



01 July 2024

**National and International News**

<p><b>Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA)</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Meghalaya Lokayukta</b> has issued notifications to the former chief secretary and other former officials of the <b>Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited (MeECL)</b> regarding alleged irregularities in the implementation of the <b>Saubhagya scheme</b> in the state.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Saubhagya scheme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Launch Date:</b> October 2017</li> <li><b>Objective:</b> <b>Universal household electrification</b> by providing electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural areas and poor households in urban areas.</li> <li><b>Last-Mile Connectivity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Electricity connections to all un-electrified households</b> in rural areas.</li> <li><b>Free connections for BPL families in rural areas</b>, including LED bulbs, wire, holders, switches, etc.</li> <li><b>Non-BPL families in rural areas:</b> Connection cost of Rs. 500, payable in 10 installments of Rs. 50.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Urban Areas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free power connections to BPL families.</li> <li>Non-poor urban households are excluded from the scheme.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Remote Areas:</b> Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV)-based standalone systems for households in remote and inaccessible villages/habitations where grid extension is not feasible or cost-effective.</li> <li><b>Identification of Beneficiaries:</b> Beneficiaries for free electricity connections identified using <b>Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data</b>.</li> <li><b>Nodal Agency:</b> <b>Rural Electrification Corporation (REC)</b> designated as the nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indian multi-role stealth frigate INS Shivalik, which has been mission-deployed in the South China Sea and North Pacific Ocean, has arrived at <b>Pearl Harbour in Hawaii</b> to participate in the <b>Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About RIMPAC Exercise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Event:</b> <b>World's largest international maritime exercise</b>.</li> <li><b>Location:</b> Hawaii.</li> <li><b>Objective:</b> Enhance interoperability and build trust among navies of friendly foreign countries.</li> <li><b>Theme:</b> Partners: Integrated and Prepared.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Duration:</b> Until August 1, 2024.</li> <li>● <b>Leadership:</b> Led by the US Navy.</li> <li>● <b>Participation:</b> Approximately 29 countries.</li> </ul>
<b>Interest Equalisation Scheme</b>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Department of Commerce</b> has extended the <b>Interest Equalisation Scheme</b> for pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit for <b>Micro, Small, and Medium-scale (MSME) exporters</b> until August 31.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Interest Equalisation Scheme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Implementation Date:</b> First implemented on 1st April <b>2015</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Purpose:</b> Provides pre- and post-shipment export credit to exporters in rupees.</li> <li>● <b>Initial Validity:</b> Initially valid for 5 years, up to 31st March 2020.</li> <li>● <b>Extensions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extended during COVID for one year.</li> <li>○ Further extensions and fund allocations have been made.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Implementing Agency:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implemented by the <b>RBI through various public and non-public sector banks</b>.</li> <li>○ Banks provide pre- and post-shipment credit to exporters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Monitoring:</b> Jointly monitored by the <b>Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)</b> and the <b>RBI</b> through a consultative mechanism.</li> <li>● <b>Objective:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Helps identified export sectors</b> be internationally competitive.</li> <li>○ <b>Aims to achieve a high level of export performance.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI)</b>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>International Monetary Fund (IMF)</b> has recently released an <b>Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI) Dashboard</b>. This dashboard aims to evaluate and rank countries based on their readiness to adopt and integrate artificial intelligence technologies.</li> </ul> <p><b>About AIPI:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Assessment Coverage:</b> The index assesses AI preparedness across 174 countries.</li> <li>● <b>Rating Criteria:</b> Ratings are based on readiness in <b>four key areas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Digital infrastructure</li> <li>○ Human capital and labour market policies</li> <li>○ Innovation and economic integration</li> <li>○ Regulation and ethics</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Country Categorisation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advanced Economy (AE)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



- Emerging Market Economy (EM)
- Low-Income Country (LIC)
- **Top Rated Advanced Economy:**
  - Singapore: 0.80
  - Denmark: 0.78
  - United States: 0.77
- **India's Rating and Ranking:**
  - Categorised as Emerging Market Economy
  - Rating: 0.49
  - Rank: 72 out of 174 countries
- **Other Countries' Ratings and Rankings:**
  - China: 0.63 (Rank 31)
  - Sri Lanka: 0.43 (Rank 92)
  - Bangladesh: 0.38 (Rank 113)

### National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) and Spot Food Licence Initiative

#### Why in the news?

- The **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has launched several **initiatives to enhance healthcare quality and promote wellness**.
- These include the **National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) assessment**, a **Dashboard for Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS)**, and the **Spot Food Licence Initiative**, all aimed at providing "**Healthcare for All**."

#### About NQAS:

- **Launch and Compliance:** Launched for **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM)** and **Integrated Public Health Laboratories (IPHL)**.
- **IPHS Digital Platform:**
  - **Real-time monitoring** of public health facilities.
  - Provides a **comprehensive overview of assessment and compliance status**.
- **Spot Food Licence Initiative:**
  - **Purpose:** **Instant issuance of licenses and registrations** through the pan-India IT platform, **Food Safety and Compliance System (FoSCoS)**.
  - **Regulatory Framework:** Supplements existing procedures under the **Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulation, 2011**.
  - **Instant Issuance Categories:**
    - Wholesalers
    - Distributors
    - Retailers
    - Transporters
    - Storage without atmospheric control + cold
    - Importers
    - Food vending agencies
    - Direct sellers
    - Merchant-exporters



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- Exclusions:
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