

NEWS TODAY

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME FOR FAST TRACK SPECIAL COURTS

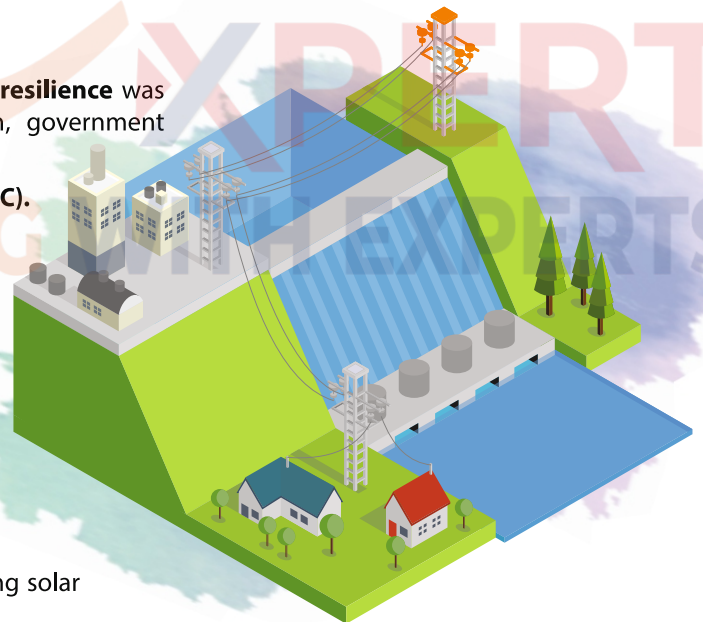
- The scheme has been **extended for 2 years** from 01.04.2021 to 31.03.2023 **with an outlay of Rs. 1572.86 crore.**
- **Central share (Rs.971.70 crore)** is to be **funded from Nirbhaya Fund.**
 - The **Nirbhaya Fund Framework provides for a non-lapsable corpus fund for safety and security of women** to be administered by the Department of Economic Affairs.
- **Fast Track Special Courts** are dedicated courts for swift justice for victims of sexual offences and strengthen the deterrence framework for sexual offenders.
 - They were **introduced under Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018** for expeditious disposal of **Cases of Rape and POCSO Act.**
 - A total of **1023 FTSC were set up for the purpose** out of which **389 FSTC were exclusively for POCSO Act cases.**
 - Each FSTC has one judicial member and seven staff members.
 - The **responsibility** of setting up FSTCs **lies with state and UT government.**
 - Currently covering **28 States**, it is proposed to be expanded to **cover all 31 states** which are eligible to join the Scheme.



- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012**
 - Enacted to protect children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and provide for establishment of Special Courts for trial of such offences.
 - Act was amended in 2019, to make provisions for enhancement of punishments for various offences.

INDIA AND WORLD BANK SIGN DEAL ON SECOND DAM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (DRIP-2)

- The **\$250 million project deal on strengthening Dam safety and resilience** was signed between Government of India, Central Water Commission, government representatives from **10 participating states** and the World Bank.
 - The national agency for the project is **Central Water Commission (CWC).**
- **Objectives of DRIP-2**
 - Introduction of **risk-based approach to dam asset management** that will help to effectively allocate financial resources towards priority dam safety need.
 - **Building dam safety guidelines** and bringing in global experience.
 - **Flood forecasting systems** and integrated reservoir operations.
 - Preparation of **Emergency Action Plans to assist vulnerable downstream** communities.
 - Using **supplemental revenue generation schemes** such as floating solar panels.
- **About DRIP**
 - It is **world's largest dam management program.**
 - It envisages rehabilitation and improvement of 223 dam projects which was later extended in 2018 for 2 years.
 - Its objective was to **improve safety and operational performance of selected dams**, along with institutional strengthening with system wide management approach.
 - It was **started with World Bank assistance of US\$M 437.5 for a period of 6 years.**



- **India ranks third globally with 5334 large dams in operation** with storage capacity of around 300 billion cubic meters.

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF SAMAGRA SHIKSHA SCHEME (SSS) FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR FIVE YEARS

- The scheme launched in 2018 has been extended for the period 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2026.
- Samagra Shiksha scheme is **an integrated scheme for school education covering the entire gamut from pre-school to class XII.**
 - The scheme treats school education as a continuum and is in line with **Sustainable Development Goal for Education (SDG-4).**
 - It **subsumed the three schemes** of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher Education.
 - The Scheme is being **implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme** in partnership with State and UT Governments.
- The scheme, in the second edition, **will have effective convergence** architecture with various Ministries and developmental agencies of the Centre and State Governments.
 - **The expansion of vocational education** will be done in convergence with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and other Ministries providing funding for Skills.
 - The **existing infrastructure of schools, ITIs and Polytechnics will be used** to ensure optimum utilization of the facilities, not only for school going children but also **for out of school children.**



BANKS USE ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANIES (ARCs) TO PARK NPAs: PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE (PSC) ON FINANCE

- PSC observed that banks park their non-performing assets (NPA) with ARCs **to hide the actual extent of bad debts and this should not be encouraged.**
 - PSC also urged the government to **speed up the establishment of ARC and Asset Management Company**, announced in the 2021-22 Budget.
 - It also suggested expediting **the setting of Public Credit Registry (PCR).**
 - PCR is an extensive database of credit information of borrowers that is accessible to all lending and credit decision-making institutions.
- ARC is a **special type of financial institution that buys debtors of the bank at a mutually agreed value** and attempts to recover debts or associated securities by itself.
 - Narsimham Committee – I (1991) envisaged setting up of a central Asset Reconstruction Fund.
 - Later, **Narsimham Committee – II (1998) proposed ARCs.**
 - ARCs are **registered with RBI** under SARFAESI Act 2002. **RBI regulates ARCs as NBFCs.**

● Benefits of ARC

- Help **consolidate & clean up bad loans of banks under a single exclusive entity.**
- **Regular banking relations are not affected** as banks are left with cleaner balance sheets.
- It helps in boosting entrepreneur's confidence



GOVERNOR'S POWERS UNDER ARTICLE 161 OF THE CONSTITUTION ARE NOT RESTRICTED BY SECTION 433A CRPC: SUPREME COURT





- In State of Haryana v. Raj Kumar case, SC was examining **whether state governments can have policies to grant pardon to convicts and release them early irrespective of the crimes they committed.**
- Section 433-A of the Criminal Procedure Code provides that **to suspend the sentence of imprisonment for life imposed on conviction of a person for an offence for which death is one of the punishments provided by law, such person shall not be released from prison unless he has served at least 14 years of imprisonment.**
 - This restricts the state power to suspend the sentence of imprisonment for life of such convicts.
- On this SC held that the **state government is empowered to grant remission of sentence to a prisoner only if he has undergone 14 years of actual imprisonment.**
 - But, **if the imprisonment is less than 14 years, premature release can exclusively be granted by the Governor under Article 161 of the Constitution, on the aid and advice of the state.**




○ Article 161 says Governor of a State **shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute.**

50% FUNDS ALLOTTED FOR ONGOING MPLADS PROJECTS REMAIN UNUSED AT THE END OF FISCAL

- Standing committee on finance (SCF) questioned **Ministry of Finance on release of funds for Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) only one week before ending of financial year 2020-2021.**
 - > This has resulted in remaining unused funds to be carried forward for next year.
- Earlier, **the government suspended MPLADS for two years in 2020** and diverted funds for managing COVID-19.
 - > **This fund crunch has hit several local area development projects** under implementation across the country.
- **About MPLADS**
 - > **It is a Central Sector Scheme formulated in 1993** to enable Members of Parliament (MPs) to recommend development works in their constituencies.
 - > The annual MPLADS non-lapsable fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore.
 - > Initially, it came under Ministry of Rural Development but was **later transferred to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**
- **Functioning**
 - > Each elected member of Lok Sabha suggests developmental works in his constituency.
 - > **Elected member of Rajya Sabha can recommend works in any district of his State.**
 - > **Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.**

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>National Mission on Edible Oil - Oil Palm (NEMO-OP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is reported that NEMO-OP, recently approved by the cabinet will push for domestic palm oil production. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It has set the target to increase in domestic palm oil production, from the current 3 lakh tonnes to 11 lakh tonnes by 2025-26. > It also helps to reduce India's high dependence on import of edible oil. ● India imported nearly 133.5 lakh tonnes of edible oil in 2020-21 to meet the domestic requirement and the share of imported palm oil was around 56%.
 <p>Repurchase option for Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Reserve Bank of India is giving a repurchase option for investors in SGB for Investors who have completed five years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > They have the option to opt for repurchase, sell it on the stock exchange or continue to hold it till its maturity which happens after eight years after purchase of the bond. ● SGBs are government securities denominated in grams of gold. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Investors have to pay the issue price in cash and the bonds will be redeemed in cash on maturity. > The Bond is issued by Reserve Bank on behalf of Government of India.
 <p>Highest motorable road in the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boarder roads organisation has constructed the road at Umlingla Pass at an altitude of 19,300 ft, bettering previous record of a road in Bolivia at 18,953 ft. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It is much above the altitude of Siachen Glacier which is at 17,700 ft. > The Khardung La Pass in Leh is at an altitude of 17,582 ft. > It connects important towns in Chumar sector of Eastern Ladakh. ● It will enhance the socio-economic condition and promote tourism in Ladakh.
 <p>Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant' begins sea trials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It has been designed by Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design (DND) at Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), a Public Sector Shipyard under Ministry of Shipping(MoS). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > This is the maiden attempt of the Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard to indigenously design and build an Aircraft Carrier. ● With building of indigenous aircraft carrier, India joins a select group of nations having niche capability to indigenously build state-of-art aircraft carrier.

 <p>Quail Farming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming of Japanese quails have helped Odisha’s Koraput district to offset the effect COVID-19 on livelihoods. • Quail is a small bird that belongs to pheasant family. They were first domesticated in Japan in 1595. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > There are two species of quail in India: Black-breasted quail found in the wild and Brown-coloured Japanese quail which is bred for meat. • Quail Farming is more profitable than farming poultry, along with low farming costs and less risk of diseases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Also quail eggs are more nutritious than other poultry eggs.
 <p>Caste Certificates of Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and De-Notified Tribes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'De-notified Tribes' stands for all those communities which were once notified under the Criminal Tribes Acts, enforced by the British Raj between 1871 and 1949. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Nomads and semi-nomads are applied to social groups who undertook a fairly frequent, usually seasonal physical movement as part of their livelihood strategy in the recent past. • The caste certificates of such Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and De-Notified Tribe communities which are already included in the SC or ST or OBC categories are valid for benefits given to these caste categories.
 <p>Draft Rules for road accidents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules provide for Scheme for Compensation of Hit & Run Accident Victims which seeks to enhance compensation from ₹ 12,500 to ₹ 50,000 for grievous hurt and from ₹ 25,000 to ₹ 2,00,000 for death. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Scheme will supersede the earlier Solatium Scheme, 1989 • Government will set up a Motor Vehicles Accident Fund, which will be used for providing compensation and treatment for accident victims. • Ministry has also proposed procedure for detailed investigations of road accidents, Detailed Accident Report (DAR) and its reporting along with timelines for different stakeholders for quick settlements of claims.