

# NEWS TODAY

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) DECLARES END TO COVID-19 AS PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN (PHEIC)

- Declaration was based on recommendation of **fifteenth meeting of International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 Emergency Committee**.

- **Declaration to end COVID-19 as PHEIC was made due to**

- **Decreasing trend** in COVID-19 deaths; **Decline in COVID-19 related hospitalizations** and intensive care unit admissions; **High levels of population immunity to SARS-CoV-2**.

- PHEIC is defined in IHR 2005 as, "an **extraordinary event** which is determined to **constitute a public health risk to other States** through **international spread of disease** and to **potentially require a coordinated international response**".

- IHR is an **instrument of international law** that is **legally binding on 196 countries**, including 194 WHO Member States.

- WHO also released the **2023-2025 COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)** which is designed to **guide countries in transitioning to long-term management of COVID-19**.

- This plan **outlines important actions for countries** to consider for **5 areas under 10 pillars** (refer table).

Alignment of COVID-19 operational pillars with core components of effective health emergency preparedness, response and resilience (HEPR)	
HEPR core component	COVID-19 operational pillar
Emergency coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pillar 1.</b> Coordination, planning, financing and monitoring</li> </ul>
Collaborative surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pillar 3.</b> Surveillance, epidemiological investigation, contact tracing and adjustment of public health and social measures</li> <li>• <b>Pillar 5.</b> Laboratories and diagnostics</li> </ul>
Community protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pillar 2.</b> Risk communication, community engagement (RCCE) and infodemic management</li> <li>• <b>Pillar 4.</b> Points of entry, international travel and transport, mass gatherings and population movement</li> <li>• <b>Pillar 10.</b> Vaccines research, policy and strategy</li> </ul>
Safe and scalable care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pillar 6.</b> Infection prevention and control and protection of the health workforce</li> <li>• <b>Pillar 7.</b> Case management, clinical operations and therapeutics</li> <li>• <b>Pillar 9.</b> Strengthening essential health services and systems</li> </ul>
Access to countermeasures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pillar 8.</b> Operational support and logistics and supply chains</li> <li>• <b>Pillar 10.</b> Vaccines research, policy and strategy</li> </ul>

## INDIA SEEKS PERMANENT SOLUTION TO FOOD STOCKHOLDING AT TRADE BODY MEET

- India at a meeting of **World Trade Organisation (WTO) Committee on Agriculture** demanded for either a **permanent solution on food security or text-based negotiations on public stockholding and MSP ceilings**.

- India informed WTO that value of its rice production in 2019-20 was \$46.07 billion while **it gave subsidies worth \$6.31 billion, or 13.7% against the permitted cap of 10%**.

- Therefore, countries such as US, UK, EU, and Japan, attempted to **scrap Bali interim decision**.

- India was the **first country to use Bali 'peace clause'**.

- It provides that **no country** would be **legally barred from food security programmes** even if subsidy **breached limits specified in WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)** i.e. 10 % of **value of production**.

- Subsidies over and **above the prescribed ceiling** are seen as **trade-distorting**.

- **3 Pillars of AoA**

- **Market access:** Developed and developing nations to convert all non-tariff barriers into tariffs.

- **Domestic support:** Subsidies classified into 3 'boxes' (refer image).

- **Export Subsidies:** Methods used to make exports artificially competitive.

- As a temporary solution, under Peace Clause (2013), WTO members agreed to refrain from challenging any breach in **prescribed ceiling by a developing nation at dispute settlement forum** of WTO.

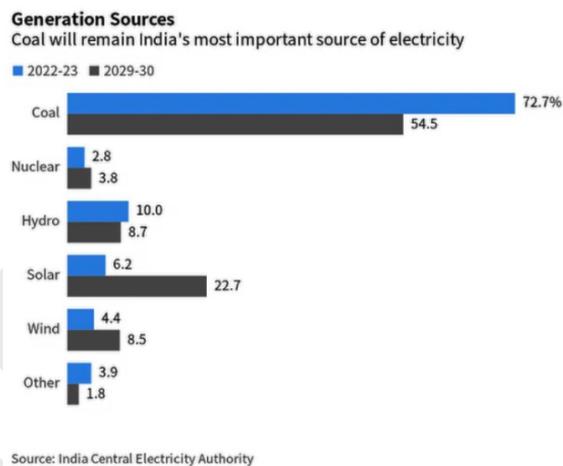
Green Box	Amber Box	Blue Box
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidies that do not distort trade, or cause minimal disruption.</li> <li>• No limit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad range of subsidies.</li> <li>• Limited to 5% of agricultural production (10% for developing countries)*.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad range of subsidies allowed but must be designed to minimise trade distortion.</li> <li>• No limit.</li> </ul>

# INDIA IS EMERGING AS A FAVOURABLE DESTINATION TO CONDUCT CLINICAL TRIALS: PWC INDIA & USAIC (US-INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE) REPORT

- Report titled, “**Clinical Trial opportunities in India**” highlighted that
  - **India has an overall clinical trial participation of ~3% but contributes upwards of 15% to global burden of most high prevalent diseases** (e.g., respiratory infections, cardiovascular, etc.), representing an untapped potential for top pharma.
- **Clinical trials are research studies performed in people** that evaluate medical, surgical, or behavioral intervention.
  - They are **governed by Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, Medical Council of India Act, 1956 and Central Council for Indian Medicine Act, 1970.**
- **Clinical Trials Registry-India (CTRI) is hosted with** Indian Council of Medical Research’s (ICMR) National Institute of Medical Statistics.
  - CTRI, launched in 2007, is an **online, free and searchable system** for registration of all clinical studies being conducted in India.
  - In addition, **CTRI also registers clinical studies being conducted in countries which do not have a Primary Registry** of their own.
  - Initiated as a voluntary measure, since 2009, **trial registration in CTRI has been made mandatory by Drugs Controller General (India) (DCGI).**
  - **World Health Organization recognized CTRI as primary registry.**

## CENTRAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY (CEA) RELEASES ‘REPORT ON OPTIMAL GENERATION CAPACITY MIX FOR 2029-30 VERSION 2.0’

- First version of report was released in 2020 to **find out least cost optimal power generation capacity mix to meet peak electricity demand by 2029-30.**
- **Key highlight of report**
  - **Peak electricity demand would be 334.8 GW by 2029-30.**
  - Installations of **solar, wind, hydro, biomass and nuclear plants will reach more than 500 Gigawatts (GW) by 2030**, an almost tripling of current levels, and **account for 64% of country’s Installed capacity.**
  - **Coal will account for about 54% of electricity generation in 2030** (refer image).
  - Coal based **capacity addition of 16.2 GW is required** apart from 26.9 currently under construction.
  - **Emissions from India’s power sector are forecast to rise about 11% on current levels by 2030** to 1,114 million tons of carbon dioxide.
- India’s Coal-based thermal power sector contributes to around **33% of India’s Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions** and **2.5% of global GHG emissions.**
- **Government initiatives to move towards greener energy**
  - **Net Zero target** by 2030 for Indian Railways and by 2070 for India.
  - **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020.**
    - **Faster Adoption & Manufacturing of Electric (& Hybrid) Vehicles (FAME) Scheme.**



### ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CLINICAL TRIALS

- **Lack of informed consent by participants** due deception by companies.
- Trial are **mostly held on poor** often result in treatments that **they cannot afford.**

### GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME FOR NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs) RENAMED

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has renamed the existing **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS)** program as **National Programme for Prevention & Control of NCD (NP-NCD).**
  - Reason for renaming is **addition of many new diseases such as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, chronic kidney disease etc. and new health initiatives** to control and prevent NCDs.
  - NPCDCS was launched in 2010 by MoHFW as **part of National Health Mission (NHM).**
- MoHFW has also **renamed Comprehensive Primary Healthcare NCD portal as ‘National NCD Portal’** which enables **risk assessment, and screening for five common NCDs** (hypertension, diabetes, cancers (oral, breast and cervical)) of population aged above 30 years.
- **NCDs (chronic diseases) like cancers, diabetes, etc.** are result of a **combination of genetic, physiological, environmental, and behavioural factors.** As per WHO, each year, 17 million people die from a NCD before age 70.
  - **Main types of NCD are cardiovascular diseases** (heart attacks and stroke), **cancers, chronic respiratory diseases** (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and **diabetes.**
  - Tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets all increase the risk of NCDs.

### INITIATIVES TAKEN TO CONTROL NCDs

- **WHO's Global NCD Compact 2020-2030** to accelerate progress on prevention and control of NCDs.
- **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP).**
- **Ayushman Bharat** to deal with NCDs and injuries along with communicable diseases.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** to reduce indoor air pollution.

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Article 355

- It was reported that Centre used Article 355 in Manipur to ensure state security.
- Article 355 is a **part of emergency provisions** contained in **Part XVIII of the Constitution** (from Article 352 to 360).
  - Article 355 says that 'It shall be the **duty of Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance** and to ensure that **Government of every State is carried on in accordance with provisions of this Constitution.**



### Front-Running

- **SEBI barred five entities from securities market and impounded illegal gains** made by them in a case pertaining to front-running.
- Front-running refers to an **illegal practice in stock market** where an **entity trades based on advanced information from a broker or analyst before the information has been made available** to its clients.
  - It is **illegal in India.**
  - Strategies commonly used to front-run trades are -- **Buy-Buy-Sell and Sell-Sell-Buy.**



### Bank for International Settlements (BIS)

- Reserve Bank of India and BIS have launched **G20 TechSprint**, a global technology competition.
- BIS (HQ: Basel, Switzerland) was created in 1930 at Hague Conference.
  - **Mission: Support central banks' pursuit of monetary and financial stability through international cooperation**, and to act as a bank for central banks.
  - **BIS Governance is exercised at three levels** - Board of Directors, General Meetings of member central banks and BIS Management - as determined by its Statutes.
  - BIS is **owned by 63 central banks** including Indian Central Bank, **representing countries from around world** that together account for about 95% of world GDP.
  - It has **two representative offices**- in Hong Kong SAR and in Mexico City.



### Transition Bonds

- SEBI mandated additional requirements for **issuance and listing of transition bonds** to facilitate transparency and informed decision-making.
- **Transition bond** is a class of **debt instruments**, the **proceeds of which are used to fund a firm's transition towards a reduced environmental impact** or to reduce their carbon emissions.
  - Whereas **green bonds** focus solely on use of proceeds or profile of issuer, and are restricted to **only financing projects** that are environmentally friendly, a **transition bond** is concerned about an **issuer's behaviour in terms of the strength of their commitment to becoming 'greener'**.



### Project Dantak

- Project Dantak was **established in 1961 by Border Road Organisation (BRO).**
  - It was tasked to **construct the pioneering motorable roads in Bhutan.**
  - Some notable projects executed by the project include construction of Paro Airport, Thimphu – Trashigang Highway, Telecommunication & Hydro Power Infrastructure.
- BRO was formed in 1960 to **develop and maintains road networks in India's border areas** and friendly neighboring countries. It functions under control of **Ministry of Defence (since 2015).**



### Battlefield Surveillance System (BSS)

- A **new BSS under Project Sanjay** is in the process of being deployed. Under BSS, the aim is to have **surveillance centres for all field formations by December 2025.**
  - It will integrate thousands of sensors which will enable provision of an **integrated surveillance picture to commanders and staff at all levels, besides completing sensor-shooter grid by integrating with Artillery Combat Command and Control System (ACCCS).**
- Complementing the BSS is the **Army Information and Decision Support System**, an upgraded and redesigned version of erstwhile Combat Information Decision Support System, which will integrate inputs from all operational and managerial information systems.



### Gangetic Dolphins (Platanista gangetica gangetica)

- Thickly knitted fishing gill nets have caused the death of river dolphin.
- **Gangetic Dolphin, a River Dolphin, is the national aquatic animal of India.** Common name is Susu.
  - They are **generally blind** and catch their prey in a unique manner. They **emit an ultrasonic sound which reaches the prey.**
  - Females are larger than males.
- **Habitat: Deep waters**, in and around the confluence of rivers.
- **Distribution:** Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- **Threat:** Direct killing, habitat fragmentation by dams and barrages and indiscriminate fishing.
- **IUCN status:** Endangered.



### United Nation's Global STI Forum 2023

- Eighth annual **Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum)** was held recently.
- Forum was conveyed by **President of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development.**
  - **Theme for STI Forum 2023** is "Science, technology and innovation for accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 and full implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels".
  - India highlighted the **importance of developing a mechanism of sharing knowledge, science, and technology between countries** to create a sustainable, resilient society at Side Event on Community Resilience Resource Centers (CRRCs).



### Places in news

#### Sri Lanka (Capital: Colombo (Executive and Judicial) and Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte (Legislative))

- China's state owned firm China Merchants Group is building a **large logistics complex** at Sri Lanka's **Colombo Port.**
  - Colombo port is the **largest and busiest port** in Sri Lanka.
- **Political Boundaries**
  - Island country lying in **Indian Ocean** and **separated from peninsular India by Palk Strait.**
  - **Maritime border with India** in northwest and **Maldives** in southwest.
- **Geographical features**
  - **Major Rivers:** Mahaweli River.
  - **Highest peaks:** Pidurutalagala, followed by kirigalpotta and Adam's Peak (Sri Pada).
  - **Important Ports:** Colombo, Trincomalee, Hambantota.



#### Ethiopia (Capital: Addis Ababa)

- Ethiopia will issue up to five banking licenses to foreign investors in next five years.
- **Political Boundaries**
  - **Landlocked country in Horn of Africa.**
  - **Largest and most populated country** in Horn of Africa.
  - Bounded by **Eritrea** (north), **Djibouti** (northeast), **Somalia** (east), **Kenya** (south), **South Sudan** and **Sudan** (west).
- **Geographical features**
  - **Major River:** Blue Nile and Tekeze river.
  - **Largest inland lake:** Lake Tana.
  - **Highest point:** Mount Ras Dejen (or Dashen).



DELHI



LUCKNOW



JAIPUR



HYDERABAD



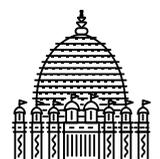
PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI