



Procurement of EVs to Boost Bihar's Electric Mobility | Bihar | 12 Jan 2024

Why in News?

Recently, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced the **procurement of two electric cars during the Bihar [Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Conclave and Expo held in Patna](#).**

- It is a **significant move towards promoting sustainable and [eco-friendly transportation](#)** in Bihar.

Key Points

- The **event was organised by the Bihar Transport Department in collaboration with World Resources Institute, India, and the Bihar State Pollution Control Board.**
- During his visit, the Chief Minister actively engaged with the **showcased EVs, seeking detailed information about their features and capabilities.**
 - He emphasised the **environmental benefits of EVs** and highlighted ongoing efforts to develop infrastructure for convenient public charging facilities.
 - He **urged the public to explore the advantages of EVs**, emphasising their role in environmental conservation.
- **Transport Department Minister Sheela Kumari inaugurated the conclave and emphasised the collective efforts required to achieve a pollution-free State.**
- According to the Transport Secretary, the **share of EVs among total new vehicle registrations was 7% in 2023, exceeding the national average of 6%.**
- With **Bihar EV Policy offering purchase incentives and exemption in motor vehicle tax** and provisions for **robust charging infrastructure**, the **EV penetration in the State** is set to meet the **target of 15%** well within the set timeframe of **2028.**
- According to **[World Resources Institute \(WRI\) India](#), Digitalisation** of the system can hugely **improve the transport system efficiency** in States.
 - **Demand aggregation** can bring about **30% reduction in cost** and help scale the adoption of e-buses.
 - **Open data repositories** are **critical to improve the transport infrastructure** as they can help us improve transport infrastructure planning **to meet growing demand.**
 - Ease of financing is another critical component that can help States in creating an enabling marketplace for public transportation.
- Sudhendu Jyoti Sinha, Adviser at **[NITI Aayog](#)** suggested **several measures to promote electric mobility**, including **implementing aggressive electric mobility initiatives** in a few cities and **encouraging schools to switch to electric buses initially.**

World Resources Institute (WRI)

- WRI was **created in 1982 in Washington, D.C.** It is a **non-profit, science and evidence based institution** that carries out rigorous **policy research of global environmental and development issues.**
- Its **mission is to move human society to live in ways that protect Earth's environment** and its capacity to provide for the needs and aspirations of current and future generations.

NITI Aayog

- The NITI Aayog serves as the **apex public policy think tank of the Government of India.**
 - The **nodal agency** tasked with **catalyzing economic development**, and fostering **cooperative federalism**.
 - Moving away from bargaining federalism through the involvement of State Governments of India in the economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach.
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NABARD Sanctions Rs 1,974 Crore to Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 12 Jan 2024

Why in News?

Under the **Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for 2023-24**, [National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development \(NABARD\)](#) has sanctioned Rs 1,974.07 crore to the Rajasthan government.

Key Points

- According to NABARD Rajasthan Chief General Manager **Rs 930.44 crore** has been sanctioned for **three rural drinking water supply projects in Ajmer, Jalore, and Kota districts**.
 - **Rs 926.48 crore** was sanctioned for the **construction of 676 rural roads in the desert and tribal areas** of the state.
 - Earlier, **Rs 117.15 crore** had been sanctioned for the **construction of 104 veterinary hospitals and 431 sub-centres in all districts** of the state.
- **Drinking water supply projects** are expected to provide clean and potable water to **2.87 lakh households in 2,500 villages**, whereas **rural road projects** will improve connectivity in **1,229 villages across 12 districts**.
- NABARD is also supporting the state government in bringing **4.28 lakh hectares under micro-irrigation with a support of Rs 740 crore from the [Micro Irrigation Fund](#)**.
- The lining of **450 km of earthen canals in Kota and Bundi districts** is under construction following a Rs 623.38 crore assistance under NABARD Infrastructure Development Assistance.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

- It is a **development bank** focussing primarily on the **rural sector** of the country. It is the **apex banking institution to provide finance for Agriculture and rural development**.
 - Its **headquarter is located in Mumbai**, the country's financial capital.
- It is a **statutory body established in 1982** under the **Parliamentary act-National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981**.

The Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)

- It was **set up by the Government of India in 1995-96** for financing ongoing rural **Infrastructure projects**.
 - The **Fund is maintained** by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (**NABARD**).
 - The **main objective** of the Fund is to **provide loans to State Governments and State-owned corporations** to enable them to **complete ongoing rural infrastructure projects**.
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Annual Free Train Scheme to Ayodhya Ram Mandir | Chhattisgarh | 12 Jan 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Chhattisgarh government sanctioned **an annual free train travel scheme for devotees who want to visit the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya.**

- It will be **implemented by the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board and the state tourism department** would allocate a necessary budget for the same.

Key Points

- **Not everyone can avail this scheme as of now** as a committee would be set up under the collectors to select pilgrims.
 - As per a state government release, those **eligible to avail this scheme** should be fit individuals **aged between 18 and 75 years** and those **above 55 years will be given priority in the initial phase.**
- **Around 20,000 people** would be **taken to Ayodhya on yearly pilgrimage by train.**
 - Stations for boarding are **Raipur, Durg, Raigarh, and Ambikapur**, with the 900-km journey culminating in Ayodhya.
 - There is also a **stopover at Varanasi** for devotees **to visit the Kashi Vishwanath temple and attend the Ganga Aarti.**
- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** will also be signed **with the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** to implement the scheme.
- **A weekly special train will also be arranged for pilgrims** wanting to visit Ayodhya.

Note

- The state government had declared **January 22 as a dry day in the entire state**, given the **consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.**
 - **Chhattisgarh** is the '**nanihal**' (the place of his maternal grandparents) of Lord Ram.
 - **Chandkhuri**, a village located 27 km from Chhattisgarh capital Raipur, is **considered as the birthplace of Mata Kaushalya, mother of Lord Ram.**
 - The ancient **Mata Kaushalya temple situated in the village** was given a magnificent look during the previous government in the state.
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Prafull Bharat: New Advocate General of Chhattisgarh | Chhattisgarh | 12 Jan 2024

Why in News?

According to the sources, the Chhattisgarh government has appointed **Prafull Bharat** as the **new Advocate General (AG) of Chhattisgarh.**

Key Points

- He served as the **Additional Advocate General of Chhattisgarh from 2014 to 2018**.
- With an extensive legal career, Bharat has been practicing at the **High Court of Chhattisgarh since November 2000, specializing in Civil, Constitutional, Arbitration, and Criminal matters**.
- His legal expertise also extends to his **tenure at the High Court of Madhya Pradesh from 1995 to 2000** and the **District Court in Jagdalpur, Bastar from 1992 to 1995**.
- **Bharat succeeds Satish Chandra Verma**, who quit as AG after the new government assumed office after the recent assembly elections.

Advocate General of State

- The Advocate General of state is **responsible for advising the State Government on legal matters referred to him by the Governor**.
- This is a **Constitutional post** and authority duly **appointed under Article 165** of the Constitution of India. **He/She acts as the highest law officer in the State**.
 - Under Article 165 of the Constitution of India **the Governor of each State shall appoint a person who is qualified to be appointed as a Judge of a High Court to be Advocate General for the State**.

Varied Progress in Clean Air Target | Uttar Pradesh | 12 Jan 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Climate Trends and Respirer Living Sciences** have conducted a study, revealing that the majority of cities are far from the clean air targets of India's **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.

Key Points

- Among **49 cities** with consistent **PM2.5 data over five years**, **only 27 cities showed a decline in PM2.5 levels**, while merely four cities met or surpassed the targeted decline as per NCAP Goals.
 - The amount of PM2.5 in the air is a key indicator of air quality.
 - **PM stands for particulate matter, and the 2.5 refers to the size of the matter**.
- While some cities like **Varanasi, Agra**, and Jodhpur exhibited **significant reductions in PM2.5 levels**, others, including Delhi, reported marginal declines (only 5.9%) or even increased pollution loads.
 - **Varanasi showed the most substantial reduction with a 72% average decrease in PM2.5 levels** and a 69% reduction in PM10 levels from 2019 to 2023.

National Clean Air Programme

- It was **launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in January 2019**.
- It is the **first-ever effort** in the country **to frame a national framework for air quality management with a time-bound reduction target**.
- The **NCAP's goal is to reduce average Particulate Matter (PM) concentrations by 40% by 2026 in 131 cities**. Initially aimed for a 20-40% reduction by 2024, the target was **later**

Concerns over Hit-and-Run Law | Chhattisgarh | 12 Jan 2024

Why in News?

The recent protests by **transporters and commercial drivers** in states like Maharashtra, **Chhattisgarh**, West Bengal, and Punjab shed light on the contentious **Section 106 (2) of the [Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 \(BNS\)](#)**.

Key Points

- This section, which stipulates **severe penalties for hit-and-run incidents**, has become a focal point of discontent among the driving community.
- The nationwide truckers' strike has been called off after the government assured that it would consult stakeholders before implementing a contentious law against hit-and-run.
- Transporters and commercial drivers are **demanding the withdrawal or amendment** of Section 106 (2) of the BNS, 2023.
 - They argue that the **prescribed penalties**, including a 10-year imprisonment and Rs. 7 lakh fine, are **excessively severe**.

Provisions of Hit-and-run Law

- The hit-and-run provision is part of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which is **set to replace the colonial-era [Indian Penal Code, 1860](#)**.
 - **Section 106 (2) of the BNS, 2023 stipulates a penalty of up to 10 years in jail and a fine** for fleeing an accident spot and failing to report the incident to a police officer or a magistrate.
 - However, **if the driver reports the incident immediately after the accident, they will be charged under Section 106(1) instead of Section 106(2)**. Section 106(1) provides for a punishment of up to five years for causing death by any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide.