

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday approved the “Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND)” scheme with an outlay of ₹2,539.61 crore up to 2025-26, paving the way for upgrade and expansion of the public service broadcasting infrastructure across the country. As a result, FM broadcasting of All India Radio (AIR) is expected to cover over 80% of the country’s population, while eight lakh Doordarshan Free Dish DTH set top boxes will be distributed to people living in remote, tribal and border areas, aspirational districts and zones affected by Left Wing Extremism.

India and China’s exposure to industrial automation looks immensely different though both share a comparable story as far as consumption is concerned, industry officials said. For instance, when China claimed to have a density of 187 robots per 10,000 employees, India only had four robots for an equal number of employees, indicating the latter was clearly lagging in terms of industrial automation despite technology prowess.

An Indian tribunal declined a request by Google to block an antitrust ruling that ordered the tech giant to change its approach to its Android platform, dealing the U.S. firm a setback in a key growth market. In October, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) fined Alphabet Inc.’s Google \$161 million for exploiting its dominant position in markets, and asked it to change curbs on smartphone makers related to preinstalling apps.

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission with an initial outlay of ₹19,744 crore, in a move aimed at making the country a global hub to produce, utilise and export green hydrogen and its derivatives. The government expects that the initiative will help abate nearly 50 million tonnes (MT) of annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and cumulatively reduce fossil fuel imports estimated at over ₹1 lakh crore.

Train ticketing platform RailYatri confirmed that it suffered a data breach on December 28, shortly after the Railway Ministry denied that user data leaked from the Railways’ side were being sold on the dark web.

63,345 number of animals, including four Asiatic lions and 73 elephants that died on railway tracks from 2017-18 to 2020-21, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) cited. The CAG raised concerns in its report ‘Performance Audit on Derailment in Indian Railways’ to Parliament last month.

98.7 percentage, the decline in cases of Kalaazar (black fever) from 44,533 in 2007 to 834 in 2022 in India, as the country aims to eradicate the disease by 2023, the Union Health Ministry informed. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, reviewing the status of the disease, stated 632 (99.8%) endemic blocks had achieved elimination status.

The verdict of a five-member Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on a batch of

URBAN FORESTRY AND URBAN GREENING IN DRYLANDS REPORT RELEASED BY FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

1. Report was produced in framework of FAO’s Green Urban Oases Programme, launched to improve resilience of dryland cities by tackling climate, health, food, and economic challenges. Program contributes to FAO’s Green Cities initiative that was launched in 2020 to improve livelihoods and well-being of urban and peri-urban populations in at least 100 cities around the world in next three years.
2. **Key highlights of report**-Some 35% of the world’s largest cities (including New Delhi, Cairo etc.) are built in world’s drylands facing a high risk of social, environmental, and economic crisis as they grow. Scarce rainfall and water supplies compound negative impacts of rapid urbanization on drylands, leading to overexploitation of limited resources, increased land degradation etc. Urban forestry and greening strategies have yet to be fully incorporated in many dryland cities.
3. **Recommendations**-At landscape level: Plan and maintain green spaces and select trees and other plants that are suited to local environment and cityscape. At community level: Boost community participation and a sense of ownership, also to provide incentives to encourage tree planting and building capacity through environmental education. At governmental level: Create robust policies and protect urban greenery.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA) SEEKS INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ) OPINION ON ISRAEL’S ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE

1. UNGA resolution (India abstained from voting) also asks ICJ on Israel’s measures aimed at: Altering of demographic composition, character, and status of Holy City of Jerusalem. Adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures.
2. **Israel-Palestine Conflict**-It dates to early 20th century with Jews claiming Palestinian land as ancestral property while Arabs being the majority. Between 1920-40, Jews migration to Palestine grew because of persecution in Europe. In 1947, UN voted to split Palestine into a separate Jewish and Arab state. Rejected by Arab states, it led to the declaration of state of Israel in 1948 and the first Arab-Israeli war.
3. At ceasefire, Jordan occupied West Bank, Egypt occupied Gaza and Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan. In 1967, six-day war started between Arabs and Israel. At its end, Israel gained territorial control of Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt; West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan; and Golan Heights from Syria.
4. Israel still occupies West Bank and East Jerusalem and built Jews settlements. In 2004, ICJ ruled that Israel’s wall in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem was illegal.
5. **About ICJ**-It is principal judicial organ of UN. ICJ, which is composed of 15 judges, has a two-fold role: To settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes between States submitted to it by them. To give advisory opinions on legal matters referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies. Judgments delivered by ICJ in disputes between States are binding upon the parties concerned.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MoD) SIGNS UP MOUs/AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER MINISTRIES TO AWARD DEGREES TO AGNIVEERS

1. MoD, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship exchanged MoUs with various stakeholders to facilitate continued education and awarding appropriate skill certificates to Agniveers. Under MoU with National Institute of Open Schooling and Indira Gandhi National Open University, suitable Class 12 certificates and Bachelor’s degrees will be awarded to Agniveers.
2. Market-ready and industry-accepted Kaushal Praman Patra will be issued at the time of their exit based on job roles and skill sets mapped with National Occupational Standards (NOS).
3. **About Agnipath Scheme**-It is a recruitment scheme for Indian youth who wish to join Armed Forces. Soldiers recruited under the scheme will be called Agniveers. Scheme envisages recruitment of personnel below officer rank (PBOR) in army, air force and navy for four years, including six months of training.
4. Around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers, between age of 17.5 to 21 years will be recruited annually. Only 25% of total recruits will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under permanent commission. Other

petitions seeking to strike down a 2017 Tamil Nadu law that protects jallikattu, a traditional event involving bulls, is expected next week. Jallikattu is a religious and cultural event celebrated by the people of Tamil Nadu. Describing jallikattu as “a tool for conserving this precious indigenous breed of livestock,” the government argued that the traditional event did not violate principles of compassion and humanity.

It added that any ban on such a practice would be viewed as “hostile to culture and against the sensitivities of the community.” The petitioners’ line of argument was that animal life was inextricably connected to the lives of humans. According to them, “extreme cruelty” was inflicted on the animals.

On January 2, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) constituted a high-powered committee chaired by Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai for the Union Territory of Ladakh. However, members of the new committee state that the MHA order instituting the committee is not clear as it avoids any mention of the primary demand for inclusion under the sixth schedule of the Constitution. The sixth schedule under Article 244 of the Constitution protects the autonomy of tribal populations through creation of autonomous development councils.

The Reserve Bank of India in the Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to take any blame for multi crore bank frauds in the past, saying individual bank managements are responsible for large value loan sanctions, their management and monitoring. The RBI has no role in their day-to-day affairs, the bank informed a Bench led by Justice B.R. Gavai. The RBI and the CBI found themselves on the same side while countering a petition filed by former MP Subramanian Swamy and advocate Satyapaul Sabharwal seeking a CBI probe into the “alleged connivance” of RBI officials in 10 “scams”.

Russian President Vladimir Putin presided over the launch of a warship armed with new Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles on a training mission to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean.

75% Agniveers will be demobilised, with an exit or “Seva Nidhi ” package and the proposed MoUs are about to benefit them.

NTPC STARTS INDIA'S FIRST GREEN HYDROGEN BLENDING OPERATION IN PIPED NATURAL GAS (PNG) NETWORK

1. Project has been started in National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) Kawas township, Surat. It is a joint effort of NTPC and Gujarat Gas Ltd (GGL). Natural Gas is a composition of hydrocarbons (Almost 95% Methane & rest other Hydrocarbons). PNG is same natural gas which is brought at consumer end through a Pipe Line network.
2. Hydrogen blending process is integration of concentrations of hydrogen into existing natural gas pipelines and the resulting blends can be used to generate heat and power. Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), regulatory body has given approval for 5% vol./vol. blending of green hydrogen with PNG to start with and it would be scaled phase wise to reach 20%. Depending on production methods, hydrogen can be grey, blue, green, pink etc.
3. **Benefits of Blending Hydrogen with PNG**-Reduces CO2 emissions keeping net heating content same. Will reduce hydrocarbon import bill significantly. India can also bring forex ashore by being a green hydrogen and green chemicals exporter to the world.
4. **Challenges:** Can weaken metal or polyethylene pipes and increase leakage risks, High Capital requirement in initial stage etc.

NO NEED FOR EXTRA CURB ON FREE SPEECH OF MINISTERS: SUPREME COURT (SC)

1. Answering a reference made to it regarding extent of Freedom of Speech and Expression available to public functionaries, constitutional bench of SC held that: Right of free speech and expression, guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (a), cannot be curbed by additional grounds other than those already laid down in Article 19 (2).
2. A statement made by a minister, even in official capacity, cannot be attributed vicariously to government by invoking principle of collective responsibility. Under Article 75 (3) and 164 (2), Council of Ministers (CoM) is collectively responsible to House of People and Legislative Assembly of State respectively. SC stated that collective responsibility flows from CoM to individual ministers, not on reverse, namely, from individual Ministers to CoM.
3. A fundamental right under Article 19, 21 can be enforced even against persons other than state or its instrumentalities. A mere statement made by a minister, inconsistent with rights of a citizen, may not become actionable as constitutional tort. But if it leads to an act of omission or commission by a public official then it is a constitutional tort.
4. A ‘constitutional tort’ is a violation of one’s constitutional rights, particularly fundamental rights, by an agent of the government, acting in his/her official capacity. A court of law can award monetary compensation to the victim in such a case.



*“Be happy with what you are.
Even if you are newton
there is an Einstein”*

DR. KHAN
(KSG)