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SCOPE OF SHIFTING TO PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Context

- There is a **growing consensus** among a broad cross-section of citizens and political parties in India that the current **First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)** electoral system must be replaced with **proportional representation.**

What is First Past the Post System?

- FPTP is a simple electoral system used in many countries, including the **United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and India.**
- In this system, the **candidate who receives the most votes** in a constituency or district wins the seat, regardless of whether they have an absolute majority (more than 50% of the votes).

Features of the FPTP

- **Voting:** Each voter casts one vote for their preferred candidate.
    - They choose from a list of candidates, usually representing different political parties or independent candidates.
- **Counting Votes:** After voting closes, the votes are counted, and the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner.
    - There is **no requirement** for the winning candidate to receive more than 50% of the total votes cast.
- **Winner Takes All:** The candidate who wins the most votes in a constituency or district is awarded the seat, and the other candidates receive nothing, even if they have a significant share of the vote.

Significance

- The FPTP system is simple and the most feasible method in a large country like India.

- FPTP provides **greater stability to the executive** in parliamentary democracy because the ruling party/coalition can enjoy a majority in the Lok Sabha/Legislative assembly without obtaining a majority of the votes (more than 50%) across constituencies.

Criticism

- One common criticism is that it can lead to **disproportionate representation,** where parties with significant overall support may not win a proportionate number of seats.
    - It may result in **over or under representation** of political parties when compared to their vote share.
- It also **discourages smaller parties** or independent candidates from participating, as they may struggle to win seats under this system.
- Elected representatives tend to pay **more attention to those who voted for them.**
    - The representative is often compelled to indulge in **vote-bank, competitive politics or sectoral politics** to remain popular and ensure re-election in the next round.

Proportional Representation (PR)

- It is an electoral system where the distribution of seats in a legislative body is closely aligned with the **proportion of votes received** by each participating political party or group.
    - Unlike First Past the Post (FPTP), where the candidate with the most votes in each constituency wins, PR aims to ensure that the overall composition of the legislative body reflects the overall distribution of voter preferences.

Table 2: If the PR system is applied for the 2024 election

Political formation	% of votes	Actual number of seats	Seats as per PR
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	43.3%	293*	243
INDIA bloc	41.6%	234	225
Others/independents	15.1%	16	75
Total	**100%**	**543**	**543**

There are various types of proportional representation systems:

- **Party List PR:** In this system, voters cast their vote for a political party rather than a specific candidate.
  - Seats are then allocated to parties in proportion to the total number of votes each party receives.
  - Parties provide a ranked list of candidates, and seats are filled based on the order of candidates on the list.
- **Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP):** This system combines elements of both FPTP and PR.
  - Voters cast two votes: one for a candidate in their local constituency and one for a political party.
  - Some seats are filled by the winners of the local constituency races, while additional seats are allocated to parties to ensure proportionality based on the overall party vote.
- **Single Transferable Vote (STV):** In STV, voters rank candidates in order of preference in multi member constituencies.
  - Candidates are elected based on achieving a certain quota of votes, with surplus votes from elected candidates and votes from eliminated candidates being redistributed until all seats are filled.
- **Mixed-Member Majoritarian (MMM):** This system combines FPTP with additional proportional seats.
  - A portion of seats are filled by FPTP, while additional seats are allocated to parties to ensure proportionality based on the overall party vote.

Significance

- Proportional representation systems aim to provide fairer representation for a broader range of political viewpoints, reduce wasted votes, and encourage voter turnout.

Criticism

- The main criticism against the PR system is that it could **potentially result in instability** as no party/coalition may obtain a majority to form the government in our parliamentary democracy.
- Some experts assert that the PR system **slows down decision-making,** resulting in the weakening of the government itself.
- It is possible that extreme pluralism can allow **tiny minority parties to hold larger parties** to ransom in coalition negotiations. The inclusiveness of the PR system is thus cited as a drawback.

- The PR system may **reduce accountability to voters** because an ousted party of the government can still remain in office by finding new coalition partners after an election.
  - Under a PR system, it may be difficult to remove a reasonably sized centre party from power.

Way Ahead

- The **discrepancies and associated flaws** of the FPTP **can be reduced**, if not eliminated, to make India's democratic system **more responsive and reflective of the will of the people.**
- There is a consensus among supporters of democracy that the **ruling party and the opposition are equally significant** for the sustainability and functioning of a democratic system.
  - Because of the FPTP electoral system, the opposition has been eliminated or reduced to a minimum several times in the past, for example in 1984, 2014, and in the first three general elections held after Independence.
- The law commission in its 170th report, **'Reform of the electoral laws' (1999),** had recommended the **introduction of the MMPR system on an experimental basis.**
  - It had suggested that 25% of seats may be filled through a PR system by increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha.

Source: TH

IUCN CHIEF URGES TO STRIVE FOR HIGH SEAS BIODIVERSITY TREATY

In Context

- The director general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), urged countries worldwide "to strive for a fully functional **High Seas Biodiversity Treaty" on World Oceans Day 2024 (8th June).**

Do you know ?

- High seas are defined by international law as all parts of the ocean that aren't included in the exclusive economic zone, the territorial sea, or the internal waters of a country, or in the archipelagic waters of an archipelagic country.
- This essentially means that the high seas and associated resources are not directly owned or regulated by any country

About the Treaty

- In June 2023, the United Nations agreement on biodiversity **beyond national jurisdiction or BBNJ Agreement**, also known as the **High Seas Treaty**, was formally adopted by governments.

- It offers an updated framework to The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea that came into force in 1994.

- It establishes a funding mechanism and sets up institutional arrangements, including a Conference of the Parties and various subsidiary bodies.

- **Members :** According to the Alliance, 90 countries have signed the treaty, including India's neighbours Nepal and Bangladesh.
  - India has neither signed nor ratified the treaty.
  - However, only seven countries — Belize, Chile, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Palau and the Seychelles — have ratified the treaty.

- **This treaty focuses on four main areas:**
  - Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits;
  - Measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas;
  - Environmental impact assessments; and
  - Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

- **Implementation status :** It is open for signature by all States and regional economic integration organisations from 20 September 2023 to 20 September 2025, and will enter into force 120 days after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession.

Key Provisions:

- **Area-Based Management Tools (ABMTs):** Creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) and other area-based measures to conserve biodiversity hotspots and vulnerable ecosystems.

- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs):** Mandatory EIAs for activities in the high seas to assess and mitigate potential environmental harm.

- **Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs):** Establishing rules for the access, sharing, and benefit-sharing of MGRs, including the potential for monetary and non-monetary benefits to be shared with developing countries.

- **Capacity Building and Technology Transfer:** Provisions to assist developing countries in building their capacity to participate in high seas conservation and to access relevant technologies.

Challenges and Concerns

- **Implementation:** Turning the treaty's provisions into effective action on the ground will be a major challenge. The treaty is the result of more than 20 years of protracted negotiations. The details of all the major contentious provisions, including environmental impact assessments, sharing of benefits from genetic resources, and mobilisation of funds for conservation activities, are still to be worked out.

- **Compliance:** Ensuring that all countries adhere to the treaty's rules and regulations will be crucial.

- **Financing:** Securing adequate financial resources for capacity building and technology transfer is a key concern for developing countries.

- **Many issues remain unaddressed**, including the mechanisms for policing the protected areas, the fate of the projects that are assessed to be heavily polluting, and the resolution of disputes.

Significance

- **Global Governance:** Fills a major gap in international ocean governance.

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Protects marine life in vast areas that are critical for the planet's health.

- **Sustainable Development:** Promotes sustainable use of marine resources, balancing conservation with economic interests.

- **Equity:** Addresses concerns of developing countries regarding access and benefit-sharing of marine resources.

Why the High Seas Treaty is Important for India?

- **Marine Biodiversity:** India has a long coastline and relies on marine resources for food security and livelihoods. The treaty helps protect the biodiversity of the high seas, which is connected to India's own marine ecosystems.

- **Blue Economy**: The treaty can facilitate India's participation in the emerging blue economy, which includes activities like deep-sea mining and bioprospecting.

- **Global Leadership:** India can play a significant role in shaping the implementation of the treaty and promoting sustainable ocean governance.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The treaty has the potential to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity by playing a coordinating role and strengthening, enhancing and promoting cooperation among existing legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies.

- This will help maintain its potential to provide for current and future generations.

- Therefore All signing nations should be supported in the ratification process to bring this treaty into force, moving almost half of the planet's surface into better regulation through international law.

- the number of ratifying countries for the global agreement on unsustainable fisheries' practices and subsidies should increase, so that the world's fish stocks are not overexploited.

About UNCLOS(United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea)

- UNCLOS, adopted in 1982 and effective since 1994, is a comprehensive international treaty that sets the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas. It replaced the older, less comprehensive quad-treaty from 1958. India became a party to UNCLOS in 1995.

Key Features:

- **Marine Zones:** UNCLOS divides marine areas into five main zones, each with varying degrees of national control and rights:
  - **Internal Waters:** Fully under national sovereignty, like land territory.
  - **Territorial Sea:** Extends 12 nautical miles from the baseline (coast). Coastal states have sovereignty but must allow "innocent passage" of foreign ships.
  - **Contiguous Zone:** Extends 24 nautical miles from the baseline. States have limited control to prevent or punish infringements of customs, fiscal, immigration, or sanitary laws.
  - **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):** Extends 200 nautical miles from the baseline. Coastal states have sovereign rights over resources (fisheries, oil, gas, etc.) and certain economic activities.
  - **Continental Shelf:** Can extend beyond 200 nautical miles if the seabed is a natural prolongation of the land territory. Coastal states have rights over non-living resources (minerals, etc.) of the shelf.
  - **High Seas (ABNJ):** Areas beyond national jurisdiction. Open to all states, but subject to UNCLOS rules on freedom of navigation, overflight, fishing, etc.
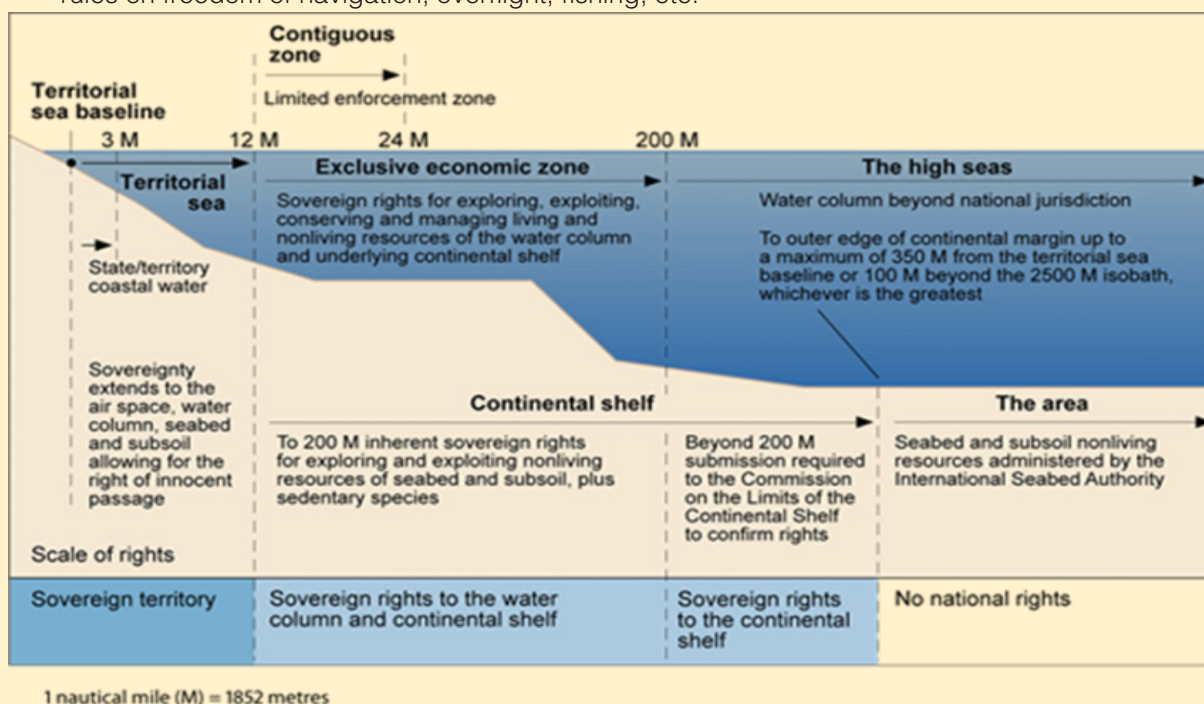
Source: DTE

CCI PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR BIG TECH ENTITIES

Context

- **The Competition Commission of India (CCI),** has proposed **new regulations** to monitor the settlements, and commitments of industry giants.

About

- In 2023, the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023 was passed by the Government, i**ncorporating certain new provisions** — such as settlement and commitment, and leniency, among others.
  - This created a **need for amendment/repeal/ overhauling of the various regulations** framed by the CCI as well as for introduction of certain new ones.
- The CCI has invited stakeholders to submit their comments on the draft amendments within 30 days beginning June 6, 2024.

Proposed Regulations

- The primary objective of this amendment is **to simplify and expedite** procedural requirements, thereby facilitating a more efficient process.
- Additionally, it seeks to guarantee that **every party involved has a fair and equal chance to participate** and have their interests adequately represented and considered.
- CCI plans to **closely monitor implementation of settlement and commitment** offered by companies such as Big Tech entities in **antitrust cases** by engaging monitoring agencies to oversee such implementation.
  - **Monitoring agencies** may include an accounting firm, management consultancy, any other professional organisation or chartered accountants, and company secretaries or cost accountants.
  - They would be required to submit reports to the CCI from time to time.
- While the procedural changes are quite ordinary, the proposed amendment enhances the authority of the CCI.

Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023

- The act seeks to **amend the Competition Act, 2002** which regulates competition in the Indian market and **prohibits anti-competitive practices** such as cartels, mergers and acquisitions that may have an adverse effect on competition.

- **The CCI** is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Act.

Amendments

- **Penalties :** It seeks to define 'turnover' for the purpose of penalty as **global turnover** derived from all the products and services by a person or an enterprise.
  - The idea is to levy a penalty as a percentage of global turnover of the offending company, moving away from the current practice of levying a part of the local or relevant market turnover as penalty.
- **Decriminalisation :** The act decriminalises certain offences by changing the nature of punishment from imposition of fine to civil penalties.
  - These offences include failure to comply with orders of the CCI and directions of the Director General related to anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position.
- **Expands CCI's Scope:** The new provisions expand the scope of CCI's merger regulation by bringing deals worth more than 2,000 crore requiring regulator clearance.
- **Settlement Mechanism:** The act introduces a scheme for commitment and settlement which is meant to reduce litigation by way of negotiated settlements.
  - This scheme is available to cases of anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominance, but not to cartels.

Competition Commission of India

- It is a **statutory body o**f the Government of India responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002, it was duly constituted in 2009.
  - The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations, which causes an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.
  - The Commission consists of one Chairperson and six Members who shall be appointed by the Central Government.
- The commission is a quasi-judicial body which gives opinions to statutory authorities and also deals with Antitrust cases.

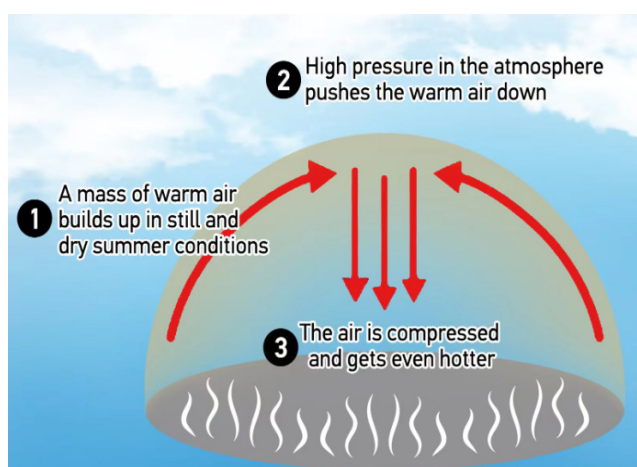**Source: BS**

⬛ NEWS IN SHORT ⬛

HEAT DOME

Context

- Recently, the US based weather agency said heatwaves in general are becoming more frequent because of the heat dome and climate change.

About Heat Dome

- It is a weather phenomenon that occurs when a persistent region of high pressure traps heat over an area.

- The **high-pressure system** acts like a lid, preventing warm air from rising and causing the air below to warm up.

Formation

- Heat domes can arise in **still and dry summer conditions**, when a mass of warm air builds up, and the high pressure from the Earth's atmosphere pushes the warm air down.

- The air is then compressed, and as its net heat is now in a smaller volume, it increases in temperature.

- As the warm air attempts to rise, the high pressure above it acts as a dome, forcing the air down and causing it to get hotter and hotter, resulting in increased pressure below the dome.

Correlation with Jet Streams

- Typically, heat domes are tied to the behaviour of the jet stream, a band of fast winds high in the atmosphere that generally runs west to east.

- Normally, the jet stream has a wavelike pattern, meandering north and then south and then north again.

- When these meanders in the jet stream become bigger, they move slower and can become stationary. That's when heat domes can occur.

Impact

- Heat domes can severely impact human health, increasing the risk of heat illnesses and deaths as people cannot cool down properly.

- It can last anywhere from days to weeks.

Source: DTE

INDIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST POLICY

Context

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India reaffirmed India's commitment to its **'Neighbourhood First' Policy** and '**Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR' Vision.**

About the India's 'Neighbourhood First Policy'

- It guides its approach towards the management of relations with countries in its **immediate neighbourhood**, that is, **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.**

- The **overarching philosophy** of India's engagement with its neighbours is to ensure that they also benefit from our economic development and growth.

  - Thus, the focus of our Neighbourhood First policy is to enhance connectivity, augment trade and investment, and build a secure and stable neighbourhood.

Objectives

- The Neighbourhood First policy, inter alia, is aimed at enhancing physical, digital and people-to-people connectivity across the region, as well as augmenting trade and commerce.

- It has evolved into an institutional priority for all the relevant arms of the Government managing relations and policies with our neighbourhood.

Extension of the Policy

- **Act East Policy:** With the objective to further strengthen ties with countries of the Southeast Asian region, **India's 'Look East Policy' launched in 1992**, was **upgraded to the 'Act East Policy' in 2014**, with proactive and pragmatic focus on the extended neighbourhood in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **Think West Policy:** India's outreach to the Gulf and West Asian countries has become an increasingly important pillar of its foreign policy. This region has traditionally been important for India's energy security.

- **Connect Central Asia Policy:** It envisages a deep, meaningful and sustained engagement with the Central Asian region.

> **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**
>
> - It was first articulated in 2015, envisaging a **free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region**, one which is built on a rules-based international order, sustainable and transparent infrastructure investment, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce, mutual respect for sovereignty, peaceful resolution of disputes, as well as equality of all nations.
> - **Guided by SAGAR**, India is making concrete contributions in connectivity, capacity building, disaster management, enhancing people to people exchanges, promoting sustainable development, creating awareness on illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing, enhancing maritime safety and security as well as strengthening underwater domain awareness in the **Indian Ocean Region.**

Source: HT

OATH TAKING CEREMONY

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the **oath** for the **3rd term in the Prime Ministerial office.**

About

- The oath-taking ceremony is the **formal event** that signifies a **person assuming control of a post**, and is associated with several government offices in India, such as that of the **President, Cabinet Ministers and judges.**

- The person set to occupy the office swears to be **loyal to the Constitution and to discharge their duties faithfully.**

- **For CMs and ministers at the state level,** the Governor administers the oath.
  - **For the Prime Minister and the Union Cabinet,** the President discharges the function.
  - The oath of **office to the President** is administered by the Chief Justice of India.

- The **words of the oath** of allegiance for each post are given in the Constitution of India.
  - The President's oath of office is in **Article 60** of the Constitution.
  - The **Third Schedule** of the Constitution details the oaths for other offices. Holders of these offices also **take an oath of secrecy.**

- **Article 164** makes it clear that the text of the oath has to be read out exactly as it is.
  - But if a person wanders from the text, it is the **responsibility of the person administering the oath** to interrupt and ask the person being sworn in to read it out correctly.

Source: IE

NATIONAL HEALTH CLAIM EXCHANGE

Context

- The Health Ministry along with the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** are launching the **National Health Claim Exchange (NHCX).**

About

- It is aimed at allowing patients **to access quality healthcare swiftly and with reduced out-of-pocket expenditure.**

- The NHCX will serve as a gateway for **exchanging claims-related information among various stakeholders** in the healthcare and health insurance ecosystem.
  - The integration with NHCX is expected to enable **seamless interoperability** of health claims processing, enhancing efficiency and transparency in the insurance industry, benefiting policyholders and patients.

- The NHCX will significantly alleviate the administrative burden on hospitals, which currently contend with multiple portals for various insurers.

- **IRDAI:** It is an **autonomous and statutory body** which is responsible for managing and regulating insurance and re-insurance industry in India.
  - Irdai is a 10-member body- a chairman, five full-time members and four part-time members.
  - It was constituted under an Act of Parliament in **1999** and the agency's headquarters is in Hyderabad.

Source: TH

CABINET COMMITTEES

In Context

- Once the Union Cabinet is sworn in and ministerial portfolios are allocated, the next step would be the formation of the high-profile Cabinet committees.

About Cabinet committees

- The Prime Minister sets up Cabinet committees with selected members of the Cabinet and assigns specific functions to these committees.

- The Prime Minister may change the numbers of committees, and modify the functions assigned to them.

- **Composition :** The membership of each committee varies from three to eight. Usually, only Cabinet ministers are members of these committees.

- **Types :** There are eight Cabinet committees at present — the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth, Cabinet Committee on Security, Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development, and Cabinet Committee on Accommodation.

    - The committees on investment and employment were innovations introduced by the Modi government in 2019.
    - All committees except the Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs are headed by the PM.

- **Functions :** The committees resolve issues and formulate proposals for the consideration of the Cabinet and take decisions on matters assigned to them.

    - The Cabinet is empowered to review such decisions.

> **Do you know ?**
>
> - The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 and the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961, facilitating smooth transaction of business in Ministries/ Departments of the Government.
> - This Secretariat provides Secretarial assistance to the **Cabinet and its Committees.**

Source :IE

INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY BOARD OF INDIA (IBBI)

In News

- Starting July 1, 2024, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is implementing revised guidelines for appointing insolvency professionals (IPs) as resolution professionals.

About

- These changes are designed to simplify the appointment process by creating a designated panel of eligible IPs, requiring specific qualifications, and mandating prior experience with Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code cases.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)

- It is a statutory body established in 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC). It has a Chairperson and 10 members from various government departments (Finance, Law, RBI, etc.).

- It plays a crucial role in overseeing and regulating the insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings in India. The IBBI aims to create a robust ecosystem for efficient insolvency resolution and bankruptcy management.

- The IBBI regulates insolvency professionals (IPs), insolvency professional agencies (IPAs), insolvency professional entities (IPEs), and information utilities (IUs) involved in insolvency and bankruptcy processes.

Source: BS

SELECTION OF GREEN AMMONIA PRODUCERS UNDER SIGHT PROGRAMME

In News

- Solar Energy Corporation of India issued a Request for Selection (RfS) for Green Ammonia Producers

About

- The move is focused on the production of **Green Ammonia** in India through cost based competitive bidding under **Mode 2A of SIGHT Programme** of the National Green Hydrogen Mission being implemented by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).

- MNRE had earlier issued the Scheme Guidelines for implementation of SIGHT Programme – Component II: Incentive for Procurement of Green Ammonia Production (under Mode2A) of the NGHM.
  - ◆ Green Ammonia produced will be supplied to the fertilizer companies.

About Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) programme

It is a major financial measure with an outlay of ₹ 17,490 crore and consists of two distinct financial incentive mechanisms to s**upport domestic manufacturing of electrolysers** and **production of Green Hydrogen.**

National Green Hydrogen Mission

- It was launched in 2023 with an outlay of Rs. 19,744 crores up to FY 2029-30.
- It aims to provide a comprehensive action plan for establishing a Green Hydrogen ecosystem and catalysing a systemic response to the opportunities and challenges in this sunrise sector.
- It has a target of establishing 5 million tonnes of annual green hydrogen production capacity by 2030.
- It will lead to significant decarbonization of the economy, reduced dependence on fossil fuel imports, and enable India to assume technology and market leadership in Green Hydrogen.

Source:PIB

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