

Fortune sides with him who dares. ~Virgil

NATIONAL POWER PORTAL (NPP)

NPP is a centralized system for Indian Power Sector which facilitates online data capture/ input (daily, monthly, annually) from generation, transmission and distribution utilities in the country and disseminate Power Sector Information (operational, capacity, demand, supply, consumption etc.) through various analyzed reports, graphs, statistics for generation, transmission and distribution at all India, region, state level for central, state and private sector.

1. The NPP Dashboard has been designed and developed to disseminate analyzed information about the sector through GIS enabled navigation and visualization chart windows on capacity, generation, transmission, distribution at national, state, DISCOM, town, feeder level and scheme based funding to states.
2. The system also facilitates various types of statutory reports required to be published regularly. The Dashboard would also act as the single point interface for all Power Sector Apps launched previously by the Ministry, like TARANG, UJALA, VIDYUT PRAVAH, GARV, URJA and MERIT.
3. NPP is integrated with associated systems of Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and other major utilities and would serve as single authentic source of power sector information to apex bodies, utilities for the purpose of analysis, planning, monitoring as well as for public users.
4. The system is available 24x7 and ensures effective and timely collection of data. It standardized data parameters and formats for seamless exchange of data between NPP and respective systems at utilities.

The stakeholders of NPP are Ministry of Power (MoP), CEA, PFC for Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), REC for Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana

(DDUGJY), other power sector utilities in government as well as private sector, Apex Bodies, other government organizations and public users.

The Nodal Agency for implementation of NPP and its operational control is CEA.

The system has been conceptualized, designed and developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

SOLAR ALLIANCE TO SET UP 1000 GW OF SOLAR ENERGY BY 2030

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has just been ratified by enough number of countries to make it operational. It will become operational by December 6 this year.

The ISA has a set for itself a target of installing 1000 GW of solar electricity in its member countries by the year 2030.

This will be one of the biggest global efforts to shift away from fossil fuels and move towards cleaner sources of energy

International Solar Alliance (ISA):

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of more than 121 countries, most of them being sunshine countries, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. The alliance's primary objective is work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

This initiative was first proposed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The alliance is a treaty-based inter-governmental organization. Countries that do not fall within the Tropics can join the ISA and enjoy all benefits as other members, with the exception of voting rights.

The initiative was launched by Modi at the India Africa Summit, and a meeting of member countries ahead of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in November 2015.

The Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance opened for signatures in Marrakech, Morocco in November 2016, and 121 countries have joined the ISA.

The ISA is to be headquartered in India. In January 2016, Narendra Modi, and the French President François Hollande jointly laid the foundation stone of the ISA Headquarters and inaugurated the interim Secretariat of the ISA at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gwalpahari, Gurgaon.

The alliance is also called International Agency for Solar Policy and Application (IASPA).

The focus is on solar power utilization. The launching of such an alliance in Paris also sends a strong signal to the global communities about the sincerity of the developing nations towards their concern about climate change and to switch to a low-carbon growth path.

ASIA PACIFIC COMPUTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (APCERT)

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under the aegis of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology organizing the Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT) Conference from November 12-15, 2017 in New Delhi.

This is the 15th Conference of APCERT and first ever conference in India and South Asia.

The conference theme is "Building Trust in the Digital Economy".

CERT's from 22 digital Asia Pacific economies participated along with participation from USA, Europe, Industry, Academia, Government and Media totaling to over 350 professionals to discuss response mechanisms in the complex and evolving threat landscape for Building Trust in the Digital Economy on the contours and vision laid down by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

This conference would cover contemporary topics around strategies of CERTs, Technology and Instruments for building trust in digitally

evolving economies and best practices for handling cyber security in mobile and social media.

Under the government's programme of supporting PhD scholars in digital technologies, the government will offer PhD scholarships in cyber security to candidates from Asia Pacific, who does their PhD in any of the 100 leading universities of India, including IITs, IISc and other universities.

The spectrum of topics covered included setting up sectoral CSIRTs, Nation State exploits, vulnerabilities of block chain, secure communication in industrial internet, cyber crime in financial technology ecosystem, building a sharing economy, machine learning, and malicious behavior in encrypted traffic, mobile security and Artificial Intelligence.

CERT-In:

CERT-In (the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) is a government-mandated information technology (IT) security organization. CERT-In was created by the Indian Department of Information Technology in 2004 and operates under the auspices of that department.

The purpose of CERT-In is to respond to computer security incidents, report on vulnerabilities and promote effective IT security practices throughout the country. According to the provisions of the Information Technology Amendment Act 2008, CERT-In is responsible for overseeing administration of the Act.

IWAI PUSHES FOR EARLY COMPLETION OF JAL MARG VIKAS PROJECT ON GANGA

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has awarded a contract to a reputed consultant for technical support services for the Multi-Modal Terminal at Haldia and new Navigation Lock at Farakka.

These projects are part of the Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) on National Waterway -I (River Ganga), being implemented with technical and financial assistance of the World Bank at an estimated cost of Rs. 5369 Crore. The objective of this is to ensure adherence to

timelines and budgeted costs of the project and full compliance with the other stated guidelines.

The consultants will ensure efficient management of the two EPC contracts awarded by IWA under the JMVP. They will provide comprehensive project technical support, including day to day supervision, proof checking of design, quality and safety parameters and coordination and management with all stakeholders.

The Contractor will also monitor the implementation of Environment Management Plan and Social Impact Management Plan.

The Jal Marg Vikas Project seeks to facilitate plying of vessels with capacity of 1500-2000 tons in the Haldia-Varanasi stretch of the River Ganga.

The major works being taken up under JMVP are development of fairway, Multi-Modal Terminals, strengthening of river navigation system, conservancy works, modern River Information System (RIS), Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS), night navigation facilities, modern methods of channel marking etc.

JPC SEEKS EXTENSION ON LAND BILL

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Land Acquisition Bill, 2015, is planning to seek the eighth extension in the upcoming Parliament session. The JPC was set up in May 2015 to examine the Bill after it was opposed by many political parties.

The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Bill, 2015, popularly known as Land bill, seeks to Amend the Act of 2013 (LARR Act, 2013).

It aims to amend six key provisions of the bill:

1. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Bill, 2015 seeks to Amend the Act of 2013 (LARR Act, 2013).

2. The Bill creates five special categories of land use: 1. defence, 2. rural infrastructure, 3. affordable housing, 4. industrial corridors, and 5. infrastructure projects including Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects where the central government owns the land
3. The Bill exempts the five categories from provisions of the LARR Act, 2013 which requires the consent of 80 per cent of land owners to be obtained for private projects and that of 70 per cent of land owners for PPP projects.
4. The Bill allows exemption for projects in these five categories from requiring Social Impact Assessment be done to identify those affected and from the restrictions on the acquisition of irrigated multi-cropped land imposed by LARR Act 2013.
5. The Bill brings provisions for compensation, rehabilitation, and resettlement under other related Acts such as the National Highways Act and the Railways Act in consonance with the LARR Act.
6. The Bill changes acquisition of land for private companies mentioned in LARR Act, 2013 to acquisition for 'private entities'. A private entity could include companies, corporations and nonprofit organizations.

FISH TOURISM CIRCUIT TO COME UP IN WEST BENGAL

West Bengal government is firming up plans to set up a fish tourism circuit to attract country's fish-loving communities.

The State Fisheries Development Corporation (SFDC) is preparing the blueprint for the tourism circuit. The circuit will centre around the hotels run by SFDC in places like Digha, Udaypur, Henry Island, Bishnupur, Jamunadighi and Siliguri.

A typical tour will consist of a two days-one night package, with fish as the focal theme – be it food or sightseeing.

DELHI POLLUTIONS GONE ABOVE THE SEVERE MARK

Delhi is facing the problem of chronic pollution and smog with highest ever deteriorated air quality index .

PROBLEMS:

1. Smog: The public health emergency
2. The callous response by various government agencies
3. Every state blames the other
4. The weak policy response is also an indication of an institutional vacuum to deal with public goods issues in a federal political system

SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS BY ENVIRONMENT POLLUTION (PREVENTION AND CONTROL) AUTHORITY (EPCA)

EPCA is tasked with implementation of the comprehensive pollution-tackling plan in Delhi-NCR cleared by Supreme Court

It had suggested measures like:

- (1) closure of brick kilns and stone crushers,
- (2) intensification of public transport services,
- (3) increase in the frequency of Delhi Metro services,
- (4) intensification of mechanized road sweeping and sprinkling of water,
- (5) continuation of the ban on use of generator sets in Delhi,
- (6) immediate enhancement of parking fees by four times,
- (7) ban on use of coal and firewood in hotels and eateries

The standard economic solution is to impose a Pigouvian tax on farmers to ensure the polluter pays for his actions

Such a tax would change incentives by increasing the cost of stubble burning

Ronald Coase way of dealing with the effects of stubble burning

Coase argued, in a landmark paper published in 1960, that the solution to externalities such as pollution is not unilateral action but complex bargaining between different interest groups

The bargaining will be based on how much farmer's value stubble burning on the one

hand and how much city dwellers value clean air on the other

How can it be implemented in India?

In the case of the smog in north India, it could mean that farmers should be paid to invest in better technologies to deal with the stubble left over from the previous harvest

A subsidy will change their incentives. Such a Coasean bargain is premised on two preconditions

First, property rights need to be assigned

Second, there needs to be a credible agency to manage the negotiation

- The more practical solution is that the state governments of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana be considered the representative agencies for their respective citizens
- They should negotiate on how the cost of changing farming practices will be shared. A first step will be to estimate the amount to be paid for every hectare of farmland that is shifted away from stubble burning
- The second problem is the lack of an institutional structure to deal with such federal negotiations, especially when the three state governments are run by three different political parties
- This is where the Union government needs to step in as a coordinating agency
- It can also offer to bear half the fiscal costs of any green bargain between the three states

What can we learn from the US?

A better solution over the long term is to set up a federal agency like the Environmental Protection Agency in the US, with powers to get states to the bargaining table

The exact contours of such an agency will need to be debated by climate change scientists, economists, environmental activists and political parties
