided to the UCBs. This will help them manage their own IT and cyber security infrastructure. Also training and awareness are to be provided to all the UCBs on cyber security.

Background

Today all the UCBs are at some stage of technology adoption. This can be ATMs or mobile banking or internet banking. With technology becoming the key driver of the banking sector, it is essential for the UCBs to adopt cyber security measures to safeguard their transactions and also boost their technical skills.

6.Ministry of AYUSH sign agreement to boost Medicinal Plant Cultivation

The National Medicinal Plants Board operating under the Ministry of AYUSH signed a Memorandum of Understanding with major Herbal industrial bodies and other major AYUSH industries to promote medicinal plant cultivation.

Highlights

The industrial bodies that signed the agreement include ADMA (Ayurvedic Drug Manufacturer Association), FICCI, CII, ANMOI (Ayurvedic Medicines Manufacturers Organization of India), etc. Both the industries and National Medicinal Plants Board agreed to provide buy-back guarantee to the farmers.

National Medicinal Plants Board

The Board was set up under the Ministry of AYUSH in 2000 to look after matters related to medicinal plants. The board works to conserve medicinal plants and promote medicinal plant cultivation.

According to the Botanical Survey of India, out of 8,000 medicinal plants 53 are put under the category of endangered, threatened or critically endangered. This shows India is rich in medicinal plants and biodiversity. Therefore, it is essential to conserve and maintain the status.

Schemes for Medicinal Plants

The National AYUSH Mission called NAM and the Central Sector Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants was launched by Gol.

E-CHARAK

The Gol launched the E-CHARAK platform for better access to information about medicinal plants. The platform was developed by the National Medicinal Plants Board and CDAC. It serves as a marketplace for medicinal plants. Also, it serves as a knowledge repository to technologies and information related to medicinal plants.

National Gene Bank

In August 2020, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and National Medicinal Plants Board entered into an agreement to conserve medicinal and aromatic plant

genetic resources. Under this initiative, conservation of genes of aromatic and medicinal plants are to be done at National Gene Bank.

National Gene Bank

It was established in 1996. It operates under the National Medicinal Plants Board operating under the Ministry of AYUSH and National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources operating under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare. The following are the four main facilities provided by the bank

- Seed Gene Bank
- Cryo Gene Bank
- In Vitro Gene Bank
- Field Gene Bank

7.India attends Ministerial Roundtable Dialogue on Biodiversity

The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change represented India at the Ministerial Roundtable Dialogue on Biodiversity that was held virtually. The dialogue was hosted by China.

Highlights

The dialogue was conducted on Biodiversity Beyond 2020: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth. The dialogue was held a week ahead of the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity to exchange views on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. More than 15 ministers from different countries participated in the dialogue.

About the Dialogue

The Minister shared the following at the dialogue

- India has been taking a leadership role in conservation of biodiversity by hosting conferences of parties (COP). India hosted the United Nations convention to Combat Desertification COP in September 2019 and Conservation of Migratory Species COP in February 2020.
- India accounts to 8% of recorded species in the world with just 2.4% of land area.
- India has enhanced its forest cover to 25%
- India has set a target to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land and also achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030
- The tiger population in India has doubled in the last 11 years. Currently, India has the largest wild tiger population.

- India has set up 250,000 Biodiversity Management Committee all over the country to access the benefits of Convention on Biological Diversity and also to document biodiversity in the country

The 15th conference of parties to the convention on Biological Diversity is to be held at Kunming, China in 2021. It will adopt post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

United Nations Summit on Biodiversity

It is to be convened on September 30, 2020. This year the summit is to be held under the theme

Theme: Urgent Action on biodiversity for Sustainable Development

According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the species extinction rates are ten to hundred times as compared to the historical averages. The summit will mainly discuss the actions that are required to restore mother earth. Around 75% of earth's land has been altered.

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