

NEWS TODAY

HIGH REFILL COST, LACK OF ACCESS DETER THE POOR FROM USING LIQUIFIED PETROLEUM GAS (LPG): STUDY

- Study, part of **USAID's Cleaner Air and Better Health (CABH) project**, aims at identifying the challenges impeding a shift away from **unclean biomass fuels**.
 - CABH strengthen air pollution mitigation and reduce its exposure in selected regions of India.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**, instrumental in expanding LPG access, was **launched by Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas in 2016**.
 - **Objective: Make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to rural and deprived households** which were using traditional cooking fuels like firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes etc.
 - **Target: Release 8 Crore LPG Connections to the deprived households** by March 2020.
 - **Ujjwala 2.0**, launched in 2021, **provide deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families** who could not be covered under earlier phase of PMUY.
- **Benefits to citizens:** Deposit-free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection to cover the **cost of a cylinder, pressure regulator, LPG hose, consumer card and installation charges**.
- **Barriers in access and sustained use of LPG:** Complex application process, absence of doorstep delivery, poor grievance redressal mechanisms, lack of awareness around LPG benefits etc.

REVIEW OF ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)-INDIA TRADE IN GOODS AGREEMENT (AITGA) TO CONCLUDE IN 2025

- Review of AITGA is a **key demand of India as it is adversely affecting** India's exports to ASEAN.
 - Under **AITGA** (signed in 2009) **India and ASEAN** decided to open their markets by **progressively reducing and eliminating duties on more than 76% goods**
- **Key issues faced by India**
 - **Disproportionate increase in imports** (import of \$87.57 billion against export of \$44 billion in 2022-23) due to issues like non-tariff barriers, import regulations.
 - Concerns of **routing goods from third countries** (like China) to **India by taking** advantage of low duty under agreement.
- **India-ASEAN relationship**
 - It began as a **sectoral dialogue partnership in 1992** and reached **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022**.
 - ASEAN holds **centrality to India's Indo-Pacific policy** while also sharing civilizational linkages, and cross-cultural exchanges.
- **Key cooperation initiatives**
 - **Signing of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement** in 2014.
 - Construction of **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**
 - **ASEAN India S&T working group (AIWGST)** and **India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan**.
 - Cooperation in **smart agriculture, and city-to-city partnerships**
 - **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME), etc.**
- **Challenges:** Influence of China, US as main security partner, India's withdrawal from the RCEP, etc.



SUPREME COURT (SC) ALLOWS RAPE SURVIVOR TO TERMINATE PREGNANCY BEYOND 24 WEEKS

- **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) (Amendment) Act 2021** allows **rape survivors** to terminate their pregnancies **upto 24 weeks** (refer table).
- Any abortion which is in contravention to MTP Act is a punishable offense under **Section 312 and 313 of IPC**.
- However, taking note that **such a pregnancy is not voluntary**, SC allowed the survivor to **terminate 27-Week Pregnancy**.
- **Key highlights of MTP Act, 2021**

Duration of Pregnancy	Process of termination
Up to 20 weeks	• Available to all women on the advice of one doctor
20-24 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available only in two conditions (serious ailment to the child or risk of life or mental health to the women) on the advice of two doctors. • Available to rape survivors, victims of incest and other vulnerable women like differently abled, minors, among others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All women irrespective of marital status are covered.
Beyond 24 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available only on the grounds of fetal abnormalities based on the advice of a medical board. • All state/ UTs are mandated to constitute a Medical Board consisting of gynecologists, pediatrician, etc.

FIRST WHO GLOBAL SUMMIT ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE HELD IN GANDHINAGAR, GUJARAT

- Summit **explores the role of Traditional Complimentary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM)** in addressing health challenges.
 - For the first time, **Summit focuses on financing of TCIM, health of Indigenous Peoples, quality assurance**, traditional medicine knowledge, biodiversity, trade, patient safety, and more.
 - Theme of the summit was **“Towards Health and Well-being for All”**.
- Traditional Medicine (TM) refers to **health practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs incorporating plant, spiritual therapies**, etc. to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being.
 - It composes of **Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) and Sowa Rigpa**.
 - India has developed **8 folds in the field of traditional medicine** from 2014 to 2023.
- **Benefits of TM:** Easily accessible and affordable cure, Personalised system of medicines, less/no side effects, focus on holistic care of an individual etc.
- **Steps taken to promote TM**
 - **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat**
 - **2018 Declaration of Astana on Primary Healthcare (PHC)** acknowledges the **need to include TM knowledge and technologies in delivery of PHC**.
 - **AYUSH Information Cell** set up in 39 countries to disseminate authentic information about AYUSH system.



CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (CERC) RELEASES PAPER ON MARKET COUPLING; SEEKS STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE

- Market coupling refers to the **forming of a single power trading entity owned by government**.
 - Under it, **buy and sell bids from all power exchanges in country will be aggregated and matched to discover a uniform power price** or market clearing price for Day Ahead Market (DAM) or Real-time Market (TAM) or any other market as notified by CERC.
 - DAM is a financial market where market **participants purchase and sell electric energy at financially binding day-ahead prices** for the following day.
 - Presently, **India has three power exchanges** – IEX, Power Exchange India Limited (PXIL) and Hindustan Power Exchange Limited (HPX).
 - **Currently, IEX enjoys a monopoly status** with almost 90% share in electricity market.
- CERC through its **CERC Power Market Regulations (PRC) 2021** has created **enabling provisions for market coupling** among power exchanges in country. However, they are **yet to be notified**.
- **Benefits of Market Coupling**
 - **Optimal use of transmission infrastructure**.
 - **Maximisation of economic surplus**, after taking into account all bid types and thereby creating simultaneous buyer-seller surplus.
- **Challenges of market coupling:** Reduce Competition, discourage investments, dampen innovation & technology investments, diminished role of power exchanges etc.

MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (MoDNER) RELEASES NEW SCHEME GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING SCHEMES DURING 2022-2026

- The MoDNER Schemes **provide gap-filling support to the eight North Eastern States** as per their felt needs by taking up projects.
- **Ministry issued revised guidelines for**
 - **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS):**
 - **Type: Central Sector Scheme**
 - **Two components:** NESIDS - Road and NESIDS - Other than Road Infrastructure
 - **Scheme of North Eastern Council (NEC)**
 - NEC is the **nodal agency** for the economic and social development of the Region.
 - **Special Development Project, Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources-Central**, etc. are its key schemes
 - **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North Eastern Region (PM-DevINE) Scheme**
- **Key highlights of PM-DeVINE**
 - **Type:** Central Sector Scheme
 - **Tenure:** 2022-23 to 2025-26
 - **Objectives:** Fund **infrastructure convergently** (in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti); enable **livelihood activities** for youth and women; etc.
 - **Project Selection:** Based on **multi-stakeholder consultation including NITI Aayog**, concerned line ministries/ departments, etc.
 - **Sustainability of PM-DevINE projects:** Adequate arrangements for **Operation and Maintenance (O&M)** of the assets will be made.
 - **Supports Public Private Partnership:** Projects would be implemented on **Engineering-Procurement-Construction (EPC) basis** to the extent possible.

ALSO IN NEWS

- Lok Sabha Speaker inaugurated 9th **India Region Conference of the CPA in Udaipur.**



CPA



Genesis: Founded in **1911**, as the Empire Parliamentary Association and renamed as CPA in 1948.



Objective: The association is to **serve the Parliamentarians of the Commonwealth Countries** by providing machinery for **regular consultation and exchange of ideas.**



Members: It has **more than 180 Parliaments and Legislatures** in 53 Commonwealth countries.



9 regions of CPA: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia.



- Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has reconstituted the ABBFF.
- **About ABBFF**
 - It conducts the **first level examination of bank frauds** (of ₹3 crores or more) before references are made to investigative agencies such as CBI.
 - It is empowered to **examine the role of officials of**
 - **public sector banks,**
 - **public sector insurance companies; and**
 - **public sector financial institutions**
 - It can also **periodically carry out fraud analysis** in financial systems and **give inputs on policy formulation** related to frauds by the RBI and CVC.



- **TRAI sought to reduce license fee as a percentage of AGR in its recommendations titled "License Fee and Policy Matters of DTH Services".**
- **In case of DTH service, AGR** should mean total revenue as reflected in the audited accounts from the operation of DTH, as reduced by
 - Subscription fee charges, sale of hardware, service/ entertainment tax.



 <p>Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the scheme, Centre has earmarked Rs 80,000 crore as interest-free loans for states undertaking capital works in the current fiscal. Under the scheme, State Governments will get special assistance in the form of 50-year interest free loan up to an overall sum of Rs. 1.3 lakh crore during the financial year 2023-24. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital expenditure refers to outlay of government funds in the form of investments or development spending towards creation of assets for the long term.
 <p>Hangul (Cervus hanglu hanglu)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population of Hangul (Kashmir stag) has registered a 10 percent increase. Hangul is a subspecies of Central Asian red deer endemic to Kashmir and surrounding areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is found in dense riverine forests in high valleys and mountains of Jammu and Kashmir and northern Himachal Pradesh. In Kashmir, it is found primarily in Dachigam National Park. Conservation Status: Critically Endangered (IUCN); Appendix I (CITES), Schedule-I (Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA) 1972 and J&K WPA, 1978). Threat: Habitat fragmentation, predation etc.
 <p>G 20 Pandemic Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying will receive a 25 million USD grant under Pandemic Fund for strengthening Animal Health System of India. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund will support 'Animal Health Security Strengthening in India for Pandemic Preparedness and Response' initiative. G20 Pandemic Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1.4-billion fund was launched in 2022 under G20 Presidency of Indonesia. Aims to finance critical investments to tackle the next global pandemic. Donors: G20 and non-G20 members, philanthropic organisations. India is one of the major donors of the fund.
 <p>Chandrasekhar limit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chandrasekhar limit refers to the maximum mass theoretically possible for a stable white dwarf star. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chandrasekhar value for a white dwarf star is generally considered to be 1.4 solar masses. This limiting value was named for the Indian-born astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, who formulated it in 1930. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He showed that when the hydrogen fuel of stars of a certain size begins to exhaust, it collapses into a white dwarf. He received Nobel Prize in Physics (1983) for his theoretical studies of the physical processes of importance to the structure and evolution of the stars.
 <p>Fifa Women's World Cup 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spain won their first Women's World Cup after defeating England. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia and New Zealand co-hosted this ninth FIFA Women's World Cup, making it the first edition to be held in Southern Hemisphere. FIFA Women's World Cup is an international association football competition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been held every four years since 1991 which was held in China. USA has won Women's World Cup titles 4 times.
 <p>Places in News</p>	<p>Katchatheevu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katchatheevu is an uninhabited island in the Palk Strait, between India and Sri Lanka. It lies northeast of Rameswaram (India) and southwest of Jaffna (Sri Lanka). It is important to the fisherfolks of the two countries who have been traditionally using the islet for fishing. In 1974, as part of 'Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime agreement', India ceded Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka. 



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR