Group

GOVERNMENT
POLICY REPORT

JANUARY 2025 EDITION

SUSTAINABILITY

DECARBONIZATION

WATER

TOURISM

NORTHEAST CORNER

SUSTAINABILITY

"Green And Sustainability" Working Group Constituted Under Bharat 6G Alliance

The "Green and Sustainability" Working Group, formed under the Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA), marks a significant step in aligning technological advancement with environmental priorities. This initiative stems from India's commitment to pioneering sustainable 6G networks, as envisioned in the Bharat 6G Vision document. **It aims for India to be a global leader in 6G design, development, and deployment by 2030.**

Out of eight working groups under the alliance, the "Green & Sustainability" working group has developed a comprehensive framework focussing on five key areas. **These are Integrated Sustainability Governance, Green Network Infrastructure, Circular Economy and E-Waste Management, Innovation, and Capacity Building along with Policy Advocacy & Collaborative Governance.**

As per the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the "Green & Sustainability" working group's focus is on creating energy-efficient 6G networks that minimize the environmental impact while maximizing technological benefits. This initiative aims to integrate sustainability into every aspect of the telecom industry, ensuring that the evolution to 6G technology aligns with environmental conservation and responsible resource management.

WORKING GROUPS

Spectrum

Technology

Applications

Device Technology, Sensors & Manufacturing Ecosystem

Green & Sustainability

Outreach

6G Use-Cases and Revenue Streams

SEPs (Strategy Planning and Policy)

The group's objectives also include reducing carbon emissions from telecommunication infrastructure, promoting the adoption of renewable energy, and integrating sustainable practices in network design and operations. Leveraging India's expertise in frugal engineering and renewable energy, the working group seeks to position India as a global hub for green telecom solutions.

FOCUS AREA	GOALS	APPROACH	VISION
Energy Efficiency	Align with UN SDG's	AI and ML Integration	Digital Inclusion
Reduced Carbon Emissions	Promote Renewable Energy	Collaboration with Academia & Industry	Economic and Social Growth

A key aspect of this effort is developing frameworks and benchmarks for sustainability in 6G networks, ensuring they align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG's). The group aims to optimize energy use in network operations and reduce resource wastage by

adopting advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning. Additionally, the working group will collaborate with academia, industry leaders, and international organizations to drive innovation in green technology and standardize global best practices.

The Bharat 6G Vision document also highlights India's goal to ensure digital inclusion and bridge the urban-rural divide, with sustainability being a core pillar. The government has emphasized that sustainable development in the telecom sector will not only enhance economic growth but also improve societal well-being and contribute to environmental preservation.

KEY FOCUS UNDER BHARAT 6G ALLIANCE

Understanding business and societal needs related to 5G advanced and 6G technology
Contribution to 6G and other future technology-related global, deployments, products, operations, and services
Sport and energize Indian participation in standard development organizations
Promote high impact Open R&D and pursue pre-standardization efforts
Identify priority areas for research with the consultation of all stakeholders
Build coalition and synergies with like-minded 6G Global Alliances and global technology alliances and associations
Facilitate availability of 6G test beds and access to 6G chipsets

This initiative reflects India's proactive stance in shaping the future of global telecommunications by integrating sustainability with technological progress, underscoring the nation's resolve to balance innovation and environmental stewardship. This collective expertise under the "Green & Sustainability" working group is instrumental in driving the adoption of sustainable practices within the telecom sector, contributing to India's commitment to the advancement of next-generation communication technologies.

DECARBONIZATION

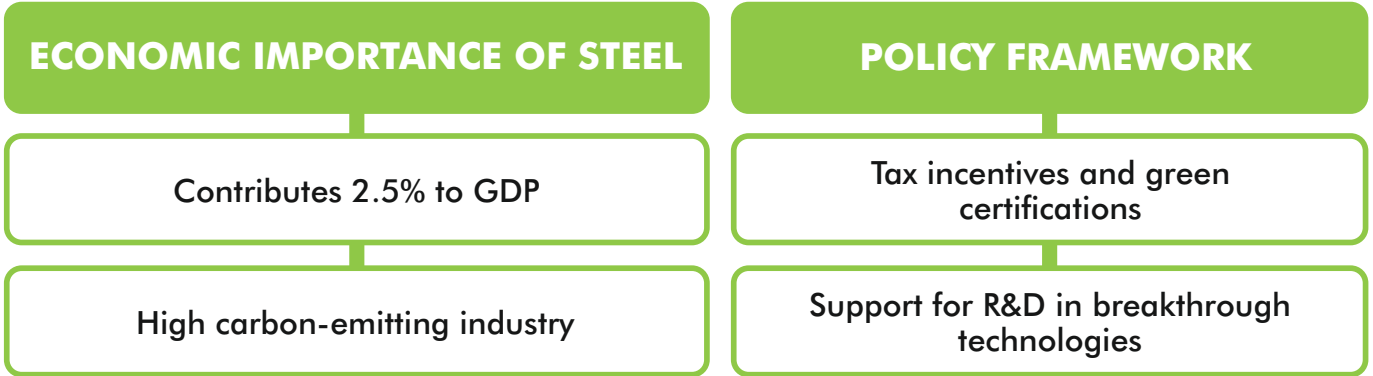## GoI Formulating Green Transition Roadmap of Steel Sector

The Government of India (GoI) is actively formulating a Green Transition Roadmap for the steel sector to align with the country's decarbonization commitments and support environmental sustainability. This initiative comes in light of the recommendations of 14 task forces formed by the Ministry of Steel that have identified the critical role of the steel sector in the growth of the Indian economy. As it **contributes**

approximately 2.5% to the national GDP while being one of the highest carbon-emitting industries, the task force has identified various key levers to achieve decarbonization of the sector.

As part of this roadmap, the Ministry of Steel has initiated consultations with industry stakeholders, research institutions, and global experts to devise strategies for reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to low-carbon production. **The focus areas include adopting cleaner technologies, enhancing energy efficiency, and promoting green hydrogen and renewable energy use in steelmaking processes.**

To achieve the same, the ministry is coming up with the 'Green Steel Mission" for which the cost is estimated around Rs 15,000 crore. This will include a PLI scheme for Green Steel along with the provision of incentives to use renewable energy as well as mandatory provision for government agencies to procure Green steel. A significant thrust is also being given to circular economy principles, such as

recycling and reusing steel scrap to minimize resource wastage. The roadmap aligns with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, which aims to reduce the economy's carbon intensity by 45% by 2030.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF STEEL	POLICY FRAMEWORK
Contributes 2.5% to GDP	Tax incentives and green certifications
High carbon-emitting industry	Support for R&D in breakthrough technologies

To achieve these targets, the government is also working on a policy framework to incentivize green steel production and ensure its competitiveness in the global market. **Measures under consideration include tax incentives, green certifications, and support for Research and Development (R&D) in breakthrough technologies.** Additionally, it also emphasizes collaboration with international

organizations and leveraging India's G20 presidency to promote global cooperation on green steel initiatives. The role of digital tools, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, in optimizing energy use and emission reduction is also being explored.

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has identified green steel as a key enabler of India's low-carbon future. According to TERI, achieving the green steel transition will require a combination of regulatory support, financial incentives, and public-private partnerships to drive innovation and scalability. With these efforts, the GoI aims to position India as a global leader in sustainable steel production, balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility.

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TOURISM

Ministry of Tourism Issued Operational Guidelines for 'SASCI Scheme' for Development of Iconic Tourist Centres

The Ministry of Tourism, GoI has issued operational guidelines for the **"Special Assistance to States/Union Territories for Capital Investment"** Scheme, also known as the **SASCI**, to develop iconic tourist centers across India. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to position India as a globally competitive tourism destination while enhancing the visitor experience and promoting sustainable tourism.

Under the scheme, **40 tourist destinations in 23 states have been identified for development with a total outlay of Rs 3295.76 Crore**. These destinations will be developed with a focus on infrastructure enhancement, cultural preservation, and marketing on a global scale. The guidelines outline steps for integrated and inclusive development of these sites, ensuring a balance between environmental conservation and economic growth.

The SASCI Scheme emphasizes several core components, including developing world-class visitor amenities, upgrading last-mile connectivity, and showcasing local culture and heritage. Its key aspect is promoting lesser-known destinations, thereby reducing pressure on areas having maximum tourist inflow areas and fostering equitable economic growth across regions.

STEPS FOLLOWED UNDER THE SASCI SCHEME

STEP 1 — Identifying 40 destinations across 23 states.

STEP 2 — Planning infrastructure and cultural preservation.

STEP 3 — Establishing partnerships with stakeholders.

STEP 4 — Implementing digital marketing and skill-building programs.

STEP 5 — Showcasing examples like Savadatti Yellammana Gudda.

To achieve these objectives, **the Ministry has adopted a destination-driven approach**. This involves collaboration with state governments, local bodies, and private stakeholders to ensure holistic development. Additionally, measures such as skill development for the local workforce and digital marketing campaigns will be implemented to enhance the competitiveness of these tourist centres.
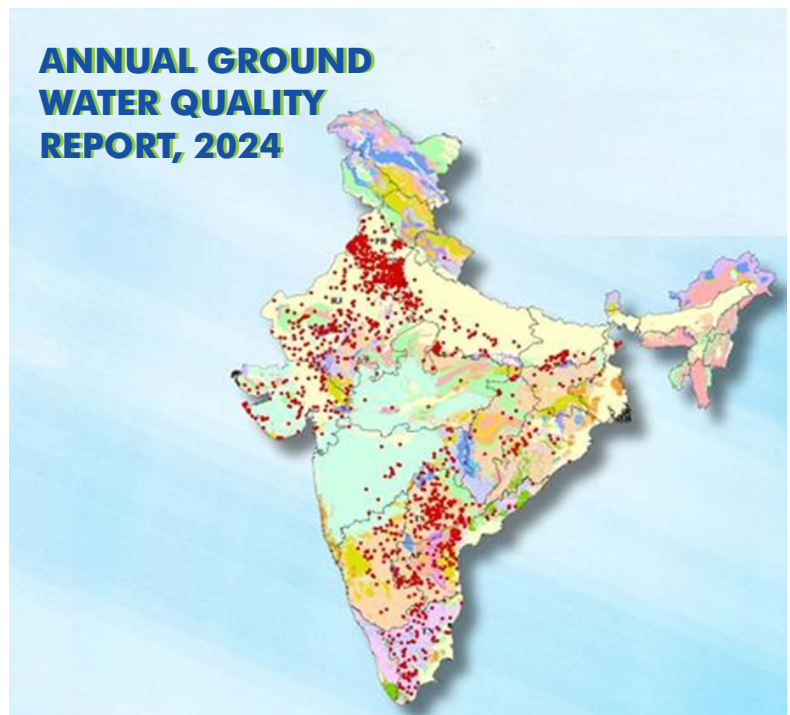

One notable example under the SASCI Scheme is the development of Savadatti Yellammana Gudda in Karnataka, with an allocation of Rs 100 crore. This project will improve infrastructure and facilities at the site, making it a major attraction for domestic and international tourists. This initiative aligns with the National Tourism Policy and the G20 Tourism Working Group's objectives to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism. By integrating cultural heritage with modern amenities, the SASCI Scheme aims to provide a transformative experience for visitors while contributing significantly to the local economy and livelihood.

WATER

Release of Annual Ground Water Quality Report 2024 by Ministry of Jal Shakti

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has released the Annual Ground Water Quality Report 2024, offering a detailed assessment of groundwater trends across India. The comprehensive report underscores significant improvements, with a reduction in groundwater extraction and enhanced recharge levels, reflecting progress in sustainable water management practices and coordinated efforts across various sectors.

According to the report, **groundwater extraction dropped to 239.16 billion cubic metres in 2024, a 4.5% decrease from 2020 levels.** Concurrently, recharge levels have seen a rise, attributed to government initiatives like the Atal Bhujal Yojana and widespread community participation in rainwater harvesting. Notably, **the number of over-exploited blocks decreased to 909 in 2024 from 1,186 in 2020**. These findings indicate a positive shift towards addressing India's groundwater crisis, which has long been a challenge for agriculture, industries, and drinking water supply.

ANNUAL GROUND WATER QUALITY REPORT, 2024

CONTAMINATION CONCERNS

Nitrate, fluoride, and arsenic contamination in regions such as Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, and West Bengal.

Calls for better water treatment and pollution regulation.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

India remains the largest global extractor of groundwater

Recommendations for integrating traditional water practices with modern technologies like GIS mapping.

The report also highlights areas of concern besides notable improvements. **Despite improvements, India remains the largest extractor of groundwater globally, contributing to 24% of total global extraction.** Nitrate, fluoride, and arsenic contamination remain prevalent in certain regions, posing health risks to affected populations. **States like Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, and West Bengal reported localized contamination issues.** Addressing this requires enhanced water treatment infrastructure and stricter regulation of industrial and agricultural pollutants.

The report emphasizes the role of participatory approaches in achieving these milestones. Efforts under flagship programs like the Jal Jeevan Mission not only aim to ensure piped water to households but also promote groundwater conservation. Experts, however, caution against complacency.

To ensure long-term sustainability, **the report recommends integrating traditional water management practices with modern technologies like GIS mapping and real-time monitoring.** The 2024 report is a testament to the effectiveness of targeted policy interventions and their outcomes. With sustained efforts, it shows the hope that India can further secure its groundwater resources, which are crucial for achieving water security in a climate-impacted future.

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NORTHEAST CORNER

First-ever Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav 2024 Celebrated Cultural Wealth and Economic Growth of Northeast India

The first-ever Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav 2024 was held in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. It marked a significant celebration of Northeast India's cultural wealth and economic growth between the 6th to 8th of December. The event was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India and was designed to highlight the region's unique cultural diversity, rich heritage, and the growing economic potential of its diverse states.

This unique festival aimed to showcase the region's economic advancements, including progress in infrastructure and trade, while also emphasizing its rich traditions, heritage, and vibrant artistic expression. The **mascot of the event was named Purvi, a young girl** representing the eight NE states.

The Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav was a blend of cultural displays, economic discussions, and a focus on sustainable development. It served as a platform for showcasing indigenous crafts, handlooms, and agri-horticulture products particularly those that have received **Geographical Indication (GI) tags**. The 34 GI-tagged products from the Northeast reflect the region's diverse craftsmanship, which is gaining recognition in global markets.

Additionally, the festival aimed to promote the importance of preserving cultural traditions while encouraging innovation for economic growth and regional integration. The Northeast has been increasingly recognized for its development potential. **With the government's focus on enhancing infrastructure, boosting local industries, and improving trade relations, the region is becoming a hub for business, tourism, and cultural exchange.**

Initiatives supporting local artisans, promoting GI products, and fostering self-sufficiency through skill development have contributed to the region's economic transformation. These efforts also align with the government's "Act East" policy to strengthen ties with neighbouring Southeast Asian countries. The event was a symbolic recognition of the region's pivotal role in India's economic endeavours.

This has also emphasized how the integration of cultural heritage with modern economic strategies can lead to sustainable development, benefiting both local communities and national growth. Thus, the event was a successful initiative celebrating Northeast India's journey towards cultural renaissance and economic prosperity, reinforcing its position as a key player in the country's development.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASHTALAKSHMI MAHOTSAV	Cultural Heritage
Sustainable Development	Economic Growth

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Follow us on

info@aggrp.in

www.aggrp.in

+91 9810046249

0124 4235267