

Current Affairs of the Day

‘Judicial inaction favours those in power’

1. High pendency of cases, a large number of vacancies and the collegium system of appointment were among the key issues raised by Lok Sabha members.
2. Judiciary's “inaction” always favours those in power. Congress called for a mechanism to ensure accountability for corruption in the judiciary.
3. Several parliament members also stressed the need to increase the retirement age of High Court judges and bring it on a par with the retirement age of SC judges. As of now, HC judges retire at 62 and SC judges at 65.
4. The Opposition called for a cooling-off period for judges, saying two former Chief Justices of India were “demoted” — one was appointed a Governor and the other became a Rajya Sabha member.

Nagaland seeks AFSPA repeal, scraps ongoing Hornbill Festival

1. Mon district in Nagaland observed a shutdown in protest against the killing of 14 civilians by the security forces, while the State Government called off a major ongoing Hornbill festival as a mark of respect to the deceased.
2. The State Cabinet also decided to write to the Union Government to immediately repeal the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, now in force in the State.

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AFSPA explained: How does it work exactly?



TRIPURA just went AFSPA FREE!

Which other states are under AFSPA right now?



ASSAM

NAGALAND

MANIPUR*

ARUNACHAL PRADESH*

MEGHALAYA*

JAMMU & KASHMIR

How does one officially declare a region to be 'disturbed'?

Section (3) of the AFSPA Act empowers the governor of the state or Union territory to issue an official notification on The Gazette of India.

Once declared 'disturbed', the region has to maintain status quo for a minimum of three months, according to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976.

But what about the state gov't's role? Does it have any say in this?

The state governments, as in Tripura's case, can suggest whether the Act is required to be enforced or not.

But under Section (3) of the Act, their opinion can still be overruled by the governor or the centre.

Is Tripura then the first state to completely do away with AFSPA?

No. It was applied in Punjab and Chandigarh in 1983 due to secessionist movements and lasted for 14 years until there 1997.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/ZppBTWeVoJCVAKRijyhCVI/AFSPA-explained-How-does-it-work-exactly.html>

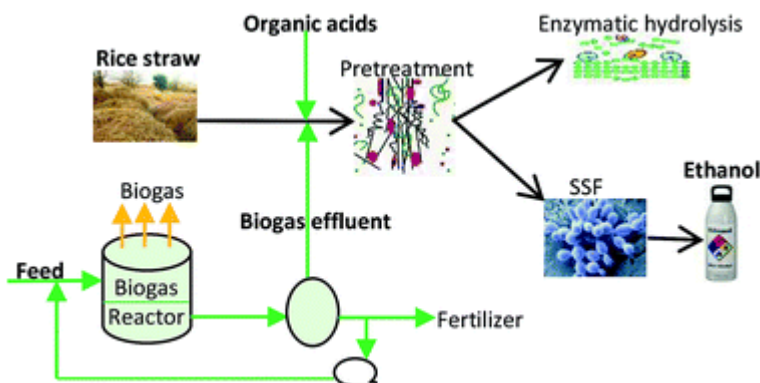
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Vaccine coverage of people with disabilities is low, figures show

1. Only 4,018 people with disabilities have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine till November 2021, as per figures released by the Health Ministry.
2. As per Census 2011, the differently-abled population in India stands at 26.8 million.
3. There are clear inequities in vaccine access and uptake among transgender and disabled communities in India.
4. The Solution is to provide at-home vaccination to people with disabilities.

From pollution to power, what stops paddy straw from becoming the fuel of choice

1. Punjab has 11 biomass power plants with a total capacity of 97.50 megawatts, consuming 880,000 metric tonnes of paddy straw every year.
2. Biogas is the cleanest way to deal with paddy straw because not only there is no combustion involved, you also get the slurry which is rich in micronutrients and can be used as a bio-fertiliser
3. The biomass plants are facing operational challenges besides stiff competition from solar and wind energy.



Challenges:

1. Primary challenge for biomass power generation is feed and the land required to grow and store this feed. Its cost depends on the local situation, distance from which procurement is happening and there is no formal regulation on this aspect.

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2. Paddy straw-based plant has more challenges as the raw material is high in silica, has low bulk density, high ash content and alkaline metals which result in incomplete combustion and adverse impact on the equipment.
3. Tough competition from other renewable sources like solar and wind is also proving to be a bane for biomass-based power producers.
4. There is not much profit margin in this business. There is an investment in machines, fuel, transportation and labour and hence we can't pay the farmer and have to charge them if the distance between the field and power plant is more

Way Forward:

1. Plant managers feel the government should incentivise the farmers and also extend the subsidy to big machines.
2. In addition to other measures, certain experiments are going on to compress straw into briquettes and pellets, which increases the bulk density and calorific value of the straw for use as an alternative to fossil fuel in industries

Currently:
in-field burning
of straw



Encouraged:
straw incorporation



Biogas production



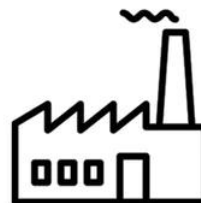
Biogas to farm
household



Fuel station



Micro-grid



Mushroom franchise



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Tackling agrobiodiversity loss in Odisha's Similipal protected area



1. The switch to chemical-based farming and other faulty agricultural practices have imperilled Odisha's Similipal biosphere reserve.
2. The Green-Ag project has identified five landscapes in India, including the Similipal biosphere reserve, to ensure sustainable agricultural practices and reduced emissions.
3. Organic farming and agrobiodiversity conservation are among a portfolio of nature-based solutions (NbS) proposed in the Green-Ag project.
4. While nature-based solutions (NbS) are at the forefront of the sustainability discourse stepping into the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, they are underused in agricultural landscapes, according to a paper by the World Agroforestry.

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- NbS in the agricultural sector is proposed as “the use of natural processes or elements to improve ecosystem functions of environments and landscapes affected by agricultural practices, and to enhance livelihoods and other social and cultural functions, over various temporal and spatial scales.”





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MCQs

- Q. **Panna Biosphere Reserve** is situated in the state of
- Odisha
 - Chattishgarh
 - Maharashtra
 - Madhya Pradesh

MAINS DAWP

Q. India and Russia have to navigate a complex geopolitical landscape while deepening ties. Comment