



# Daily Current Affairs

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## **Cabinet approves Submission of India's Second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to UNFCCC.**

### **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved Submission of India's second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change towards fulfilment of the reporting obligation under the Convention.

### **Salient Features:**

- The scope of BUR is to provide an update to India's first BUR to UNFCCC. The BUR contains five major components — National Circumstances; National Greenhouse Gas Inventory; Mitigation Actions; Finance, Technology and Capacity Building Needs and Support Received and Domestic Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) arrangements.
- BUR has been prepared based on a range of studies conducted at the national level.
- The BUR has undergone multitier review process, through peer review, review by Technical Advisory Committee of Experts chaired by Additional Secretary (Climate Change) and by National Steering Committee chaired by Secretary (EF&CC).
- The National Steering Committee is an inter-ministerial body comprising NITI Aayog, Agricultural Research and Education, Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Economic Affairs, External Affairs, New and Renewable Energy, Science & Technology, Coal, Power, Railway Board, Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Water Resources, River Development and

Ganga Rejuvenation, Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Rural Development, Housing and Urban Affairs, Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Steel, Civil Aviation, Statistics and Programme Implementation and India Meteorological Department. The BUR has been finalized after addressing all the relevant comments and modifications as per the multi-tier review process.

- In 2014, a total of 26,07,488 Gigagram (Gg) CC-2 equivalent\* (around 2.607 billion tonnes of CC-2 equivalent) of GHGs were emitted from all activities (excluding LULUCF) in India.
- The net national GHG emissions after including LULUCF were 23,06,295 Gg CO<sub>2</sub>e equivalent (around 2.306 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent). Out of the total emissions, energy sector accounted for 73%, IPPU 8%, agriculture 16% and waste sector 3%. About 12% of emissions were offset by the carbon sink action of forestland, cropland and settlements.

#### **Major impact:**

- Submission of India's Second BUR will fulfil the obligation of India to furnish information regarding implementation of the Convention, being a Party.

#### **Background:**

- India is a Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
  - The Convention, in accordance with its Article 4.1 and 12.1, enjoins upon all Parties, both developed country Parties and developing country Parties to furnish information, in the form of a National Communication regarding implementation of the Convention.
  - Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in its sixteenth session decided vide paragraph 60 (c) of decision 1 that developing countries, consistent with their capabilities and the level of support provided for reporting, should also submit biennial update reports containing updates of national greenhouse gas inventories and information on mitigation actions, needs and support received.
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## **Draft National Commission for Homoeopathy, Bill, 2018**

### **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the draft National Commission for Homoeopathy, Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the existing regulator Central Council for Homoeopathy (CCH) with a new body to ensure transparency.

### **Important features:**

- The draft bill provides for the constitution of a National Commission with three autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Homoeopathy by Homoeopathy Education Board.
- The Board of assessment and rating to assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Homoeopathy and Board of ethics and registration of practitioners of Homoeopathy to maintain National Register and ethical issues relating to practice are under the National Commission for Homoeopathy.
- It also proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses. Further, a teacher's eligibility test has been proposed to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions.
- It further aims at bringing reforms in the medical education of Homoeopathy in lines with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for Allopathy system of medicine. The CCH had been earlier superseded by Board of Governors through an Ordinance and subsequent amendment of Act.

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## **Cabinet apprised of two Bilateral MoUs between India and Cuba, and India and Korea in the area of Biotechnology**

### **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has

been apprised of two Bilateral Memorandums of Understanding signed between India and Cuba, and India and Korea in the area of Biotechnology.

**Major impact:**

- The MoUs have been signed to strengthen the Indo-Cuba and Indo-Republic of Korea bilateral ties, to work out the future agenda for the collaboration for Innovation in S&T Diplomacy to evolve a concrete strategic plan in the area of biotechnology education, training and research.
- The proposal has the potential towards employment generation for more than 50 postgraduates and Ph.Ds in biological sciences and related areas for a period of upto five years.

**Background:**

**Indo-Cuba Collaboration:**

- India and Cuba signed a bilateral MoU to deepen collaboration on biotechnology on 22nd June 2018 during the visit of Hon'ble President of India to Havana, Cuba.
- The Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba, have signed the MoU on 22nd June, 2018 at Havana.

**India-Republic of Korea Collaboration**

- India and Korea have signed an MoU in the area of Biotechnology and Bio-economy.
- The MoU aims to broaden and deepen cooperation between the two countries in Science & Technology, in the fields of Biotechnology and encouraging industrial R&D and related bilateral investment flows.

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**National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2018**

## **Why in news?**

The Cabinet today approved the draft National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the existing regulator Central Council for Indian Medicine (CCIM) with a new body to ensure transparency.

### **Salient features:**

- The draft bill provides for the constitution of a National Commission with four autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Ayurveda, under Board of Ayurveda and Unani, Siddha & Sowa Rigpa under Board of Unani, Siddha and Sowa Rigpa.
- There are two common Boards namely, Board of assessment and rating to assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Indian systems of Medicine and Board of ethics and registration of practitioners of Indian systems of medicine to maintain National Register and ethical issues relating to practice under the National Commission for Indian Medicine.
- It also proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam, which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses. Further, a teacher's eligibility test has been proposed in the Bill to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions.
- The draft bill is aimed at bringing reforms in the medical education of Indian medicine sector in lines with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for Allopathy system of medicine.
- The proposed regulatory structure will enable transparency and accountability for protecting the interest of the general public. The NCIM will promote availability of affordable healthcare services in all parts of the country.

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## **Cabinet approves Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2018**

## **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has

approved the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2018 which was last reviewed and issued in 2011, with periodic amendments to some clauses.

The move comes in the backdrop of a series of representations received by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change from various Coastal States/UTs, besides other stakeholders, for a comprehensive review of the provisions of the CRZ Notification, 2011, particularly related to the management and conservation of marine and coastal eco-systems, development in coastal areas, eco-tourism, livelihood option and sustainable development of coastal communities etc.

### **Benefits:**

- The proposed CRZ Notification, 2018 will lead to enhanced activities in the coastal regions thereby promoting economic growth while also respecting the conservation principles of coastal regions.
- It will not only result in significant employment generation but also to better life and add value to the economy of India. The new notification is expected to rejuvenate the coastal areas while reducing their vulnerabilities.

### **Salient Features:**

1. Allowing FSI as per current norms in CRZ areas: As per CRZ, 2011 Notification, for CRZ-II (Urban) areas, Floor Space Index (FSI) or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) had been frozen as per 1991 Development Control Regulation (DCR) levels. In the CRZ, 2018 Notification, it has been decided to de-freeze the same and permit FSI for construction projects, as prevailing on the date of the new Notification. This will enable redevelopment of these areas to meet the emerging needs.
2. Densely populated rural areas to be afforded greater opportunity for development: For CRZ-III (Rural) areas, two separate categories have now been stipulated as below:
  - a. CRZ-III A - These are densely populated rural areas with a population density of 2161 per square kilometre as per 2011 Census. Such areas shall have a No Development Zone (NDZ) of 50 meters from the HTL as against 200 meters from the High



- Tide Line stipulated in the CRZ Notification, 2011 since such areas have similar characteristics as urban areas.
- b. CRZ-III B - Rural areas with population density of below 2161 per square kilometre as per 2011 Census. Such areas shall continue to have an NDZ of 200 meters from the HTL.
  3. Tourism infrastructure for basic amenities to be promoted: Temporary tourism facilities such as shacks, toilet blocks, change rooms, drinking water facilities etc. have now been permitted in Beaches. Such temporary tourism facilities are also now permissible in the "No Development Zone" (NDZ) of the CRZ-III areas as per the Notification. However, a minimum distance of 10 m from HTL should be maintained for setting up of such facilities.
  4. CRZ Clearances streamlined: The procedure for CRZ clearances has been streamlined. Only such projects/activities, which are located in the CRZ-I (Ecologically Sensitive Areas) and CRZ IV (area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 Nautical Miles seaward) shall be dealt with for CRZ clearance by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The powers for clearances with respect to CRZ-II and III have been delegated at the State level with necessary guidance.
  5. A No Development Zone (NDZ) of 20 meters has been stipulated for all Islands: For islands close to the main land coast and for all Backwater Islands in the main land, in wake of space limitations and unique geography of such regions, bringing uniformity in treatment of such regions, NDZ of 20 m has been stipulated.
  6. All Ecologically Sensitive Areas have been accorded special importance: Specific guidelines related to their conservation and management plans have been drawn up as a part of the CRZ Notification.
  7. Pollution abatement has been accorded special focus: In order to address pollution in Coastal areas treatment facilities have been made permissible activities in CRZ-I B area subject to necessary safeguards.
  8. Defence and strategic projects have been accorded necessary dispensation.

### **Background:**

- With the objective of conservation and protection of the coastal environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate

Change notified the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification in 1991, which was subsequently revised in 2011. The notification was amended from time to time based on representations received.

- A need was felt overtime to undertake a comprehensive revision of the notification on the basis of number of representations from various Coastal States/UTs, besides other stakeholders particularly related to the management and conservation of marine and coastal eco-systems, development in coastal areas, eco-tourism, livelihood options and sustainable development of coastal communities etc.
- Therefore, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change constituted a Committee in June 2014 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Shailesh Nayak to examine the various issues and concerns of Coastal States/UTs and other stakeholders for recommending appropriate changes in the CRZ Notification, 2011.
- The Shailesh Nayank Committee held wide ranging consultations with State Governments and other stakeholders and submitted its recommendations in 2015.
- The recommendations were further examined in consultation with Members of Parliament of Coastal States and Union Territories besides other concerned Ministries of Government of India. A draft notification was issued in April, 2018 for inviting comments from public at large.
- A number of suggestions and comments were received by the Government and based on overall imperative of sustainable development of Coastal areas and need for conserving the Coastal environment, Government has approved the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2018 which is expected to go a long way in meeting the aspirations of Coastal communities besides ensuring welfare of poor and vulnerable populations.
- The changes brought about in the CRZ Notification will further add to creating additional opportunities for affordable housing. This will benefit not only the housing sector but the people at large looking for shelter.
- The Notification is so designed that it balances the needs in such a way that both are fulfilled. Tourism has been one of the greatest creators of livelihood and jobs.
- The new Notification will boost tourism in terms of more activities, more infrastructure and more opportunities and will certainly go a long way in creating employment opportunities in various aspects of



tourism. This will also give boost to people, desirous of seeing and enjoying the beauty of the mighty seas.

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## **Cabinet approves Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012**

### **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children.

### **Salient Features:**

- The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.
- The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age, and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child. The act is gender neutral.
- The amendment in Section-4, Section-5, Section-6, Section-9, Section-14, Section-15 and Section-42 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, is made to address the aspects of child sexual abuse in appropriate manner. The modification is made to address the need for stringent measures required to deter the rising trend of child sex abuse in the country.
- To discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent Section-4, Section-5 and Section-6 are proposed to be amended to provide option of stringent punishment, including death penalty, for committing aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child to protect the children from sexual abuse.
- The amendments are also proposed in section-9 to protect children from sexual offences in times of natural calamities and disasters and

in cases where children are administered, in any way, any hormone or any chemical substance, to attain early sexual maturity for the purpose of penetrative sexual assault.

- Section-14 and Section-15 of the POCSO Act, 2012 are also proposed to be amended to address the menace of the child pornography.
- It is proposed to levy fine for not destroying/or deleting/ or reporting the pornographic material involving a child. The person can be further penalized with jail term or fine or both for transmitting/propagating/administrating such material in any manner except for the purpose of reporting as may be prescribed and for use as evidence in court.
- Penal provisions have been made more stringent for storing/possessing any pornographic material in any form involving a child for commercial purpose.

#### **Benefits:**

- The amendment is expected to discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent due to strong penal provisions incorporated in the Act.
- It may protect the interest of vulnerable children in times of distress and ensures their safety and dignity. The amendment aims to establish clarity regarding the aspects of child abuse and punishment thereof.

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## **Cabinet approves Indian Human Spaceflight Initiative: Gaganyaan Programme**

### **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved the Gaganyaan Programme with demonstration of Indian Human Spaceflight capability to low earth orbit for a mission duration ranging from one orbital period to a maximum of seven days.

- A human rated GSLV Mk-III will be used to carry the orbital module

which will have necessary provisions for sustaining a 3-member crew for the duration of the mission.

- The necessary infrastructure for crew training, realization of flight systems and ground infrastructure will be established to support the Gaganyaan Programme. ISRO will collaborate extensively with National agencies, laboratories, academia and industry to accomplish the Gaganyaan Programme objectives.

### **Expenditure:**

- The total fund requirement for the Gaganyaan Programme is within Rs.10,000 crore and includes cost of technology development, flight hardware realization and essential infrastructure elements.
- Two unmanned flights and one manned flight will be undertaken as part of Gaganyaan Programme.

### **Benefits:**

- Gaganyaan Programme will establish a broader framework for collaboration between ISRO, academia, industry, national agencies and other scientific organizations.
- It This will allow pooling in of diverse technological and industrial capabilities and enable broader participation in research opportunities and technology development benefitting large number of students and researchers.
- The flight system realization will be through Industry.
- It is expected to generate employment and train human resources in advanced technologies.
- It will inspire large number of young students to take up science and technology careers for national development.
- Gaganyaan Programme is a national effort and will involve the participation of the Industry, Academia and National Agencies spread across the length and breadth of the country.

### **Implementation Strategy and Targets:**

- Gaganyaan Programme will be a national effort in collaboration with Industry, Academia and other scientific agencies and laboratories as stake holders along with ISRO.
- ISRO will be responsible for realizing the flight hardware through Industry. National agencies, laboratories and Academia will

participate in crew training, human life science technology development initiatives as well as design reviews.

- First human space flight demonstration is targeted to be completed within 40 months from the date of sanction. Prior to this, two unmanned flights in full complement will be carried out to gain confidence on the technology and mission management aspects.

### **Impact:**

- The programme is expected to spur research and development within the country in niche science and technology domains.
- Huge potential for technology spinoffs in areas such as medicine, agriculture, industrial safety, pollution, waste management, water and food resource management etc.
- Human spaceflight programme will provide a unique micro-gravity platform in space for conducting experiments and test bed for future technologies.
- The programme is expected to give impetus to economic activities within the country in terms of employment generation, human resource development and enhanced industrial capabilities.
- Human Spaceflight capability will enable India to participate as a collaborating partner in future Global space exploration initiatives with long term national benefits.

### **Background:**

- ISRO has completed the development of launch vehicle GSLV Mk-III which has the necessary payload capability to launch a 3-member crew module in low earth orbit.
- ISRO has also tested the crew escape system which is an essential technology for human space flight. The aerodynamic characterization of crew module has been completed as part of GSLV Mk-III X mission flight.
- Elements of life support system and Space suit also have been realized and tested. In addition, the orbital & re-entry mission and recovery operations have been flight demonstrated in Space Capsule Re-entry experiment (SRE) mission.
- ISRO has developed and demonstrated most of the baseline technologies essential for undertaking human spaceflight mission. Globally also, there is a renewed interest in undertaking manned

exploration initiatives.

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