

NEWS TODAY

GeM STEPS FOR EASY PROCUREMENT OF CRITICAL HEALTH EQUIPMENT

- In the wake of on-going COVID-19 pandemic, **public procurement portal Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has implemented measures like **rapid onboarding of sellers of oxygen cylinders and concentrators** to enable easy buying of critical health equipment by government agencies.

- **Government e-Marketplace (GeM):**

- It is **National Procurement Portal** functions under the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D), the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.
- It provides the **tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation** to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value of their money.
- It is **paperless, cashless and contactless platform** giving end to end solution.
- It facilitates online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs.
- To improve the portal further, **GeM 2.0** was launched as a pilot project and **GeM 3.0** offers **powerful search engine, real time and multisource price comparison**, demand aggregation, etc. **GeM 4.0** is the **latest version** (see infographic).

FEATURES OF GeM 4.0

- MSMEs, Artisans, Self Help Groups, weavers registered in Hoonar Haat, and TRIFED will get GeM registration.
- The portal is **integrated with many banks and ERPs** (Enterprise resource planning) to ensure timely payment and delivery acceptance for all vendors.
- **Adoption of TReDS (Trade Receivables Discounting System)** will provide bill discounting and access to working capital for MSMEs.
- **Grievance redressal mechanism** has been improved.
- Bidding module has been redesigned and now item-wise bidding is permitted.

ICMR TO DELIBERATE USE OF PLASMA THERAPY IN COVID TREATMENT

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), India's **nodal health research body**, will meet soon to deliberate the use of **convalescent plasma therapy (CPT)**, widely used in India to treat COVID-19 patients.
 - At present, CPT is an **investigational therapy permitted "off label"**— meaning, they are prescribed for conditions other than those for which they were approved.
 - ICMR's own study, released in September, **showed that CPT was not that affective against COVID-19**.
 - CPT involves **transfusion of the blood plasma** of a recovered patient into another patient.
 - It is based on this concept of **passive immunity** where the **short-term immunity is developed by introduction of antibodies** into a person from another person or animal.
 - Blood Plasma is the **liquid component of blood** in which the blood cells float and it **houses antibodies**.
 - **Antibodies are proteins that fight the foreign substances** that invade the body.
 - Once that is done, some blood cells function as **memory cells** so that they can **identify and defeat the same enemy** by quickly producing the same antibodies.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS SLOWING THE HUM OF INDIA'S WINDMILLS

- Typically, monsoon brings along with it **wind speeds that range between 23 - 29 kilometres** per hour, fuelling the turbines that harness the wind power to generate electricity.
 - However, last monsoon, the **average wind speed was 20-27kmph, the slowest on record**.
 - Wind speeds were **below normal**, particularly in July and September, resulting in widespread **decline in capacity utilization factor (CUF)**.
 - CUF of wind turbines is a **measure of efficiency** that indicates the extent to which installed capacity is deployed.
 - At the end of the financial year in March 2021, **CUF was 17%** compared with 20% in the previous two years.
- Central government set a target of building 175 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2022, **including 60GW of wind power**.
 - At the end of March 2021, India had capacity to produce **38.78GW of wind power**.
 - Capacity addition had already slowed due to the pandemic and procedural red tape, with **monsoon winds throwing down another challenge**.
 - Around **two-thirds of wind energy in India is generated during** the four months ending September.

THERE ARE TWO BASIC TYPES OF WIND TURBINES:

- **Horizontal-axis turbines:** Here, blades of the turbine being perpendicular to the wind, the rotation of the blades can generate more power compared to the vertical axis wind turbine.
- **Vertical-axis turbines:** Here, have blades that are attached to the top and the bottom of a vertical rotor perpendicular to the ground.



CENTRAL VISTA PROJECT

- Petition was filed seeking an interim stay on the ongoing **construction at Central Vista Avenue in Lutyen's Delhi amidst COVID-19 pandemic**.
- The Central Vista is a **heritage area**, declared in the **1962 Master Plan of Delhi** as an 'important site to meet the aspirations of a rich culture',
 - It envisages **constructing a new triangular Parliament building**, a common secretariat for central government offices, along with the Prime Minister's office and residence, Special Protection Group building and Vice-President Enclave.
 - **Central Public Works Department** is executing the project.
- **Need**
 - Current Parliament was built in 1927. It was **not intended to house a bicameral legislature**. Rather it was built to house Legislative Council.
 - New Parliament building has the **capacity to seat between 900 and 1,200 MPs**.
 - The existing building **does not abide by safety norms and is not earthquake proof**.
- Lutyens' Delhi, **named after British architect Edwin Lutyens** (1869–1944), who was **responsible for much of the architectural design and building** during 1920s and 1930s.
 - Along with Edwin Lutyens, Herbert Baker also designed the buildings.

NHRC ORGANIZES VIRTUAL MEETING WITH NGOS FOR PANDEMIC CONTAINMENT

- NHRC is a statutory organization under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.
 - It investigates the violation of human rights or the failures of the state or others to prevent a human rights violation.
- Earlier, **Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019** amended the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, which said
 - Person who has been **Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or a Judge of the Supreme Court** will be the **chairperson of the NHRC** (earlier only ex-CJI was allowed).
 - **Increases the members of the NHRC from 2 to 3** (one must be a woman) who have knowledge of human rights issues.
 - **Reduces the term office for chairperson and member to 3 years (earlier 5)** or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier and they shall be eligible for re-appointment.
 - Includes the **chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as members of the NHRC.**

ALSO IN NEWS

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| National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NBCFDC and NSFDC are conducting the initiatives like Food distribution Programme for providing relief to Covid patients.• NBCFDC and NSFDC are incorporated as company not for profit operated under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ NBCFDC is a Government of India Undertaking under Companies Act 1956 with an objective to promote economic and developmental activities for the benefit of Backward Classes.• NSFDC is incorporated as a fully owned Government of India Company under the Companies Act, 2013.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ NSFDC facilitate, finance and mobilize funds for the economic empowerment of people belonging to the SC category and living below double the poverty line. |
| Business responsibility and sustainability report (BRSR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued a circular notifying new disclosure norm on sustainability related reporting for the top 1,000 listed companies by market cap by FY23.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ The reporting will be under a new BRSR format.• BRSR is a notable departure from the existing business responsibility report and a step towards bringing sustainability reporting at par with financial reporting.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Now, companies will need to provide an overview of their material environmental, social, governance (ESG) risks and opportunities and approach to mitigate or adapt to the risks along with financial implications. |
| IREDA bags 'Green Urja Award' | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has been conferred with 'Green Urja Award' for being the Leading Public Institution in Financing Institution for Renewable Energy in 2021 by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).• IREDA is a Mini Ratna (Category – I) Government of India Enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ It is a Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987. |
| Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved this vaccine for kids between 12 and 15 years of age, making it the first for children.• It is mRNA-based vaccine developed by USA.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. |
| Asperger's syndrome | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tech billionaire Elon Musk announced that he has Asperger's syndrome.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ It is a disorder where people have trouble in social relationships.➢ It belongs to the autism spectrum which can severely inhibit a person's mental and social development.➢ The disorder is named after German doctor Hans Asperger, who first described it in 1944.• In 2013, it became part of one umbrella diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM-5). |
| Personalities in news | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rabindranath Tagore:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ His birth anniversary is celebrated in Bengal as Pachishe Baishakh.➢ He is the composer of National Anthems of two nations - India and Bangladesh.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ He is also considered to have influenced the Sri Lankan National anthem.➢ He was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature (for collection of poems Geetanjali) in 1913, becoming the first non-European to win it.➢ His father Debendranath Tagore, was a leader of the Brahmo Samaj.➢ It was Tagore who conferred the title of 'Mahatma' on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in 1915.➢ Visva-Bharati university was founded by Rabindranath Tagore.• Gopal Krishna Gokhale:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Gokhale became Congress president at its Banaras session in 1905.➢ Before joining politics, Gokhale worked as a professor.➢ He founded the Servants of India Society in 1905, which launched campaigns for the promotion of education, health care and sanitation.➢ Gokhale was a 'moderate' Congress leader, and was a mentor to both Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammed Ali Jinnah.➢ He was elected to the Council of India of the Governor-General of India in 1903.➢ He started English weekly newspaper, The Hitavada.➢ Gandhi wrote a book in Gujarati dedicated to Gokhale titled 'Dharmatma Gokhale'. |