



# AIR Discussions (October 4<sup>th</sup> Week)

## ALL INDIA RADIO SUMMARY (25 October -31 October, 2020)

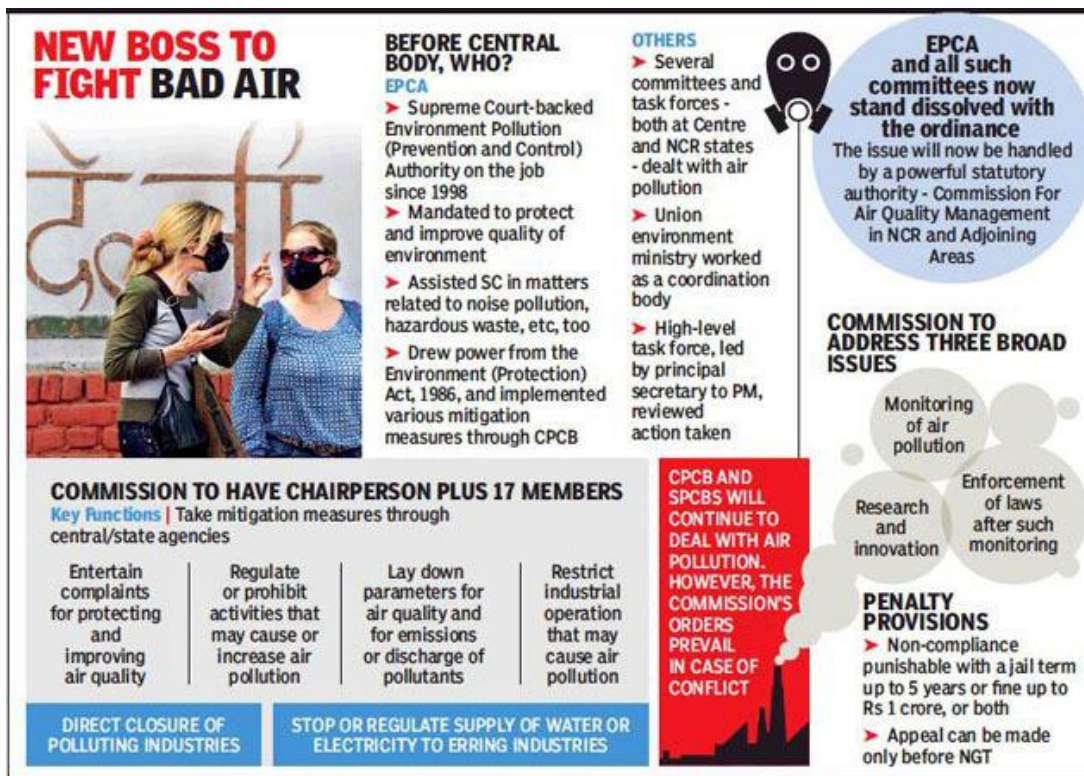
### SPOTLIGHT (30 October, 2020)

#### GS-II: HEALTH, GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

### COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN NCR AND ADJOINING REGIONS

**Context:** Dissolving the 22-year-old Environmental Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) that has so far addressed air pollution in Delhi, the Centre has constituted a “permanent” body — the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas.

- As the quality of air is deteriorating in the Delhi-NCR, the Central government introduced a new law through an ordinance that puts in place a powerful oversight body.
- The ordinance may be called the Commission for Air Quality Management In National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance 2020.





### Need:

- In tackling air pollution in Delhi and the surrounding region, there has been the inability of agencies such as the CPCB and the EPCA to consistently enforce rules on the ground.
- Stubble burning or prevent pollution from thermal plants do exist, but these are often not strongly enforced always in States due to political considerations.

### Ordinance will be applicable

- It shall apply to national capital region and also adjoining areas so far as it relates to matters concerning air pollution in the NCR
- Adjoining areas where it shall be in force include Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, adjoining areas of the NCR and Delhi where any source of pollution is located and is causing adverse impact on air quality in the national capital region.

### What is the Role of New Commission?

- It has been established to check pollution in the neighboring areas, which cause pollution in the capital.
- The commission will take stern action against violators of the ordinance.
- They can be penalized heavily and even suffer a sentence of five years.

### Special powers

- It will have the power to lay down parameters of air quality, parameters of discharge of environmental pollutants, to inspect premises violating the law, ordering closure of non-abiding industries/plants etc.
- It can restrict any industry, operations or processes or class of industries that may have implications on air quality in the region.
- Orders of the commission shall prevail in case there is a conflict between the central pollution control board and the state pollution control boards.
- It may take up matter suo-moto or on the basis of complaints, any appeal against any direction of the panel shall lie only with the National Green Tribunal.
- Commission would be empowered to constitute special investigative groups for stricter implementation.

### Composition of commission:

- The members of the commission include a
  - chairperson, who is or has been the secretary of Government of India or chief secretary of a state,
  - representative of environment secretary and
  - five ex-officio members who are either chief secretaries or secretaries in charge of the environment department of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
  - two full-time members who have been joint secretaries to the central government,
  - three full-time independent technical members who have specific scientific knowledge regarding air pollution,
  - one technical member from Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB),
  - one technical member nominated by ISRO and
  - three members of NGOs having experience in matters concerning combating of air pollution.



- The commission will have three sub-committees, one each for monitoring and identification, safeguarding and enforcement, and research and development.
- Encompassing Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the all-powerful body assumes several powers to coordinate action among States, levy fines — ranging up to ₹1 crore or five years of prison — to address air pollution.
- There will be at least six permanent members and it will be headed by a former or incumbent Secretary to the Government of India, or a Chief Secretary to a State government.
- It has members from several Ministries as well as representatives from the States.

### New commission and states

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and its State branches have the powers to implement provisions of the Environment Protection Act for air, water and land pollution.
- Their powers continue. However, in case of dispute or a clash of jurisdictions, the Commission's writ will prevail specific to matters concerning air pollution.

### Criticism:

- Commission is considered as a “bureaucratic vessel”, as it was created practically overnight, with no discussion and input.
- **Lack of diversity in representation:** Only three members representing NGOs have been included, majority are Ministries which are engaged in actions which contribute towards pollution — the Ministry of Power, Housing and Urban Affairs; Road Transport and Highways; Petroleum and Natural Gas.

### Challenges ahead:

- The major issue with the ordinance will be when it comes to implementation, as EPCA had almost similar powers but failed miserably in cleaning the air even after being in force for more than 20 years.
- Whether it's a positive move or just a distraction and wasteful exercise will be decided on the fact whether the ordinance changes the status quo when it comes to ground implementation and strict action on polluters or not,”

### Way forward:

There is need to ensure that these members have the capability to bind together the States into air quality solutions that can and will solve our air quality problems.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/centre-sets-up-permanent-commission-to-tackle-air-pollution-in-delhi-territory/article32975397.ece>

<https://www.india.com/news/india/will-centres-new-law-effectively-curb-air-pollution-in-delhi-ncr-whats-the-new-ordinance-all-about-explained-4191674/>



## OTHER NEWS

### Production Linked Incentive Schemes

**Context:** Govt revises PLI Schemes for promoting domestic manufacturing of bulk drugs & medical devices.

#### Revised guidelines

- Minimum threshold investment requirement has been replaced by committed investment taking into account availability of technology choices, which varies from product to product.
- The change has been made to encourage efficient use of productive capital.
- Globally, the Indian pharmaceutical industry is the third largest in terms of volume and contributes significantly to India's economic growth and export earnings.



<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Govt-revises-PLI-Schemes-for-promoting-domestic-manufacturing-of-bulk-drugs-%26-medical-devices&id=403285>

### Procurement of ethanol by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies

**Context:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, approved Mechanism for procurement of ethanol by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies under Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme.

- New Price fixed for Ethanol produced from sugar will be Rs. 62.65 per litre, ethanol manufactured from B heavy molasses will be Rs. 57.61 per litre and ethanol manufactured from C heavy molasses will be Rs. 45.69 per litre.
- Additionally GST and transportation charges will also be payable.
- Oil Marketing Companies have been advised to fix realistic transportation charges so that long distance transportation of ethanol is not disincentivised.
- To offer fair opportunity to the localized industry within the State and reduce criss-cross movement of ethanol, Oil Marketing Companies shall decide the criteria for priority of ethanol from various sources taking in account various factors like cost of transportation, availability, etc.



### Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme

- Government has been implementing Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme wherein OMCs sell petrol blended with ethanol up to 10 per cent.
- This programme has been extended to whole of India except Union Territories of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands with effect from 1st April, 2019 to promote the use of alternative and environment friendly fuels.

### Norms for Mandatory Packaging in Jute Materials

**Context:** 100 per cent of the food-grains and 20 per cent of the sugar shall be mandatorily packaged in diversified jute bags.

- It will give an impetus to the diversification of the jute industry.
- The decision also mandates that initially 10 per cent of the indents of jute bags for packing foodgrains would be placed through reverse auction on the Gem portal.
- This will gradually usher in a regime of price discovery.
- The Government has expanded the scope of mandatory packaging norms under the Jute Packaging Material Act, 1987.
- the decision will benefit farmers and workers located in the Eastern and North Eastern regions of the country particularly in West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.

### Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project

**Context:** CCEA approved Externally Aided Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, DRIP Phase II and Phase III with the financial assistance of the World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

- It aims to improve the safety and operational performance of selected dams across the whole country, along with institutional strengthening with system wide management approach.
- The project worth Rs. 10, 211 crore will be implemented from April 2021 to March 2031 in two phases.

#### DRIP

- The Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Government of India, with assistance from the World Bank, undertook the Dam Rehabilitation And Improvement Project (DRIP).
- It would be a six-year project starting around January 1, 2011.
- The project would be implemented in 4 States, namely Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu.
- About 223 large dams in the four participating states with substantial need for rehabilitation and improvements would be included in the project.
- Development of appropriate institutional mechanisms for the safe operation and maintenance of all large dams would also be taken up in these states.
- Strengthening of the institutional set up for national level dam safety surveillance and guidance would be taken up in Central Water Commission (CWC) under Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR).
- The project implementation agencies for DRIP would be the owners of dam (i.e. Water Resources Departments (WRD) or State Electricity Boards (SEB)) in the five participating States.





- The overall implementation of the project would be coordinated by Central Water Commission. The project development objectives of DRIP are:
  - (i) to improve the safety and performance of selected existing dams and associated appurtenances in a sustainable manner, and
  - (ii) to strengthen the dam safety institutional set-up in participating states as well as at central level.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Cabinet-approves-Mechanism-for-procurement-of-ethanol-by-Public-Sector-Oil-Marketing-Companies&id=403287>

### Feni bridge connecting India and Bangladesh

**Context:** The 1.8 kilometre long Feni bridge connecting Sabrum in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh will be completed by December this year.

- It will ease the transportation of goods from Chattogram and Kolkata ports.
- An integrated check post is also proposed to be built near Sabrum.
- Tripura will act as the gateway of the 'Act East Policy' of the government.



<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Feni-bridge-connecting-India-and-Bangladesh-to-be-completed-by-December%3a-Road-Transport-Minister-Nitin-Gadkari&id=403152>

### PM Swanidhi Scheme

**Context:** Uttar Pradesh government has secured the first rank in central government's one of the most ambitious schemes - the PM Atmanirbhar Nidhi Scheme (SVANidhi Scheme) by approving the highest number of loans under the scheme in the country.



### SVANidhi Scheme

- The scheme was launched on June 1, 2020, by the Central Government to help the street vendors resume their livelihood activities that were impacted by COVID-19.
- It aims at facilitating working capital loan up to Rs. 10,000 at a subsidised rate of interest.
- The scheme aims at providing benefits to street vendors or hawkers in urban, pre-urban and rural areas.
- All street vendors who have been in the business on or before March 24, 2020, are eligible to avail the benefits.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=UP-govt-secures-first-rank-in-disbursing-loans-under-PM-Swanidhi-Scheme&id=403059>

### New Industry 4.0 solution

**Context:** IIT Kharagpur and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) have jointly developed a novel Industry 4.0 technology for remotely controlled factory operations and real-time quality correction during industrial production in a bid to deliver quality output at low costs.

- Through this innovation, IIT Kharagpur aims to stimulate innovation in advanced manufacturing to boost the capital goods sector.
- The innovation was undertaken at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur's centre of excellence in Advanced Manufacturing Technology set with support from the Department of Heavy Industry, Government of India along with an industry consortium.



<http://newsonair.com/News?title=IIT-Kharagpur%2c-TCS-jointly-develop-new-Industry-4.0-solution&id=402954>



## Regional Raw Drug Repository at AIIA

**Context:** AYUSH Minister inaugurated the Regional Raw Drug Repository at All India Institute of Ayurveda in New Delhi through a virtual function.

- It is the second in the series of repositories proposed by National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB).

### Need:

- There is an increased demand for the natural healing and herbal products across the globe which has been further pushed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- To document the diversity in the genetics and chemistry of medicinal plants.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=AYUSH-Minister-inaugurates-Regional-Raw-Drug-Repository-at-AIIA&id=402843>