

Renewable energy

- Union Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister R.K. Singh on Wednesday said the country's electricity generation capacity will reach 820GW by 2030, including more than 500GW from non-fossil fuel sources
- Pointing out that India had already started adding storage capacity to renewable energy, the Minister said the government had come out with one of the largest bids on storage and was trying to bring down the storage cost by adding volume.
- He also emphasised on India's commitment to energy transition targets though the country had one of the lowest per capita emissions.

THE HINDU

Fiscal stimulus

- The Ukraine-Russia conflict had impacted exports of Indian pharmaceuticals, tea, coffee and marine products, but bilateral trade with Russia had improved
- Centre had provided for fiscal stimulus in this year's Budget with a gross fiscal deficit to GDP ratio budgeted at 6.4%.

WHAT IS FISCAL STIMULUS?

- Fiscal stimulus measures are one of the standard prescriptions for allocating funds to an economy in crisis
- Stimulus packages comprise a range of different government taxation and spending measures. When it enacts fiscal stimulus, the government hands over cash, via direct subsidies, loans or tax incentives, to individuals, companies and even entire industries impacted by an economic downturn.
- "The federal government provides fiscal stimulus when it increases spending, cuts taxes, or both, to shore up households' and businesses' demand for goods and services during a recession."
- Industry bailouts are among the most common forms of fiscal stimulus. And these actions often take place independent of any broader economic downturn.
- They can be targeted at individual companies or an entire industry, and may include low-interest loans, loan guarantees and even direct subsidies.

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HEPATITIS

- Eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030, a global target. Elimination would translate to a 90% reduction in incidence and 65% reduction in mortality by 2030, compared to the corresponding figures of 2015
- Mortality is showing an increasing trend. Globally, approximately 354 million people are suffering from hepatitis B and C.
- Southeast Asia has 20% of the global morbidity burden of hepatitis. About 95% of all hepatitis-related deaths are due to cirrhosis and liver cancers caused by the hepatitis B and C virus.
- Second, viral hepatitis is preventable. Clean food and good personal hygiene, along with access to safe water and sanitation, can protect us from hepatitis A and E.
- Measures to prevent hepatitis B and C need to focus on full coverage with hepatitis B immunization including a birth dose, as well as access to safe blood, safe sex and safe needle usage.
- Third, a world free of hepatitis is practical and feasible.
- We have the tools to diagnose, treat, prevent and therefore eliminate chronic viral hepatitis. Safe and effective vaccines exist to prevent hepatitis B, alongside new and powerful antiviral drugs that can manage chronic hepatitis B and cure most cases of hepatitis C.
- En route to the 2030 target of eliminating hepatitis, there are some transitional targets to be achieved.
- By 2025, we must reduce new infections of hepatitis B and C by half, reduce deaths from liver cancer by 40%, and ensure that 60% of people living with hepatitis B and C are diagnosed and that half of those eligible receive appropriate treatment.
- This can only be achieved if hepatitis care reaches the community.
- Several priorities must be addressed for this.
- These include the need to enhance political commitment across all countries of the region and ensure sustained domestic funding for hepatitis; improve access to drugs and diagnostics by further reducing prices; develop communication strategies to increase awareness; and innovate service delivery to maximise the use of differentiated and people-centred service delivery options across HIV, viral hepatitis.
- For the first time, an integrated Regional Action Plan for viral hepatitis, HIV and STIs 2022–2026 is being developed by WHO.
- This will ensure effective and efficient utilisation of limited

resources available for the region and will guide countries to adopt a person-centred approach rather than a disease specific one.

What is hepatitis?

- Hepatitis refers to an inflammatory condition of the liver. It is commonly the result of a viral infection, but there are other possible causes of hepatitis.
- These include autoimmune hepatitis and hepatitis that occurs as a secondary result of medications, drugs, toxins, and alcohol. Autoimmune hepatitis is a disease that occurs when your body makes antibodies against your liver tissue.
- The five main viral classifications of hepatitis are hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E. A different virus is responsible for each type of viral hepatitis.

Hepatitis A

- Hepatitis A is the result of an infection with the hepatitis A virus (HAV). This type of hepatitis is an acute, short-term disease.

Hepatitis B

- The hepatitis B virus (HBV) causes hepatitis B. This is often an ongoing, chronic condition.

Hepatitis C

- Hepatitis C comes from the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV is among the most common blood-borne viral infections in the United States and typically presents as a long-term condition.

Hepatitis D

- This is a rare form of hepatitis that only occurs in conjunction with hepatitis B infection. The hepatitis D virus (HDV) causes liver inflammation like other strains, but a person cannot contract HDV without an existing hepatitis B infection.

Hepatitis E

- Hepatitis E is a waterborne disease that results from exposure to the hepatitis E virus (HEV).
- Hepatitis E is mainly found in areas with poor sanitation and typically results from ingesting faecal matter that contaminates the water supply.

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SC ON PMLA AND RECENT AMENDMENTS

- The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the core amendments made to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which gives the government and the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) virtually unbridled powers of summons, arrest, and raids, and makes bail nearly impossible while shifting the burden of proof of innocence on to the accused rather than the prosecution.

- The top court called the PMLA a law against the “scourge of money laundering” and not a hatchet wielded against rival politicians and dissenters.
- “This is a sui generis (unique) legislation. Parliament enacted the Act as a result of international commitment to sternly deal with the menace of money laundering of proceeds of crime having transnational consequences and on the financial systems of the countries,”

PMLA ACT AMENDMENTS

- Money laundering is the process where proceeds of a crime or unlawful activity are filtered in such a way that the source of their origin is disguised.
- Section 3 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as PMLA) defines “money laundering” as Whosoever attempts to indulge in any process or activity connected proceeds of crime including its concealment, possession, acquisition or use and projecting or claiming it as untainted property shall be guilty of offence of money-laundering.
- The amendments made in the PMLA in the Finance Act, 2019 can be accessed [here](#).

Key amendments

- Explanation to Section 2 (u) inserted
- This Explanation clarifies the position of ‘proceeds of crime’. Now, ‘proceeds of crime’ will be understood to relate to any property that directly or indirectly derived or obtained through an activity relatable to scheduled offences.

Explanation to Section 3

- Section 3 of PMLA relates to “offences of money laundering”. The Explanation under Section 3 mentions, a person shall be guilty of money laundering if the person is directly involved or is knowingly a party to one or more of the following processes, connected with the ‘proceeds of crime’:
- Concealment, (b) Possession, (c) Acquisition, (d) Use, (e) Projecting as untainted property, (f) Claiming it as untainted property, in any manner whatsoever.
- Proviso to Section 17(1) and 18(1) omitted

- Omitting the above proviso now gives the authorized officer under PMLA the authority to enter any property for purpose of conducting search and seizure, and the search of any person, even in the absence of the reporting of a scheduled offence to a Magistrate or any other competent authority in this regard.
- Amendment to Section 44 of the PMLA
- Section 44 of the PMLA encompasses the provisions for offences which can be tried by Special Courts.
- Explanation to Section 45 (2) of PMLA
- This Explanation clarifies that the offence of money laundering is a cognizable and non-bailable offence. Accordingly, an authorized officer can arrest the accused without a warrant.

US IN WEST ASIA

- oil prices a much-needed respite for the U.S. President at a time when the U.S.-initiated embargo on Russian energy supplies has thrown global oil markets into disarray and boosted prices.
 - This has meant that the cost of petrol at American petrol stations has crossed \$5 a gallon.
 - But, not wanting to be seen as sacrificing moral principle for energy benefits, Mr. Biden had clarified that, in Jeddah, he would be attending a larger meeting of Arab leaders.
 - Mr. Biden's foray in Israel was a 'love fest'. He signed the 'Jerusalem Declaration' that essentially reaffirmed all earlier U.S. commitments to Israel's security.
 - It included the American pledge "never to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon" and "to use all elements of its national power to ensure that outcome".
 - However, much to Israel's chagrin, Mr. Biden insisted that he would pursue diplomacy in addressing the nuclear issue with Iran and refused to set a deadline for the finalisation of the nuclear agreement.
 - In a remarkable display of unity, the nine Arab leaders refused to back the U.S. in its confrontation with Russia and impose sanctions.
- Mr. Biden's immediate concern during the visit was to encourage Saudi Arabia and its GCC partners to significantly increase oil production and, in the process, break their affiliation with "OPEC +" where they partner Russia in managing the group's production.
 - The U.S. view is that increased oil production would help bring down

- The GCC oil producers made no promise to increase oil production, or attempt to break-up the “OPEC +” coalition.
- Above all, they rejected Mr. Biden’s efforts to play down Palestinian aspirations.
- Saudi Arabia made no move to normalise ties with Israel; it only agreed to overflights of Israeli civilian aircraft over its airspace.
- The GCC states also rejected the blandishment of a regional security grouping that would bring Israel as their partner against Iran.
- The principal regional states have been pursuing several diplomatic interactions with their neighbours, without any U.S. involvement: Saudi Arabia has already had five rounds of discussions with Iran in Baghdad, and is preparing for the next round; Iran is no longer viewed as the outlier nation that threatens the region: the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced dispatching its ambassador to Tehran,
- While Saudi Arabia has accepted the need for improved ties with the Islamic Republic.
- Again, Turkey has reached out enthusiastically to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while Iraq, Jordan and Egypt have announced a regional economic and political alignment.
- The Arab states have accepted Israel as an integral part of Middle East geopolitics, but have made further normalisation of ties conditional on genuine progress on matters relating to Palestinian aspirations.
- And, finally, all the regional states have built close and substantial political and economic ties with Russia and China.
- Thus, West Asia reflects the same multipolarity that is emerging at the global level.
- Though the region still buys U.S. weaponry and hosts American military bases, it no longer sees the U.S. as central to the region’s security interests; nor does it share its hostility to Russia and China.

THE HINDU
