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APEX BODY ON RIVER LINKING IN PIPELINE

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Once approved, the projects will be pursued as national projects, wherein the Centre will absorb 90% of the cost and the States concerned the rest.

As of now, six ILR projects — the Ken-Betwa, Damanganga- Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada, Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga, Mahanadi-Godavari and Godavari-Cauvery (Grand Anicut) — have been under examination of the authorities.

With regard to the peninsular rivers, the Centre has chosen to focus on the Godavari-Cauvery link than the earlier proposal to link the Mahanadi-Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery rivers.

The latter has eluded consensus given reservations from Odisha, officials said.

Tamil Nadu situation

In view of Tamil Nadu's not-so-happy experience with its neighbours in getting its due share of water, it has been particular that either the Centre or any of its agencies execute the Godavari-Cauvery link project and look after operation.

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PIPED WATER CONNECTION TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Jal Shakti

Piped Water Connection to every Household

Posted On: 02 MAR 2020 5:40PM by PIB Delhi

In August, 2019, Government of India,,in partnership with the States, has launched Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) which aims at providing potable water at service level of 55 litre per capita per day (lpcd) to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) by 2024.

The estimated outlay of JJM is Rs.3.60 lakh Crore out of which Central share is Rs. 2.08 lakh Crore.

The estimated amount of Rs. 3.60 lakh Crore is proposed to be shared between the Union and State Governments. In addition,to enable individuals, trusts, foundations, corporate and industrial houses to contribute in furthering the objective of the JJM, Rashtriya Jal Jeevan Kosh is being set up.

This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti & Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Rattan Lal Kataria in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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PER CAPITA AVAILABILITY OF WATER

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Jal Shakti

Per Capita Availability of Water

Posted On: 02 MAR 2020 5:40PM by PIB Delhi

Water availability per person is dependent on population of the country and for India, per capita water availability in the country is reducing due to increase in population. The average annual per capita water availability in the years 2001 and 2011 was assessed as 1816 cubic meters and 1545 cubic meters respectively which may further reduce to 1486 cubic meters and 1367 cubic meters in the years 2021 and 2031 respectively.

As per Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 135 litre per capita per day (lpcd) has been suggested as the benchmark for urban water supply. For rural areas, a minimum service delivery of 55 lpcd has been fixed under Jal Jeevan Mission, which may be enhanced to higher level by states.

As mentioned in the report of National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development (NCIWRD), the percentage of water used for irrigation out of the total water use for the year 1997-98 was 83.30%. Further, as per NCIWRD report, the percentage of water used for irrigation out of the total water use for the year 2025 under high demand scenario was estimated as 72.48%.

This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti & Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Rattan Lal Kataria in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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THE MINERAL LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key Natural Resources - Mineral & Oil Resources of India

- The Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was introduced in Lok Sabha on March 2, 2020. The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) and the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 (CMSP Act). An Ordinance with similar provisions was promulgated on January 10, 2020.
- The MMDR Act regulates the overall mining sector in India. The CMSP Act provides for the auction and allocation of mines whose allocation was cancelled by the Supreme Court in 2014. Schedule I of the Act provides a list of all such mines; Schedule II and III are sub-classes of the mines listed in the Schedule I. Schedule II mines are those where production had already started then, and Schedule III mines are ones that had been earmarked for a specified end-use.
- **Removal of restriction on end-use of coal: Currently, companies acquiring Schedule II and Schedule III coal mines through auctions can use the coal produced only for specified end-uses such as power generation and steel production. The Bill removes this restriction on the use of coal mined by such companies. Companies will be allowed to carry on coal mining operation for own consumption, sale or for any other purposes, as may be specified by the central government.**
- **Eligibility for auction of coal and lignite blocks: The Bill clarifies that the companies need not possess any prior coal mining experience in India in order to participate in the auction of coal and lignite blocks. Further, the competitive bidding process for auction of coal and lignite blocks will not apply to mines considered for allotment to: (i) a government company or its joint venture for own consumption, sale or any other specified purpose; and (ii) a company that has been awarded a power project on the basis of a competitive bid for tariff.**
- **Composite license for prospecting and mining: Currently, separate licenses are provided for prospecting and mining of coal and lignite, called prospecting license, and mining lease, respectively. Prospecting includes exploring, locating, or finding mineral deposit. The Bill adds a new type of license, called prospecting license-cum-mining lease. This will be a composite license providing for both prospecting and mining activities.**
- **Non-exclusive reconnaissance permit holders to get other licenses: Currently, the holders of non-exclusive reconnaissance permit for exploration of certain specified minerals are not entitled to obtain a prospecting license or mining lease. Reconnaissance means preliminary prospecting of a mineral through certain surveys. The Bill provides that the holders of such permits may apply for a prospecting license-cum-mining lease or mining lease. This will apply to certain licensees as prescribed in the Bill.**
- **Transfer of statutory clearances to new bidders: Currently, upon expiry, mining**

leases for specified minerals (minerals other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals) can be transferred to new persons through auction. This new lessee is required to obtain statutory clearances before starting mining operations. The Bill provides that the various approvals, licenses, and clearances given to the previous lessee will be extended to the successful bidder for a period of two years. During this period, the new lessee will be allowed to continue mining operations. However, the new lessee must obtain all the required clearances within this two-year period.

- **Reallocation after termination of the allocations:** The CMSP Act provides for the termination of allotment orders of coal mines in certain cases. The Bill adds that such mines may be reallocated through auction or allotment as may be determined by the central government. The central government will appoint a designated custodian to manage these mines until they are reallocated.
- **Prior approval from the central government:** Under the MMDR Act, state governments require prior approval of the central government for granting reconnaissance permit, prospecting license, or mining lease for coal and lignite. The Bill provides that prior approval of the central government will not be required in granting these licenses for coal and lignite, in certain cases. These include cases where: (i) the allocation has been done by the central government, and (ii) the mining block has been reserved to conserve a mineral.
- **Advance action for auction:** Under the MMDR Act, mining leases for specified minerals (minerals other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals) are auctioned on the expiry of the lease period. The Bill provides that state governments can take advance action for auction of a mining lease before its expiry.

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LAW FOR RAIN WATER HARVESTING

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Jal Shakti

Law for Rain Water Harvesting

Posted On: 05 MAR 2020 5:33PM by PIB Delhi

As per information received from Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, the Model Building Bye

Laws, 2016, has been issued for guidance of the States/UTs which has a chapter on 'Rainwater Harvesting'.

33 States/UTs have adopted the rainwater harvesting provisions. The provisions of this chapter are applicable to all the buildings. The implementation of the rainwater harvesting policy comes within the purview of the State Government/Urban Local Body / Urban Development Authority. As per Model Building Bye Laws- 2016, provision of rainwater harvesting is applicable to all residential plots above 100 sq.m.

In order to regulate the Over-exploitation and consequent depletion of ground water, the Ministry has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact suitable ground water legislation for regulation of its development, which includes provision of rain water harvesting. So far, 15 States/UTs have adopted and implemented the ground water legislation on the lines of Model Bill.

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been constituted under Section 3(3) of the 'Environment (Protection) Act, 1986' for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water development and management in the Country. CGWA is regulating ground water withdrawal by industries / infrastructure/ mining projects in the country for which guidelines/ criteria have been framed which includes rainwater harvesting as one of the provisions while issuing No Objection Certificate.

Water being a State subject, initiatives on water management including conservation and water harvesting in the Country is primarily States' responsibility. However, the important measures taken by the Central Government for conservation, management of ground water and effective implementation of rain water harvesting in the country are at the following URL: <http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps to control water depletion Jun2019.pdf>.

This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti & Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Rattan Lal Kataria in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

PK/SK

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THE SUN BRINGS OUT A FRESH BATCH OF SUNSPOTS

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: The Earth and the Solar System

Not sedate: Huge solar flares and coronal mass ejections spew material from the solar surface into outer space | Photo Credit: [SOHO](#)

Sun spots are relatively cooler spots on the Sun's surface. Their number waxes and wanes in cycles that last 11 years approximately. We are currently at the minimum of one such cycle. Amidst claims that the Sun would "go silent" and not give out sunspots for an extended period, a group from IISER Kolkata has shown that the next sunspot cycle has begun and the Sun has indeed spoken. Their results were published in Research Notes of the American Astronomical Society.

From our safe distance of about 148 million km, the Sun appears to be sedate and constant. However, huge solar flares and coronal mass ejections spew material from its surface into outer space. They originate from sunspots, an important phenomenon that people have been following for hundreds of years.

Sunspots occur in pairs, with a leader and a follower. They originate deep within the Sun and become visible when they pop out. Their number is not constant but shows a minimum and then rises up to a maximum and then falls again in what is called the solar cycle. So far, astronomers have documented 24 such cycles, the last one ended in 2019.

Following a weakening trend in activity over the last few cycles, there were predictions that the Sun would go silent into a grand minimum in activity, with the disappearance of cycles. However, a team from IISER Kolkata has shown that there are signs that cycle 25 has just begun. They used the data from the instrument Helioseismic and Magnetic Imager aboard NASA's space-based Solar Dynamics Observatory for their calculations.

"There has been a lot of controversy about solar cycle 25 stemming from observations of a weakening trend in solar activity over the past three sunspot cycles. This has led to speculation that the solar cycle is about to die and we are going to enter a grand minimum in solar activity lasting many decades. Some groups have claimed that this would give rise to a mini ice age and cooling of global climate," says Dibyendu Nandi of IISER Kolkata who led the effort. "Our findings indicate that sunspot cycle 25 fields have already started appearing, implying that we are going to have a solar cycle. Speculation and predictions of a grand minimum are unfounded."

Why is this so important to us on earth? After all the sunspots look small and are hardly even visible to us. Contrary to this, sunspot activity may be correlated with climate on earth. In the period between 1645 and 1715, sun spot activity had come to a halt on the Sun – a phenomenon referred to as the Maunder minimum. This coincided with extremely cold weather globally. So sunspots may have a relevance to climate on earth. Such links are tenuous, but definitely solar activity affects space weather, which can have an impact on space-based satellites, GPS, power grids and so on.

Given the high temperatures in the Sun, matter exists there in the form of plasma, where the electrons are stripped away from the nuclei. The Sun is made of hot ionised plasma whose motions generate magnetic fields in the solar interior by harnessing the energy of the plasma

flows. This mechanism is known as the solar dynamo mechanism (or magnetohydrodynamic dynamo mechanism). "Simply stated, it is a process by which kinetic energy of plasma motions is converted to magnetic energy, which generates the magnetised sunspots, giving rise to the solar cycle," explains Prof. Nandi.

Because of the nature of the solar dynamo, the part of its magnetic field that gives rise to sunspots reverses direction when it moves from one solar cycle to another. This can be inferred by observing when the relative orientation of the sunspot pairs flip. Studying 74 such pairs of magnetic regions, the researchers find that in 41 the orientation corresponds to cycle 24, and in 33 the orientation corresponds to cycle 25. Thus they conclude that the Sunspot cycle 25 is brewing within the solar interior.

"Small magnetic regions and a few full grown sunspots with the magnetic polarity orientation that is expected of sunspot cycle 25 have already started appearing on the solar surface. This means that we have either already seen the start of sunspot cycle 25 or it is just about to start," says Prof. Nandi.

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The WHO had to come up the name in line with the 2015 guidelines between the global agency, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

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SHARE OF GAS IN THE ENERGY BASKET

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of Key Natural Resources - Energy Resources of the World

Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas

Share of Gas in the Energy Basket

Posted On: 11 MAR 2020 2:54PM by PIB Delhi

Natural Gas being an alternative cleaner fossil fuel has a major role in catering the growing energy demand in a sustainable manner. To increase the share of gas in the primary energy mix of the country, Government is progressively taking steps to enhance domestic gas production and develop requisite gas infrastructure including gas pipelines, city gas distribution networks and import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals. The initiatives to develop eco-system of gas infrastructure across the country have a potential of investment of about Rs. 2.00 lakh crore in Gas Grid, LNG Terminal and City Gas Distribution (CGD) networks in next 5-8 years.

As per the present policy, Government is meeting the entire requirement of CNG (Transport) and PNG (Domestic) segment of CGD networks by supplying domestic gas, which is cheaper than imported gas.

Government has taken several policy measures/initiatives to enhance exploration & production of oil and gas in the country which include:

- i. Policy for Relaxations, Extensions and Clarifications under Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime for early monetization of hydrocarbon discoveries, 2014
- ii. Discovered Small Field Policy, 2015
- iii. Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy, 2016
- iv. Policy for Extension of Production Sharing Contracts, 2016 and 2017
- v. Policy for early monetization of Coal Bed Methane, 2017
- vi. Setting up of National Data Repository, 2017
- vii. of Unapprised areas in Sedimentary Basins

viii. Re-assessment of Hydrocarbon Resources

ix. Policy framework to streamline the working of Production Sharing Contracts in Pre-NELP and NELP Blocks, 2018

x. Policy to Promote and Incentivize Enhanced Recovery Methods for Oil and Gas Policy framework for exploration and exploitation of Unconventional Hydrocarbons under existing Production Sharing Contracts, Coal Bed Methane contracts and Nomination fields, 2018.

Grant of Marketing including pricing freedom, on natural gas production from High Pressure-High Temperature (HP-HT) reservoirs and deepwater and ultra deepwater areas (with ceiling), gas produced from CBM blocks, blocks awarded under Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) and Discovered Small Fields (DSF) Policy, commercial gas produced from North-Eastern Region (NER) on or after July 01, 2018 and also in those new gas discoveries whose Field Development Plan (FDP) has been approved after February, 2019. To incentivize additional gas production from Administered Price Mechanism (APM) fields, reduction in royalty by 10% of the applicable royalty has also been granted on the additional production over and above business-as-usual scenario.

In addition, Government in February, 2019 approved major reforms in exploration and licensing policy to enhance exploration activities, attract domestic and foreign investment in unexplored/unallocated areas of sedimentary basins and accelerate domestic production of oil and gas from existing fields. The policy reforms inter alia aim to boost exploration activities with greater weightage to work programme, simplified fiscal and contractual terms, bidding of exploration blocks under Category II and III sedimentary basins without any production or revenue sharing to Government. Further, reforms envisage simplified fiscal incentives and incentivizing gas production including marketing and pricing freedom. The policy also provides more functional freedom to National Oil Companies for collaboration and private sector participation for production enhancement methods in nomination fields. Streamlining approval processes and promoting ease of doing business including electronic single window mechanism is also an important aspect of policy reforms.

This information was given by the Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

YKB/SK

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NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of Key Natural Resources - Energy Resources of the World

Department of Atomic Energy

Nuclear Power Plants

Posted On: 11 MAR 2020 2:21PM by PIB Delhi

The details of projects under construction and new projects accorded sanction are as follows:

Project	Location & State	Type	Capacity (MW)	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. crore)
Projects under Construction				
KAPP 3&4	Kakrapar, Gujarat	P H W R	2 X 700	11459 [#]
RAPP 7&8	Rawatbhata, Rajasthan		2 X 700	12320 [*]
GHAVP 1&2	Gorakhpur, Haryana		2 X 700	20594
KKNPP 3&4	Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu	LWR	2 X 1000	39849
PFBR	Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu	FBR	1 X 500	5677
New Projects accorded Administrative approval & financial sanction				
KKNPP 5&6	Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu	LWR	2 X 1000	49621
Chutka-1&2	Chutka, Madhya Pradesh	P H W R	2 X 700	105000
Kaiga-5&6	Kaiga, Karnataka		2 X 700	
MahiBanswara-1&2	M a h i B a n s w a r a , Rajasthan		2 X 700	
GHAVP- 3&4	Gorakhpur, Haryana		2 X 700	
MahiBanswara- 3&4	MahiBanswara, Rajasthan		2 X 700	

[#] under revision to Rs 16580 crore

^{**} under revision to Rs. 17079 crore

PHWR – Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor LWR – Light Water Reactor FBR – Fast Breeder Reactor

The Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) are fuelled by Natural Uranium while Light Water Reactors (LWRs) are fuelled by Low Enriched Uranium. The annual requirement of fuel (UO₂) of a 700 MW PHWR (at 85% Capacity Factor) is about 125 tons and that of a 1000 MW LWR (at a capacity factor of 90%), about 25 tons. Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor

(PFBR) being implemented by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI) is fuelled by Mixed Oxide (MoX) Fuel.

The installed power generation capacity, utilisation and production cost per unit of each of the nuclear power plants in the country, nuclear plant-wise;

Unit	State	Location	Capacity (MW)	Capacity Utilisation(PLF), 2019-20 (uptoJan 20)	Electricity Tariff (Paise/ kWh)
TAPS-1	Maharashtra	Tarapur	160	81.15	206.24
TAPS-2			160	90.91	
TAPS-3			540	76.62	307.64
TAPS-4			540	94.86	
RAPS-1*	Rajasthan	Rawatbhata	100	-	--
RAPS-2			200	77.54	349.06
RAPS-3			220	88.98	
RAPS-4			220	98.41	
RAPS-5			220	99.88	406.28
RAPS-6			220	95.07	
NAPS-1	U t t a r Pradesh	Narora	220	98.03	320.32
NAPS-2			220	97.51	
KAPS-1	Gujarat	Kakrapar	220	86.36	249.06
KAPS-2			220	101.52	
KGS-1	Karnataka	Kaiga	220	94.01	364.84
KGS-2			220	91.58	
KGS-3			220	93.85	
KGS-4			220	98.50	
MAPS-1 [#]	Tamil Nadu	Kalpakkam	220	-	279.73
MAPS-2			220	94.13	
KKNPP-1		Kudankulam	1000	80.15	412.06
KKNPP-2			1000	49.58	

* RAPS-1 is under extended shutdown for techno-economic assessment for continued operation.

[#]MAPS-1 is in project mode for Endshield related works.

This information was provided by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances &

Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh in written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

VG/SNC/JM

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INITIATIVES TO RECHARGE GROUND WATER

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

Initiatives to Recharge Ground Water

Posted On: 12 MAR 2020 4:26PM by PIB Delhi

Water being a State subject, initiatives on sustainable water management including conservation and water harvesting in the Country is primarily States' responsibility. However, the important measures taken by the Central Government for conservation, management of ground water and effective implementation of rain water harvesting in the country are at the following URL:

http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Jun2019.pdf.

Further, a number of States have done notable work in the field of water conservation/harvesting. Of these, mention can be made of 'Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan' in Rajasthan, 'Jalyukt Shibir' in Maharashtra, 'Sujalam Sufalam Abhiyan' in Gujarat, 'Mission Kakatiya' in Telangana, 'Neeru Chettu' in Andhra Pradesh, 'Jal Jeevan Hariyali' in Bihar, 'Jal Hi Jeevan' in Haryana among others.

As per information received from Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, the Model Building Bye Laws, 2016, has been issued for guidance of the States/UTs which has a chapter on 'Rainwater Harvesting'. The provisions of this chapter are applicable to all the buildings. 33 States / UTs have adopted the rainwater harvesting provisions. The implementation of the rainwater harvesting policy comes within the purview of the State Government/Urban Local Body / Urban Development Authority.

In order to regulate the Over-exploitation and consequent depletion of ground water, the Ministry has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact suitable ground water legislation for regulation of its development, which includes provision of rain water harvesting. So far, 15 States/UTs have adopted and implemented the ground water legislation on the lines of Model Bill.

(b) & (c) As per information received from Ministry of Rural Development, under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provisions vide Schedule-1, section 4(3), Para 4.(1) 'Category: A: Public works relating to Natural Resource Management Para: (i)', water conservation and water harvesting structures to augment and improve ground water like underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams, check dams, percolation tanks with special focus on recharging ground water including drinking water sources are permissible activities.

The expenditure on Water conservation & Water Harvesting related works under MGNREGA during last 5 years as uploaded by the States/UTs are as under:

Water conservation & Water Harvesting related works

Years	Expenditure in Crore (Rs.)
2018-19	10328.5
2017-18	6843.085
2016-17	7943.917
2015-16	5621.353
2014-15	4722.494

This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti & Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Rattan Lal Kataria in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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GROUNDWATER AFFECTS HIMALAYAN SLIP AND CLIMATE AS THE MOUNTAINS DANCE TO ITS TUNE

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

Ministry of Science & Technology

Groundwater affects Himalayan slip and climate as the mountains dance to its tune

Posted On: 13 MAR 2020 4:02PM by PIB Delhi

Researchers from Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, have found the mighty Himalayas subside and move up depending on the seasonal changes in groundwater. Since Himalayas play a very important role in influencing climate in the Indian subcontinent, the study funded by DST will help in understanding how hydrology affects climate.

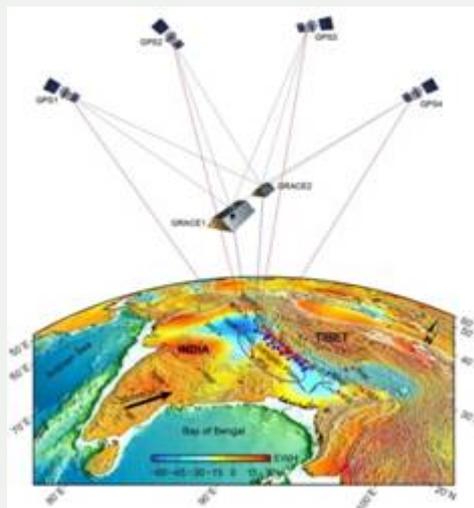
The Himalayan foothills and the Indo-Gangetic plain are sinking because its contiguous areas are rising due to tectonic activity associated with landmass movement or continental drift. The new study published in the Journal of Geophysical Research shows that subsidence and uplift are found to be associated with seasonal changes in groundwater, apart from the normal, common reasons. Water acts as a lubricating agent, and hence when there is water in the dry season, the rate of slip of the fault in this region is reduced.

Nobody till now has looked at the rising Himalayas from a hydrological standpoint. Ajish Saji, working towards his Ph.D. under Prof Sunil Sukumaran, has looked at this phenomenon through this innovative prism. The water storage and surface load variations are quite tricky to quantify through the application of extant global models.

In the Himalaya, seasonal water from glaciers, as well as monsoon precipitation, plays a key role in the deformation of the crust and the seismicity associated with it. The subsidence rate is associated with groundwater consumption.

The researchers have made the combined use of Global Positioning System(GPS) and Gravity Recovery And Climate Experiment (GRACE) data, which has made it possible for them to quantify the variations of hydrologic mass. The GRACE satellites, launched by the US in 2002, monitor changes in water and snow stores on the

continents. This made it possible for the IIG team to study terrestrial hydrology.



A Schematic illustration of the study area in a GPS and GRACE satellite perspective view

According to the researchers, the combined GPS and GRACE data suggest a 12% reduction in the rate of the subsurface slip. This slip refers to how fast the fault is slipping relative to the foot and hanging wall. The slip occurs at the Main Himalayan Thrust (MHT), due to hydrological variations and human activities, over which there is the periodic release of accumulated strain.

SNC/KGS (DST-VP)

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AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Demography of the World - Demographic Attributes

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Average Life Expectancy

Posted On: 13 MAR 2020 12:24PM by PIB Delhi

As per the report titled **SRS Based Life Table 2013-17** published by the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Government of India, the average life expectancy at birth has increased from 49.7 during 1970-75 to 69.0 in 2013-17, registering an increase of 19.3 years during this period. As per the same report, the life expectancy at birth for male and female during 2013-17 were 67.8 and 70.4 years respectively. The State/UT-wise details are provided at Annexure. However, State/UT-wise average life expectancy of male and female in the rural and urban areas of the country may also be accessed from the report **SRS Based Life Table 2013-17** available at the portal of Census of India (<http://censusindia.gov.in/>).

A cross-sectional multi-centric community based study of elderly population aged 60 years and above conducted jointly by the Government of India and WHO Country Office in India has revealed that diseases like hypertension, diabetes mellitus, ischaemic heart disease, poor vision, difficulty in hearing, anaemia, arthritis, fall/fractures, bowel complaints, urinary complaints, depression, weight loss, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, TB etc. are common among older patients.

Recognizing the need for specialized accessible health care for the elderly, the Government of India has launched various programmes, including the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) and Integrated Programme for Older Persons such as Ayushman Bharat. These programmes aim to provide health care facilities to senior citizens (aged 60 years and above) at primary, secondary and tertiary health care delivery system and to further increase the average life expectancy of people. The Government of India has also enacted 'Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007'.

The measures taken/proposed by the Government of India for providing better health services to ensure healthy life and to further improve the average life expectancy of the people in the country are as follows:

- Mobilization of public health action at multiple levels
- The Ayushman Bharat effort, with its two components of Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), addresses disparity in access and reduces out of pocket expenditure for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization for 40% of India's population. The scheme provides hospital care for about 1,350 illnesses at secondary and tertiary level empanelled public and private hospitals. HWC encourages healthy choices and behaviours including Yoga and other physical activities.
- National Health Mission (NHM) is creating a network of 1,50,000 HWCs by upgrading existing Sub Centres (SCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to provide Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC), which is universal and free to all those who access public health facilities. The CPHC basket of services cover 12 key service areas, which go beyond the Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) services

to include screening and care for NCDs (diabetes, high blood pressure, oral, breast, cervical cancers etc.), elderly care, palliative and rehabilitative care, Oral, Eye and ENT care, mental health and first level care for emergencies and trauma etc.

- Continuum of care is being provided to all elderly citizen of age above 60 years from preventive and promotive up to rehabilitation in Geriatric units of District Hospital, Community Health Centres and Primary Health Centres under National programme for Healthcare of Elderly (NPHCE).
- Palliative care is being provided to terminal cases of Cancer, AIDS etc. under National programme for Palliative Care (NPPC).
- Providing financial support in the form of untied funds, annual maintenance grants and Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) funds for development of health facilities and ensuring services.
- Providing infrastructural support to State/UTs in constructing new health facilities and/or for up-gradation of infrastructure, Mother & Child Health (MCH) wings, up-gradation of the trauma centres & First Referral Units, Operationalization of the blood banks etc.
- Operationalizing health facilities in rural areas (through placement of human resources in difficult areas, supply of equipment, drugs and diagnostics).
- In addition, certain new initiatives have been undertaken like the Screening for Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs), Mothers Absolute Affection (to promote exclusive breastfeeding), Pradhan Mantri Shurakshit Matratva Abhiyan (to improve access to specialist maternal care through voluntary participation of private providers), Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Program, Mission Indradhanush (to immunise partially or uncovered population), Rashtriya Swasthya Bal Karyakram (RBSK), Kayakalp (to promote cleanliness, hygiene and Infection Control Practices in public Health Care Facilities), Labour room quality improvement initiative- LAQSHYA (Initiative to reduce preventable maternal and new-born mortality, morbidity and stillbirths associated with the care around delivery in Labour room and Maternity OT and ensure respectful maternity care), Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) (to end all preventable maternal and neonatal deaths) etc.

Expectation of Life at Birth by Sex and Area of Residence,

India and Bigger States/UT's, 201 3-17

India & bigger States/UTs	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
India*	69	67.8	70.4	67.7	66.4	69	72.4	71.2	73.6
Andhra Pradesh	69.7	68.3	71.2	68.4	66.8	70.3	72.6	71.8	73.6
Assam	66.2	65.4	67.3	65.1	64.2	66.1	73	72.5	73.6
Bihar	68.9	69.2	68.6	68.5	68.8	68.2	71.7	72	73.6
Chhattisgarh	65.2	63.8	66.6	64.3	63	65.5	68.8	67.1	73.6
NCT of Delhi	74.7	73.3	76.3	71.8	70	-	74.9	73.4	73.6
Gujarat	69.7	67.6	72	68.2	65.3	71.5	71.8	70.8	73.6
Haryana	69.7	67.6	72.3	68.7	66.5	71.4	71.6	69.6	73.6
Himachal Pradesh	72.6	69.8	75.6	72.2	69.3	75.4	77.1	75.1	73.6

Jammu & Kashmir	74.1	72.1	76.7	73	71.1	75.4	-	-
Jharkhand	68.6	68.8	68.4	67.7	68	67.3	72	71.7
Karnataka	69.2	67.7	70.8	67.5	65.9	69.3	72.5	71.4
Kerala	75.2	72.5	77.8	75.3	72.4	78.1	75.1	72.5
Madhya Pradesh	66	64.2	67.9	64.7	62.8	66.8	70.1	68.7
Maharashtra	72.5	71.2	73.9	71	69.9	72.2	74.4	72.8
Odisha	68.4	67.1	69.9	67.7	66.4	69.4	71.7	71
Punjab	72.4	71	74	71.4	70.1	72.9	74.1	72.4
Rajasthan	68.5	66.3	70.9	67.5	64.9	70.3	71.8	71.2
Tamil Nadu	71.7	69.9	73.7	70.2	68.3	72.1	73.4	71.6
Uttar Pradesh	65	64.3	65.6	63.9	63.2	64.7	68.5	68.1
Uttarakhand	71	68	74.2	70.6	67.3	74.2	71.8	69.9
West Bengal	71.2	70.4	72.2	70.2	69.1	71.3	73.4	72.9

*: Data includes all States/UTs; Note: Andhra Pradesh includes Telangana.

The Minister of State (Health and Family Welfare), Sh Ashwini Kumar Choubey stated this in a written reply in the Lok Sabha here today.

MV/LK

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THERMAL POWER PLANTS TO HAVE 2,43,034 MW CAPACITY BY 2021-22

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of Key Natural Resources - Energy Resources of the World

Ministry of Power

Thermal Power Plants to Have 2,43,034 MW Capacity by 2021-22

Posted On: 12 MAR 2020 7:59PM by PIB Delhi

The Minister of State (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) for Power, New & Renewable Energy Shri R.K. SINGH informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply today that as per the extant National Electricity Plan, the installed capacity of thermal power plants of the country, comprising of Coal based and Gas & diesel based plants, is likely to be 243,037 MW in 2021-22 out of a total projected Installed Capacity of 479,419 MW. The Plant Load Factor (PLF) of Coal based capacity in 2021-22 is likely to be 56.5%.

He added that generators supplying power under Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) will not suffer financial loss due to underutilization of their power generation capacity as they are entitled to full recovery of fixed charges from the beneficiaries subject to achieving the normative availability.

Shri Singh further said that the PLF/generation of thermal, (coal/lignite based) Stations depend on total electricity demand in the country which is affected by climate/weather conditions, growth of electricity demand in various sectors and generation from various other sources like hydro, nuclear, gas etc. Besides "Must Run Status" has been accorded to Renewable Energy projects (Solar, wind & Small Hydro). Power from such sources get dispatched on priority and is generally fully utilized. The generation from the hydro power plants is commensurate with availability of water and is generally fully utilized. Thus, the utilization of coal/lignite based plants depends on balance generation required from thermal Stations and the position of the particular plant in the merit order, resulting in thermal Stations generally operating on low PLF. The PLF of gas based generation is low due to non-availability of gas in the country.

The Minister also informed the House that the government is exploring the possibility of use of cost effective energy storage system e.g. pumped storage hydro plant, Battery storage etc. so that the electricity generated during off peak period can be stored for use during peak period. This would lead to better utilisation of power generation capacity of thermal power plants.

RCJ

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A DAM OF CONTENTION IN AFRICA

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Physical Geography of Africa incl. important Geopolitical regions

A general view of the Saddle Dam, part of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Ethiopia, near Guba in Ethiopia, on December 26, 2019. | Photo Credit: [AFP](#)

As the July deadline draws closer for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the river Nile to become functional, the dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt, with Sudan caught in between, has escalated into a diplomatic stand-off. Differences were laid bare recently when Ethiopia skipped the latest round of tripartite negotiations with Egypt and Sudan in Washington, being mediated by the U.S. and the World Bank.

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, who won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, even said last October that “no force could stop Ethiopia from building a dam,” though he stressed that war was not a solution, echoing similar rhetoric from Cairo. The Arab League earlier this month underscored Egypt’s historical and civilisational links to the river region and opposed any unilateral action by Ethiopia.

The contentious issue around the GERD, Africa’s biggest hydropower project, concerns control of the flow of water in the world’s longest river among the riparian states. Ethiopia, Africa’s second-most populated country and a manufacturing hub, views the mega dam as a symbol of its sovereignty. It began construction on the Blue Nile (a tributary) in 2011 at a cost of \$4 billion. The government wants to extend power supply to some 60% of the country’s population and bridge the infrastructure gap. Addis Ababa is hence impatient to fill the gigantic reservoir within six years, and generate 6,000 MW of electricity.

But the GERD’s storage capacity of 74 billion cubic meters of water has raised hackles in Egypt. Cairo, which relies on the Nile for 90% of its freshwater supply, is apprehensive that a rapid filling of the reservoir in upstream Ethiopia would cause a drastic reduction in supplies. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has insisted on a staggered approach to fill the reservoir, say, between 10 and 21 years, and for the release of a minimum of 40 billion cubic metres annually. No less is the risk Egypt perceives from the diversion of waters to its own High Aswan Dam.

Conversely, Addis Ababa is concerned that a long delay in filling the reservoir would jeopardise returns on its investments and hamper the prospects for overall growth. The GERD is said to have been financed almost entirely from domestic resources, in part due to the resistance mounted by Egypt against global funding for the project. There is in addition the element of national pride in the timely completion of the GERD, as Ethiopia’s recent economic resurgence has revived the old vision of Great Ethiopia. There is also a lot at stake for the government of Mr. Ahmed, who faces a difficult general election this year after the euphoria of the 2018 peace process with Eritrea has largely faded.

Cairo’s strong reservations over the GERD are also rooted in history and geopolitics. Under the 1959 Nile Waters Agreement, the two downstream riparian states Egypt and Sudan, respectively, were allocated 55.5 billion cubic metres and 18.5 billion cubic metres of Nile water annually. That settlement reduced Cairo’s control of the waters, compared to the virtual veto over utilisation it was granted under a 1929 treaty.

Ethiopia was outside the purview of the 1959 treaty, as also other upstream states including Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. But Addis Ababa’s assertion of its rights for an equitable share of the Blue Nile flows from the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) signed by some of the 10

Nile Basin Initiative nations (under the initiative, Eritrea participates as an observer).

The establishment of the Nile River Basin Commission mandated by the CFA has not materialised so far. The challenges for the fair utilisation of waters among the riparian states have only been compounded by the pressures of population growth and the effects of global warming. While the parties have sought international mediation from the U.S. and South Africa, that is no substitute for regional cooperation among the parties.

garimella.subramaniam@thehindu.co.in

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REFORMS IN EXPLORATION AND LICENSING POLICY

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key Natural Resources - Mineral & Oil Resources of India

Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas

Reforms in Exploration and Licensing Policy

Posted On: 16 MAR 2020 3:39PM by PIB Delhi

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is working in collaboration with various Central Government Ministries/stakeholders to make efforts to achieve reduction in import dependency on oil. The import reduction strategy broadly includes increasing domestic production of oil and gas, improving energy efficiency and productivity, giving thrust on demand substitution, promoting biofuels and alternate fuels and renewables. The Roadmap has highlighted various strategies/initiatives which can be taken for reducing import dependency, for which disaggregated level targets have not been indicated.

As per the schedule stipulated in Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP)/Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP), four bidding rounds have so far been finalized in which 94 exploration blocks have been awarded covering an area of approximately 1,36,790 sq. km. OALP Bid Round-V offering 11 blocks covering an area of approximately 19,800 sq. km. was also launched on 14th January, 2020.

The Government, through Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), is implementing Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme and Biodiesel blending programme for blending of ethanol and biodiesel with Petrol and High Speed Diesel respectively. Further, in order to improve the availability of ethanol for blending with petrol and thereby reduce imports of petroleum products, the Government has opened the Second Generation (2G) route and allowed use of other feedstocks like grains, sugarcane juice, fruit and vegetable wastes etc. for production of ethanol. Government is also promoting production of Compressed Bio Gas from various wastes / biomass sources. In this direction, Oil PSUs have launched 'Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) initiative. Government has also notified the National Policy on Biofuels – 2018 which envisages an indicative target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol and 5% blending of biodiesel in diesel by 2030.

The Government in February, 2019 approved major reforms in exploration and licensing policy to enhance exploration activities, attract domestic and foreign investment in unexplored/unallocated areas of sedimentary basins and accelerate domestic production of oil and gas from existing fields. The policy reforms inter-alia aims to boost exploration activities with greater weightage to work programme, simplified fiscal and contractual terms, bidding of exploration blocks under Category II and III sedimentary basins without any production or revenue sharing to Government, early monetization of discoveries by extending fiscal incentives, incentivizing gas production including marketing and pricing freedom, induction of latest technology and capital, more functional freedom to National Oil Companies for collaboration and private sector participation for production enhancement methods in nomination fields,

streamlining approval processes and promoting ease of doing business including electronic single window mechanism.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in the Lok Sabha today in a written reply.

YKB/SK

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IRON ORE AND FINISHED IRON

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key Natural Resources - Mineral & Oil Resources of India

Ministry of Steel

Iron Ore and Finished Iron

Posted On: 16 MAR 2020 3:34PM by PIB Delhi

The production, export and estimated consumption of iron ore in the country are as under:-

(in million tonnes)

Year	Production	Export	Estimated Consumption		
2018-19	207.7	16.2	159.94		

(Source: JPC/IBM)

The crude steel capacity, crude steel production and total finished steel export and consumption in the country are as under:-

(in million tonnes)

Year	Crude Steel Capacity	Crude Steel Production	Total Finished Steel Export	Total Finished Steel Consumption
2018-19	142.24	110.92	6.36	98.71

Source: JPC

The production of iron ore in the country is sufficient to meet the current demand/consumption of iron ore by domestic steel industry. However, the entire demand of coking coal is not met from domestic production as the availability of high-quality coking coal (low-ash coal) in the country is limited and thus no option is left but to resort to import of coking coal.

As regards coking coal, during 2018-19 the total demand of coking coal for steel industry was 58.37 MT. Out of this, 51.83 MT were met through imports, 1.6 MT was provided by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) and Coal India Limited (CIL) and remaining was catered by captive collieries of SAIL and TATA Steel.

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL): SAIL is focussed on maximising sales through existing and new markets. There are continuous efforts to improve upon the customer services. During 2018-19, saleable steel sales were 14.11 Million Tonnes. In the current financial year 2019-20 till Dec, 2019, the saleable steel sales are about 10.7 Million Tonnes, which is a growth of about 7.7% over CPLY. SAIL has made efforts to improve customer services through introduction of new brands of reinforcement Bars & Parallel Flanged Structurals, Digital Payment Methods, Door-delivery, Incentivisation of local

MSMEs around its Plants etc.

SAIL has also exported various products to new international markets. Some of the initiatives taken towards higher customer satisfaction for export markets are:-

- i. Commencing operations from Paradip Port for exports
- ii. Increased number of containerized shipments for catering to smaller sized export orders.

Rashtriyaspat Nigam Limited (RINL): RINL policies are directed towards enhancing its presence in the steel market while supplying quality steel to the customers. For providing fillip/boost to the steel consumption in rural India, pro-active campaign is made to highlight usage of RINL products & their advantages in the community infrastructure in rural & semi-urban areas.

RINL regularly supplies steel products to many MSME units, including SSICs & NSICs, engaged in the manufacturing sector. Besides, RINL has a large network of Manufacturers, Project customers & Retailers to cater to the steel requirements across the country. RINL is giving emphasis and thrust on exports.

To improve the existing process & products and also to develop new products, RINL interacts with its customers on regular basis and takes their feedback and requirement.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in the Lok Sabha today in reply to an Unstarred Question.

YKB

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CONVERSION OF BARREN LAND INTO ARABLE LAND

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Land Resources incl. Land conservation in world & India

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

Conversion of Barren Land into Arable Land

Posted On: 20 MAR 2020 4:20PM by PIB Delhi

As per the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India, prepared by the Space Applications Centre for the period [2011-2013](#), [96.4](#) million hectares i.e. 29.32% of the Total Geographical Area of the country is undergoing the process of desertification/land degradation. Approximately 6.35% of land in Uttar Pradesh is undergoing desertification/degradation.

As per the Special Report on Climate Change & Land of Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change released in August, 2019, land use change, land-use intensification and climate change have contributed to desertification and land degradation. The report highlights that climate change, including increases in frequency and intensity of extremes, has adversely impacted food security and terrestrial ecosystems as well as contributed to desertification and land degradation in many regions.

In order to reclaim and develop barren lands, Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) through Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation (IISWC) has developed several location specific bio-engineering measures to check soil erosion due to run-off of rain water. Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur has developed sand dune stabilization and shelter belt technology to check wind erosion. The Council through Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal and All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Salt Affected Soils has developed reclamation technology, sub-surface drainage, bio-drainage, agroforestry interventions and salt tolerant crop varieties to improve the productivity of saline, sodic and waterlogged soils in the country. ICAR through National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) demonstrated Climate resilient technologies namely drought tolerant short duration varieties, crop diversification, integrated farming systems, soil and water conservation measures etc. in 151 most vulnerable districts in the country to minimize vulnerability against climate change. Agricultural Contingent Plans for 651 districts have also been prepared to cope up with any climate adversities.

National Afforestation & Eco Development Board (NAEB) Division of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing the "National Afforestation Programme (NAP)" for ecological restoration of degraded forest areas under which an area of over 2 million ha has been approved for afforestation at a cost of Rs.3874 crore.

Various other schemes like Green India Mission, fund accumulated under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Nagar Van Yojana etc. also help in checking degradation and restoration of forest landscape. MoEF&CC also promote tree outside forests realizing that the country has a huge potential for increasing its Trees Outside Forest (TOF) area primarily through expansion of agroforestry, optimum use of wastelands and vacant lands.

Department of Land Resources has sanctioned 8214 watershed development projects in 28 States (except Goa) [during the period 2009-10 to 2014-15] (now 27 States and 2 Union

Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) covering an area of about 39.07 million hectare under Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) principally for development of rainfed portions of net cultivated area and culturable wastelands. The IWMP was amalgamated in 2015-16 as the Watershed Development Component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY).

India has also committed to achieve land degradation neutrality status by 2030. In addition, at the recently concluded 14th session of the Conference of Parties of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in India in September, 2019, India has raised its ambition to restore degraded land from 21 mha to 26 mha by 2030.

This information was given in a written reply by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in Rajya Sabha today.

APS/PK/BA

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