

GOVERNANCE**Green Energy Push Slowed Down: Report**

According to a report, the lockdowns slowed renewable energy installations in the country and the pace of such installations is lagging India's 2022 target. The report was released by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA). IEEFA is a US non-profit corporation. India stands at 4th position in the world in terms of installed Renewable Energy capacity, 5th in solar and 4th in wind.

Key Points**Highlights of the Report:****• Solar Energy Capacity:**

1. India has managed to install only 43.94 GW of solar energy capacity till 31st July 2021.
2. India was to have installed 100 GW of solar energy capacity by March 2023 - 40 GW rooftop solar and 60 GW ground-mounted utility scale.

• Green Energy Capacity:

1. Only 7 GW of green energy capacity was added in FY 2020/21.
2. India had set a target of 175 GW renewable power installed capacity by the end of 2022 and 450 GW by 2030.

• Power Traded Amount:

1. The amount of the power traded increased by 20% over 2020, by 37% compared to 2019 and by 30% over 2018.
2. This led to prices on average increasing by 38% compared to 2020, by 8% compared to 2019 and by 11% over 2018.

• Coal Stocks:

1. It hit a new record high of 1,320 lakh tonnes (Mt) and exceeded the monthly averages of the previous five years.
2. However, an analysis of the daily coal stock position exhibited a "deterioration" as more plants reported supplies were critical.

Suggestions:

- The challenge of India's growing daily peak demand does not require investment in excess baseload thermal capacity.
- Instead, the electricity system needed "flexible and dynamic generation solutions" such as battery storage, pumped hydro storage, peaking gas-fired capacity and flexible operation of its existing coal fleet.
- Government should accelerate deployment of such sources to help meet peak demand and also balance the grid at a lower cost.
- Their prices were falling and so would be cost effective and a buffer against very high prices at the power exchange during peak demand.

India's Initiatives for the Renewable Energy

1. National Solar Mission (NSM)
2. The Wind Energy Revolution
3. National Biofuels Policy and SATAT
4. Small Hydro Power (SHP)
5. National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHEM)
6. Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme
7. National Biofuels Policy and SAYAY

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**Extension of CPEC to Afghanistan**

Recently, Pakistan has discussed Taliban-led Afghanistan joining the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) infrastructure project. China has proposed construction of the Peshawar-Kabul motorway as an extension of CPEC in Afghanistan.

Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and China emerging as a major challenge in the form of the extension of its ambitious CPEC, has raised India's concerns on economic, political and security fronts.

Key Points**China-Pakistan Economic Corridor:**

- The CPEC is a bilateral project between Pakistan and China.
- It is intended to promote connectivity across Pakistan with a network of highways, railways, and pipelines accompanied by energy, industrial, and other infrastructure development projects.

- It aims to link the Western part of China (Xinjiang province) to the Gwadar Port in Balochistan, Pakistan via Khunjerab Pass in the Northern Parts of Pakistan. It will pave the way for China to access the Middle East and Africa from Gwadar Port, enabling China to access the Indian Ocean.
- CPEC is a part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI, launched in 2013, aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.
- India has been severely critical of the CPEC, as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which is a disputed territory between India and Pakistan.

Implications of Afghanistan Joining CPEC on India:

- **Filling the Void:** In Afghanistan, China is trying to fill the vacuum created after the US forces left Afghanistan economically and gets its Belt and Road (BRI) initiatives going.
 - **Undermining Chabahar Port:** The foremost concern with Afghanistan joining CPEC is that India is apprehensive of its investment in Chabahar port in Iran. India is wary of undermining the India–Iran–Afghanistan trilateral that gives Afghanistan access to sea via Chabahar port.
 - **Weakening of India's Economic Influence:** Attempts to extend CPEC to Afghanistan may undermine India's position as economic, security and strategic partner of Afghanistan.
1. India has been the biggest regional donor to Afghanistan committing more than US\$2 billion for the developmental work that includes construction of roads, power plants, dams, parliament building, rural development, education, infrastructure and much more.
 2. With Extension of CPEC, China will play a leading role in Afghanistan overpowering India's economic influence in Afghanistan.
- **Terrorism and Strategic Concerns:** Given India's limited strategic depth in Afghanistan, China is in better position to leverage its strategic advantages in Afghanistan.
1. Further, Afghanistan's inclusion in the CPEC will definitely help in the economic development, but it will also help Pakistan gain the strategic advantage and upper hand in Afghanistan at the cost of India.
 2. In this situation, Pakistan may augment use of terrorism against India.
- **Control of Strategic Air Base:** Besides its issues with the CPEC, India will be wary of the likelihood that China may try to take over the Bagram air force base in Afghanistan. The Bagram airport is the biggest airport and technically well-equipped as the Americans kept it for their use till the end, instead of the Kabul airport.
 - **Exploitation of Rare Earth Minerals:** With the extension of CPEC, China is also looking to exploit Afghanistan's rich minerals and highly lucrative rare-earth mines. Rare-earth metals, which are key components for a host of advanced electronic technologies and hi-tech missile guidance systems.

Way Forward

- For the success of CPEC in Afghanistan and to a large extent in Pakistan's troublesome territories, it becomes imperative for China to stabilise the security situation in the region.
- Improved infrastructure and security situation in Afghanistan may help India to conduct its economic and trade activities in a smoother way.
- However, given the hostility of China, Pakistan and Taliban against India, Afghanistan joining CPEC will certainly be a strategic advantage for China and a loss for India.

SOCIAL ISSUE

PM Poshan Scheme

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Prime Minister POSHAN scheme or PM-POSHAN for providing one hot cooked meal in Government and Government-aided schools. The scheme will replace the existing national programme for mid-day meal in schools or Mid-day Meal Scheme.

It has been launched for an initial period of five years (2021-22 to 2025-26).

Mid-day Meal Scheme

- The Mid-day Meal Scheme (under the Ministry of Education) is a centrally sponsored scheme which was launched in 1995.
- It is considered as the world's largest school meal programme aimed to attain the goal of universalization of primary education.
- Provides cooked meals to every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school.
- If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.

Key Points**PM POSHAN:****• Coverage:**

1. The scheme will cover 11.8 crore students enrolled in classes 1 to 8 in over 11.2 lakh schools across the country. Primary (1-5) and upper primary (6-8) schoolchildren are currently entitled to 100 grams and 150 grams of food grains per working day each, to ensure a minimum of 700 calories.
2. The scheme will be extended to students studying in pre-primary or Balvatikas running in government and government aided primary schools. Balvatika is the pre-school that was started in government schools last year to include children aged younger than six years in the formal education system.

- **Nutritional Gardens:** The government will promote nutritional gardens in schools. The gardens are being provided to offer additional micro-nutrients to students.

• Supplementary Nutrition:

1. The new scheme has a provision for supplementary nutrition for children in aspirational districts and those with high prevalence of anaemia.
2. It does away with the restriction on the part of the Centre to provide funds only for wheat, rice, pulses and vegetables.
3. Currently, if a state decides to add any component like milk or eggs to the menu, the Centre does not bear the additional cost. Now that restriction has been lifted.

• Tithi Bhojan Concept:

1. The concept of Tithi Bhojan will be encouraged extensively.
2. Tithi Bhojan is a community participation programme in which people provide special food to children on special occasions/festivals.

• Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):

1. The central government will ensure Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) from states to schools, which will use it to cover cooking costs. Earlier money was allocated to the states, which then included their share of the money before sending it to a nodal midday meal scheme authority at district and tehsil levels.
2. This is to ensure no leakages at the level of district administration and other authorities.

- **Nutrition Expert:** A nutrition expert is to be appointed in each school whose responsibility is to ensure that health aspects such as Body Mass Index (BMI), weight and haemoglobin levels are addressed.

• Social Audit of the Scheme:

1. A social audit of the scheme has also been mandated for each school in each state to study the implementation of the scheme, which was so far not being done by all states.
2. The Ministry of Education will also engage college and university students to monitor the scheme at a local level.

- **Fund Sharing:** The Centre will bear Rs. 54,061 crore of the total estimated cost of Rs 1.3 lakh crore, with the states paying Rs 31,733 crore (Rs 45,000 crore will be released by the Centre as subsidies for food grains).

• Vocal for Local for Atmanirbhar Bharat:

1. Involvement of Farmers Producer Organizations (FPO) and Women Self Help Groups in implementation of the scheme will be encouraged.
2. Use of locally grown traditional food items for a fillip to local economic growth will be encouraged.

Challenges:

- **Meeting Nutrition Targets:** As per the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025.
- **Serious 'Hunger' Level:** India has been ranked at 94 among 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020. India has a level of hunger that is "serious".
- **Menace of Malnutrition:** According to the National Family Health Survey-5, several states across the country have reversed course and recorded worsening levels of child malnutrition. India is home to about 30% of the world's stunted children and nearly 50% of severely wasted children under the age of five.
- **Others:** Corrupt practices and Caste Bias and Discrimination in serving food.

Other Related Government Initiatives:

1. Anemia Mukht Bharat Abhiyan
2. The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013
3. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)
4. Poshan Abhiyaan

POLITY**Special Category Status**

Recently, the Bihar Government has asserted that it has not dropped the demand of special category status to Bihar.

Key Points**About Special Category Status (SCS):**

- Special category status is a classification given by the Centre to assist development of states that face geographical and socio-economic disadvantages.
- This classification was done on the recommendations of the Fifth Finance Commission in 1969.
- It was based on the Gadgil formula. The parameters for SCS were:
 1. Hilly Terrain;
 2. Low Population Density And/Or Sizeable Share of Tribal Population;
 3. Strategic Location along Borders With Neighbouring Countries;
 4. Economic and Infrastructure Backwardness; and
 5. Nonviable Nature of State finances.
- SCS was first accorded in 1969 to Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and Nagaland. Since then eight more states have been included (Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand).
- There is no provision of SCS in the Constitution.
- Special Category Status for plan assistance was granted in the past by the National Development Council to the States that are characterized by a number of features necessitating special consideration. Now, it is done by the central government.
- The 14th Finance Commission has done away with the 'special category status' for states, except for the Northeastern and three hill states.
 1. Instead, it suggested that the resource gap of each state be filled through 'tax devolution', urging the Centre to increase the states' share of tax revenues from 32% to 42%, which has been implemented since 2015.

Benefits to States with SCS:

- The Centre pays 90% of the funds required in a centrally-sponsored scheme to special category states as against 60% or 75% in case of other states, while the remaining funds are provided by the state governments.
- Unspent money does not lapse and is carried forward.
- Significant concessions are provided to these states in excise and customs duties, income tax and corporate tax.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Cyclone Gulab**

Recently, Cyclone Gulab made landfall on India's east coast and weakened into a depression. Another cyclone—Shaheen—may form over the Arabian Sea from the remnant of cyclone Gulab.

Key Points**Named By:**

- Gulab was a tropical cyclone and was named by Pakistan. It affected the coasts of south Odisha north Andhra Pradesh.
 1. According to WMO (World Meteorological Organization) guidelines, countries in every region are supposed to give names for cyclones.
 2. The North Indian Ocean Region covers tropical cyclones formed over Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.
 3. The 13 members, which come under the region, are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen.
 4. Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMC) in the world, is mandated to issue advisories and name tropical cyclones in the north Indian Ocean Region. It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Occurrence:

- India has a bi-annual cyclone season that occurs between March to May and October to December. But on rare occasions, cyclones do occur in June and September months. Cyclone Gulab became the third cyclone of the 21st century to make landfall over the east coast in September, after tropical cyclone Daye in 2018 and Pyarr in 2005.
- Typically, tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region (Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea) develop during the pre-monsoon (April to June) and post-monsoon (October to December) periods.
- May-June and October-November are known to produce cyclones of severe intensity that affect the Indian coasts.

Classification:

- The IMD classifies cyclones on the basis of the Maximum Sustained Surface Wind Speed (MSW) they generate.
- The cyclones are classified as severe (MSW of 48-63 knots), very severe (MSW of 64-89 knots), extremely severe (MSW of 90-119 knots) and super cyclonic storm (MSW of 120 knots or more). One knot is equal to 1.8 kmph (kilometers per hour).
- Cyclone Gulab Falls into the severe category with maximum speed of 95 km/hr.
- Cyclones that Hit India in 2020-21: Tauktae, Yaas, Nisarga, Amphan.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. POSHAN Abhiyaan 2.0 has created an enabling atmosphere to tackle hunger and malnutrition. However, its needs to account for the new realities in the covid times to make India malnutrition free. Examine. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

Poshan Abhiyan, which vowed to make India free of malnutrition by 2022, repositioned nutrition as central to development and emphasised its multi-factorial and multi-sectoral nature. It was launched to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcome, with renewed focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition in the country.

Recently, the Ministry for Women and Child Development inaugurated Poshan 2.0 and urged all Aspirational Districts to establish a Poshan Vatika (nutrition garden) during the Nutrition Month (Poshan Mah) from 1st September.

Body**Poshan 2.0: Overview**

- Under Poshan 2.0, several related schemes have been merged to tap the synergies.
- Malnutrition hotspots are being identified and 112 aspiring districts will receive extra attention.
- **Poshan Maah:** It includes a month-long activity focussed on antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding, Anaemia, growth monitoring, girls education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene and sanitation and eating healthy (Food Fortification).
 1. The activities focus on Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) and are based on Jan Andolan Guidelines.
 2. Under the current Poshan Maah, the drive to identify children suffering from severe acute malnutrition has been intensified and Anganwadi workers have been asked to refer those having medical complications to health institutions and NRCs.
- **Poshan Vatika:** Its main objective is to ensure supply of nutrition through organically home-grown vegetables and fruits simultaneously ensuring that the soil must also remain healthy. Plantation drives for Poshan Vatikas would be taken up by all the stakeholders in the space available at anganwadis, school premises and gram panchayats.

Covid and impact on nutrition in India

- The momentum set by this entire nutrition movement was disturbed once Covid lockdowns led to the shutting of schools, Anganwadi centres, Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres;
- Further, frontline workers had to be engaged in Covid-related work that took precedence over their daily duties, which entailed identifying, referring and monitoring children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition among other nutrition-strengthening activities.
- States tried to cope to the best of their abilities by replacing hot-cooked meals with dry ration or cash transfers.

- But understandably, they couldn't match the intensity of Poshan Abhiyan with Covid surveillance taking over as priority.
- Moreover, indirect forces triggered by the pandemic such as disruption in food systems, dried-up income sources, job losses and consequent financial hardships also mean that access to nutrient-rich food might have reduced among economically vulnerable people.

Streamlining Poshan 2.0 to overcome covid related nutritional challenges

- Community management protocols: For those facing severe acute malnutrition without medical complications, community management protocols should be strengthened, so that they do not go on to develop medical complications in times of the pandemic.
- Adaptation: Fresh waves of Covid cannot be ruled out in the near future, and we must adapt our nutrition interventions to the possibility of such repeated shocks.
- Document Learning: Rising above political differences, it is important to document and learn from states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, which have scaled up Community-based Management of Malnutrition practices in recent times, so that best practices can be adopted and incorporated.
- Revamp health awareness and monitoring: Other activities, such as making new mothers breastfeed for longer, managing childhood diarrhoea, distributing deworming tablets and iron and folic acid diligently while convincing target groups to take these diligently will go a long way in improving the nutrition status of children and new mothers.
- Food fortification to ensure essential micro nutrients reaches the body.

Conclusion

Covid-related shocks could lead to an additional 9 million children under the age of five suffering from wasting, of which two-thirds will be in South Asia, predicted research in Nature in August. So it is important to not only renew but multiply our efforts towards Poshan 2.0 with full vigour while practising physical distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. With reference to 'Swachh Survekshan' survey, which was in news recently, consider the following statements:

1. It is an annual survey of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in cities and towns across India.
2. It is conducted by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) since 2014.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only b. 2 only c. Both 1 and 2 d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. Recently, the Supreme Court of India has held that the government aid to an institution is:

- a. a fundamental right **b. not a fundamental right**
c. extraordinary right d. none of the above

Q3. With reference to the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, consider the following statements?

1. It involves the creation of not just a unique health ID for every citizen, but also a digital health insurance.
2. It supports health ID creation via mobile or Aadhaar.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only **b. 2 only** c. Both 1 and 2 d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. The 'Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action' (JCPOA) was in news recently, is related to which of the following?

- a. US-Taliban peace deal
b. Israeli-Palestinian peace process
c. Iran nuclear deal
d. Climate change mitigation strategy

Q5. Formosa Strait separates:

- a. Spain from Morocco
b. Australia from New Zealand
c. China from Taiwan
d. Indonesia from Singapore