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14 November 2024

"EV as a Service" Program

Context: Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) has taken a significant step towards promoting green mobility with the launch of its 'EV as a Service' program. This initiative aims to deploy 5,000 electric cars in government ministries and public sector units within the next two years

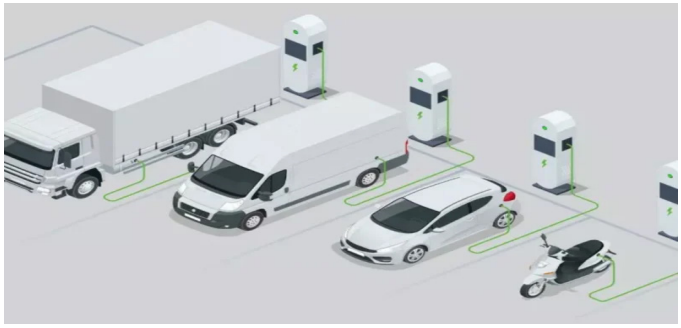
Key Features of the 'EV as a Service' Programme:

The 'EV as a Service' programme offers several advantages for government departments looking to transition to electric vehicles:

- **Flexible Procurement Model:** The programme enables government offices to select from a variety of electric car models, allowing them to choose vehicles that best meet their operational needs. This flexibility ensures that EV deployment aligns with the specific requirements of each department, such as fleet size, type, and usage patterns.
- **Promoting E-Mobility in Government Offices:** By introducing electric cars into government fleets, the programme aims to reduce the carbon footprint of public sector transportation. The initiative is in line with India's broader environmental goals and the commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.
- **Supporting Energy Security:** The transition to electric vehicles helps reduce India's dependency on fossil fuels, thereby promoting energy security and contributing to the country's energy efficiency targets.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** The initiative fosters a collaborative ecosystem involving manufacturers, fleet operators, policymakers, and users, promoting sustainable mobility solutions. The program aligns with the PM E-DRIVE Scheme, a national effort aimed at accelerating India's transition to electric mobility.
- **Progress and Achievements:** CESL has already made significant strides in electric mobility, with nearly 2,000 electric cars deployed across the country. Additionally, the organisation is facilitating the deployment of approximately 17,000 electric buses as part of a wider effort to promote sustainable transportation solutions.

About CESL

- Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) is a subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), under the Ministry of Power, Government of India. CESL was created with the mission to drive the adoption of clean energy technologies and energy-efficient solutions across India.



What are Electric Vehicles?

- Electric Vehicles use one or more electric motors for propulsion, replacing traditional internal combustion engines (ICEs) that burn gasoline or diesel.

Types of Electric Vehicles:

- **Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs):** Run solely on battery power, producing zero tailpipe emissions.
- **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs):** Combine electric motor and gasoline engine, can be charged externally.
- **Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs):** Use both electric motor and gasoline engine, but battery cannot be charged directly.

Benefits of Electric Vehicles:

- **Reduced Emissions:** Zero tailpipe emissions, improving air quality and public health.
- **Lower Operating Costs:** Electricity can be cheaper than gasoline.
- **Quieter Operation:** Electric motors generate less noise.
- **Improved Efficiency:** Electric motors convert more energy into usable power.

DoPT Report Reveals Growing Cybersecurity Threats

Context: The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) annual report for 2023-24, released in November

2024, raises serious concerns regarding the state of cybersecurity in India, particularly in the context of national security risks.

- The report highlights a sharp increase in cybercrime incidents, including:
  - » A ransomware attack on a defence unit,
  - » A massive data breach affecting millions of Indian citizens,
  - » Malicious cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure.

Key Highlights from the DoPT Report:

- **Ransomware Attack on a Defence Unit:** In 2023, a critical defence unit was hit by a ransomware attack. Ransomware encrypts a target's data and demands a ransom to unlock it. The attack blocked access to vital computer systems, emphasizing the growing vulnerability of India's defence infrastructure to cyber threats.
- **Data Breach Affecting 81 Crore Indians**: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) suffered a major data breach. The breach was discovered by Resecurity, a U.S.-based cybersecurity firm, in October 2023. This breach exposed serious flaws in India's data protection mechanisms, with potential risks to citizens' privacy and identity theft.
- **Malware Attack on Ministry:** A malware attack targeted a government ministry in 2023.
- **Impact of Malware:** Malware attacks can cause significant disruptions, such as the theft of classified information or disruption of essential services. This underscores the need for heightened vigilance and security protocols in government systems.
- **DDOS Attacks on Critical Infrastructure:** A Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDOS) attack targeted critical infrastructure, including airports in India.

How DDOS Works:

- DDOS attacks overwhelm servers with massive traffic, rendering them inoperable and causing service disruptions.

Increase in Cybersecurity Incidents

- CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) reported a dramatic increase in cybersecurity incidents:
- 15,92,917 incidents were recorded in 2023, compared to just 53,117 in 2017. These incidents included a range of threats such as:
  - » Website intrusions,
  - » Malware propagation,
  - » Phishing attacks,
  - » DDOS attacks, and
  - » Unauthorized network activities.

Types of frauds:

- **Crypto Fraud:** CBI uncovered a $2 million cryptocurrency scam tied to a fraudulent tech support call centre. The CBI also exposed a large-scale crypto mining scam in India, where perpetrators misled citizens into investing ₹100 crore in fake crypto mining operations.
- **Call Centre Frauds:** The CBI dismantled several call centre fraud networks operating in India, targeting citizens in countries like the U.S. and Canada. These networks were involved in fraudulent schemes, costing victims millions of dollars.
- **Investment and Loan App Frauds:** The CBI also investigated investment and loan app frauds, where fraudulent operations targeted citizens, particularly those from neighboring countries. These apps often used deceptive tactics to trap unsuspecting investors.

Changing Landscape of Cybersecurity Coordination:

- In September 2023, the Cabinet Secretariat amended the Allocation of Business Rules, placing the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) under the National Security Adviser (NSA), Ajit Doval, as the primary agency responsible for providing strategic direction on cybersecurity.
- MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) was designated to oversee telecom network

security, while the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was given responsibility for handling cybercrimes.

Global Carbon Markets and Climate Finance

Context: The COP29 summit held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on November 12, 2024, made significant strides in developing a global carbon market and advancing climate finance goals. These discussions focused on finalizing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and establishing the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance.

Framework for a Global Carbon Market:

- **Article 6.2:** Enables bilateral trading of carbon credits, allowing countries to cooperate directly in achieving emissions reductions.
- **Article 6.4:** Establishes a UN-supervised global carbon market to facilitate wider, regulated trading beyond bilateral agreements.
- **Carbon Credits:** Represent certified reductions in emissions, encouraging investments in sustainable projects and helping countries achieve Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Progress Achieved at COP29:

- Nations approved new standards to verify carbon removal, ensuring credits are authentic and credible.
- COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev noted that implementing Article 6 could reduce the cost of climate goals by $250 billion annually.
- These advancements are expected to make carbon trading a "game-changing tool" to channel resources toward developing countries.

Challenges in Carbon Markets:

- Transparency and accountability in credit validation are critical to avoid misuse and ensure genuine emissions reductions.
- Clear guidelines are needed for when credits become tradable and who retains credit ownership.
- Ensuring broad acceptance of these standards by all signatory countries remains a priority.

Ownership and Eligibility Issues:

- **Credit Ownership:** If a developed country finances a carbon-reducing project in a developing country, questions arise over who can claim the emissions reduction.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Determining at what stage in a project's lifecycle the credits become eligible for trade is essential for accurate accounting.
- **NDC Reporting:** Countries must decide if credits generated by foreign-financed projects within their borders can count toward their NDC targets.

India's Commitments and Needs:

- India aims to reduce emissions intensity by 45% from 2005 levels and create 2.5–3 billion tonnes of additional carbon sinks by 2030.
- As a major developing economy, India needs clear credit ownership rules to meet its climate commitments effectively.
- India's case underscores the importance of transparent rules in managing international financing and carbon credit ownership.

New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for Climate Finance:

- Updates the initial $100 billion annual climate finance target set for developed countries to support developing nations.
- The NCQG aims to increase this target to address rising costs in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- Expected to take effect by 2025, the NCQG underscores the financial responsibility of developed countries to help vulnerable regions.
- The NCQG can create a robust financial foundation to meet ambitious climate goals globally.

Conclusion:

COP29 in Baku has made pivotal advancements in global carbon markets and climate finance frameworks. By establishing standards for carbon credit authenticity and emphasizing the NCQG, COP29 highlights a collective, cooperative approach to climate action. These frameworks are expected to be operational by 2025, making carbon markets and climate finance essential tools for global climate goals and sustainable development.

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Power Packed News

Tayyab Ikram Re-elected President of the International Hockey Federation

- At the 49th International Hockey Federation (FIH) Statutory Congress in Muscat, Oman, Tayyab Ikram was re-elected as President for a full four-year term.
- Pakistan-born Ikram, who previously served a two-year term, initially stepped into the role in 2022 following the resignation of former President Narinder Batra. His re-election signals stability and continuity in the FIH's leadership, fostering a sense of sustained progress in global hockey governance.
- Ikram's continued leadership aligns with the FIH's mission to support the development of both indoor field hockey and field hockey worldwide.
- Alongside Ikram, Danae Andrada (URU), Alberto Daniel Budski (ARG), and Erik Cornelissen (NED) were re-elected as members of the FIH Executive Board, with Katrin Kauschke (GER) also joining the Board.
- Headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, the FIH oversees field hockey's international development, rules, and tournament organization. Ikram's leadership is expected to further advance the sport's global reach, promoting inclusivity and growth across member nations.

Dubai Ranks 5th Globally in the 2024 Global City Index

- Dubai has topped the rankings in the Middle East and Africa and is now the 5th most influential city globally, according to the latest Global City Index by Brand Finance.
- The city has surpassed major cities like Singapore, Los Angeles, and Sydney, though London, Paris, and New York remain in the top three positions.
- A key factor in Dubai's rise is its focus on improving work opportunities, both locally and remotely, moving from 24th to 4th place in work accessibility. The city's strong infrastructure, strategic trade partnerships, and economic stability have contributed to its high overall score of 86 out of 100.
- As a global hub for trade, finance, and tourism, Dubai has leveraged its strategic location to strengthen its role in international commerce. With a forward-looking approach to economic policies, Dubai continues to grow as a leading global city.

Dubai ranks highest in Middle East and North Africa in '2024 Global City Index'

Eurasian Otter

- A rare Eurasian Otter (Lutra lutra) was rescued in Indapur, Pune District, marking the first recorded sighting of this species in the area. The discovery, made by the Pune Forest Department and RESQ Charitable Trust, followed a call regarding a civet trapped in a well.
- Forest guards and RESQ team members executed a six-hour operation using an auto-trap cage to safely retrieve the otter, later transporting it to the Wildlife Transit Treatment Centre in Pune for assessment.
- This unexpected sighting is significant as Eurasian Otters are usually found in Europe, the Himalayan foothills, and parts of Northeast India. Typically inhabiting clean, freshwater environments rich in fish, these otters are solitary, nocturnal, and sensitive to pollution.
- Eurasian Otters are classified as Near Threatened by the IUCN, are protected under India's Wildlife Protection Act (Schedule II) and listed in Appendix I of

Face to Face Centres
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CITES, highlighting their conservation importance.

Azerbaijan

- Azerbaijan, located in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia, is a transcontinental nation bridging Asia and Europe. Its capital, Baku, recently hosted the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29). The country is bordered by Russia to the north, Georgia to the northwest, Armenia to the west, Iran to the south, and the Caspian Sea to the east.

Political and Geographical Features:

- **Land Boundaries:** Borders Russia, Iran, Armenia, and Georgia.
- **Water Bodies:** The Caspian Sea lies to its east, crucial for Azerbaijan's trade and resources.
- **Major Rivers:** The Kura and Aras rivers are significant for the country's irrigation and agriculture.
- **Highest Peak:** Bazardyuzyu, part of the Greater Caucasus range, is the country's highest point.
- **Territorial Dispute:** Azerbaijan has a longstanding dispute with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.
- **Natural Resources:** Azerbaijan is rich in natural resources, particularly oil and natural gas, as well as minerals like lead, zinc, iron, and copper, which are central to its economy.

- Azerbaijan's strategic location and resource wealth play a significant role in its regional influence and geopolitical importance.