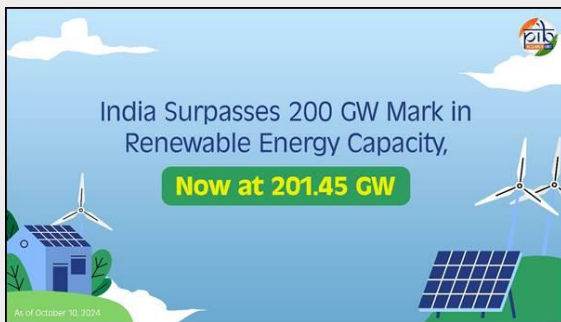


'Sharing is Caring'

If you have friends preparing for Civil Services, tell them that they can also receive Updates from PrepMate IAS by sending 'Name' and 'State' through WhatsApp on 75979-00000

### 1. India's Renewable Energy Milestone: 200 GW of Clean Energy Capacity

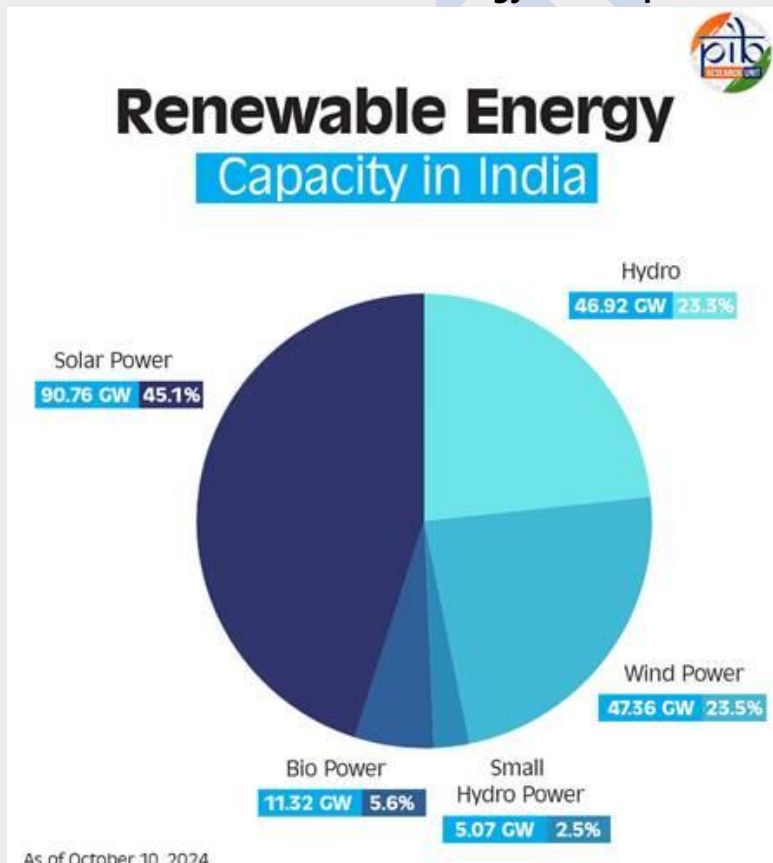
#### Introduction



India has crossed a significant milestone in its renewable energy journey, with the country's total renewable energy capacity surpassing 200 GW as of October 10, 2024. According to the Central Electricity Authority, renewable energy-based electricity generation now stands at 201.45 GW, constituting 46.3% of India's total capacity. This achievement highlights India's growing focus on clean energy and its efforts

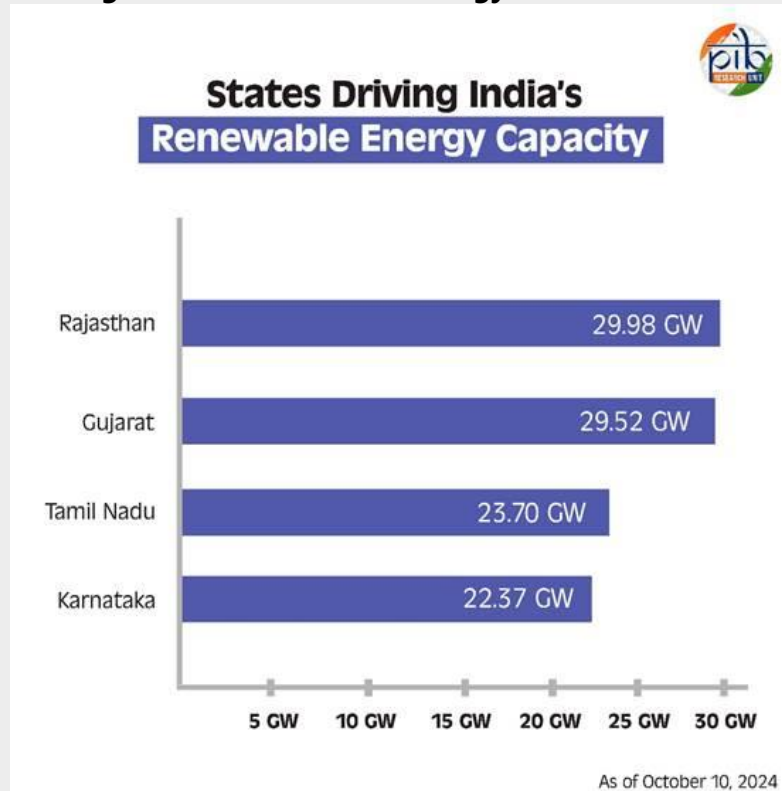
toward a greener future.

#### Overview of India's Renewable Energy Landscape



India's total electricity generation capacity has reached 452.69 GW, with renewable energy contributing 46.3% to the overall mix. Solar power leads with 90.76 GW, followed by wind energy at 47.36 GW, and hydroelectric power, which adds 51.99 GW from both large and small hydro projects. Biopower, which utilizes agricultural and organic waste, contributes 11.32 GW, further diversifying India's clean energy sources. Together, these renewable resources are reducing the country's dependence on fossil fuels and advancing its sustainability goals.

## Leading States in Renewable Energy



Several Indian states have emerged as leaders in renewable energy. Rajasthan tops the list with 29.98 GW, followed closely by Gujarat at 29.52 GW. Tamil Nadu ranks third with 23.70 GW, while Karnataka holds fourth place with 22.37 GW. These states play a crucial role in driving India's renewable energy growth.

### Conclusion

India's achievement of over 200 GW of renewable energy capacity underscores its commitment to a sustainable future. With ongoing government initiatives like the National Green Hydrogen

Mission and ambitious targets of 500 GW from non-fossil sources by 2030, India is well on its way to becoming a global leader in renewable energy, ensuring energy security and environmental sustainability.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

## 2. Issues in the treatment of 'rare diseases', and what the govt can do

### Introduction

The Delhi High Court last week issued directions aimed at improving the availability of so-called "orphan drugs", which are medications used to treat "rare diseases" — defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a debilitating, lifelong condition that affects 1 or fewer people in 1,000.

Around 55 medical conditions — including Gaucher's disease, Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSDs), and certain forms of muscular dystrophy — are classified as rare diseases in India. The National Registry for Rare and Other Inherited Disorders (NRROID) started by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has the records of 14,472 rare disease patients in the country.

Therapies are available for less than 5% of rare diseases, leading to less than 1 in 10 patients receiving disease-specific care. Existing treatments are often very expensive. While the Centre provides financial assistance to various Centres of Excellence (CoE) for treatment, stakeholders have gone to court to highlight challenges in accessing funds.

### RARE DISEASES TYPES

7,000+

Identified rare diseases, with more being discovered every day



### THE CAUSE

80%

of rare diseases are caused by faulty genes



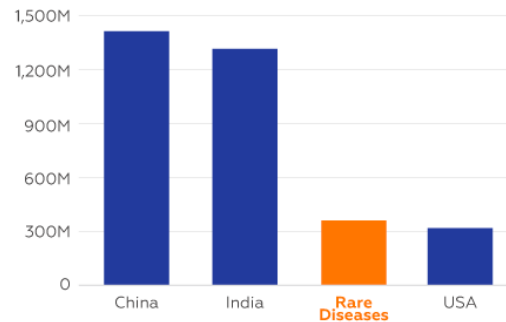
### RARE DISEASE EFFECT



30M  
americans

350M  
worldwide

If all of the people with rare diseases lived in one country, it would be the world's 3rd most populous country



### Categories of rare diseases

In India, rare diseases are categorised into three groups based on the nature and complexity of available treatment options.

Group 1 includes diseases that can be treated with a one-time curative procedure. Group 2 diseases require long-term or lifelong treatment which are relatively less costly and have shown documented benefits, but patients need regular check-ups. Group 3 diseases are those for which effective treatments are available, but they are expensive and must often continue lifelong. There are challenges in selecting the right beneficiaries for these treatments.

### Current funding policy

In 2021, the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) was launched, under which financial assistance up to Rs 50 lakh is provided to patients receiving treatment at an identified CoE. The CoEs include AIIMS in Delhi, PGIMER in Chandigarh and the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research at Kolkata's SSKM Hospital.

The following year, the Health Ministry opened a Digital Portal for Crowdfunding & Voluntary Donations with information about patients and their rare diseases, the estimated cost of treatment, and bank details of the CoEs. Donors can choose the CoE and patient treatments they wish to support. Each CoE also has its own Rare Disease Fund, which is used with approval from its governing authority.

In August 2024, the government told Parliament that financial assistance of Rs 24 crore had been released to CoEs for treating rare disease patients until August in the current financial year. Before that, Rs 3.15 crore, Rs 34.99 crore, and Rs 74 crore was released in 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 respectively. Further, Rs 35 crore has been released for purchasing equipment to improve patient care services.

### **Cost of orphan drugs**

\* Many medicines and therapies for rare diseases are patented, which makes them very expensive. The market for these drugs is small and the development costs are high, so pharmaceutical companies often don't find it profitable to produce them, pushing up prices.

\* Developing and manufacturing these drugs in India could help bring down prices, but the government will have to offer incentives such as tax breaks to companies.

\* Import of rare disease medicines by patients does not attract customs duty, but companies that bring these drugs to India still pay 11% customs duty and 12% GST. Delhi High Court has now set a deadline of 30 days to process the necessary exemptions for these medicines under the customs, GST, and Income Tax laws.

\* On January 3, 2019, the Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers issued an order freeing orphan drugs from price controls. The High Court expressed concern over this exemption, saying "the position cannot continue in this manner".

\* If treatments or medicines for rare diseases are not available, the government can, under the Patents Act of 1970, allow a third party to manufacture them against payment of a royalty to the patent holder. The government can also acquire patents to ensure the availability of medicines if the patent holder does not provide them. The court said there wasn't enough research and development in the field of rare diseases, and stressed that negotiating with pharma companies and boosting domestic efforts could help lower costs of treatment.

\* Delays and red tape in decision making is another problem. The National Rare Diseases Committee meeting in June 2023 discussed the delay in getting approval from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for US-based Sarepta Therapeutics to sell its medicines in India. AIIMS and other CoEs were importing the drugs through distributors for patients, and the delay was impacting treatment.

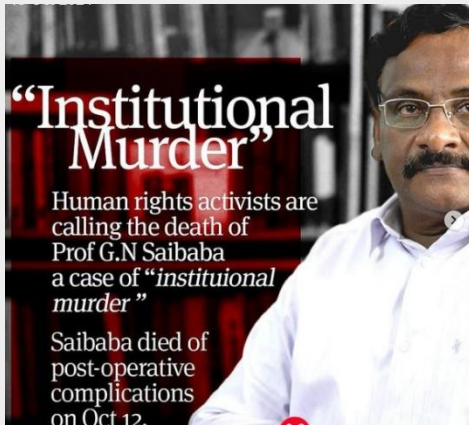
Relevance: GS Prelims

Source: Indian Express

### **3. Saibaba passes away: His decade-long trials, acquittal**

#### **Introduction**

Seven months after he was cleared of all charges of alleged Maoist links and released from jail after nearly a decade, former Delhi University professor in a Hyderabad hospital, where he was undergoing treatment.



The 57-year-old had a 90 per cent disability due to a polio infection contracted during his childhood, leaving him paralysed from the waist down. Upon his release from Nagpur jail on March 7, he spoke about the health complications he faced while incarcerated. During that period, Saibaba's family and lawyers often raised concerns and made applications in court about his deteriorating health and the delays in treatment.

### **The case and conviction**

On September 12, 2013, a team of Maharashtra police raided Saibaba's residence in Delhi, where he was an assistant professor at Ram Lal Anand College. Police arrested him on May 9, 2014, claiming he was an active member of the banned organisation Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI-M). Five others were arrested as well.

The police claimed they were all CPI-M members who hatched a criminal conspiracy to wage war against the Government of India through unlawful activities by use of violence. It alleged that Saibaba was found to possess documents and electronic gadgets, containing Maoist literature, correspondence between members, and video clips of their meetings.

On March 7, 2017, Saibaba and five others were found guilty by the sessions court under various charges, including the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The court said that though the wheelchair-bound Saibaba was disabled, there was no ground to show him leniency as he was "mentally fit" and a "think tank and high-profile leader" of CPI-M. His lawyers argued that the entire trial was vitiated, as the mandatory sanction necessary to prosecute an accused under UAPA was only granted after trial began. However, the court did not consider this valid. An appeal was then filed before the Bombay High Court.

### **The first acquittal**

On October 14, 2022, Saibaba and his co-accused were cleared of all charges by the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court.

The court noted various faults in the procedure followed by the investigating agency concerning the grant of sanction under UAPA. It held that the proceedings before the trial court were "null and void", as there was no valid sanction. Even as the police argued that the invalidity or absence of the sanction is a "curable defect", the court held that every legislatively provided safeguard, however minuscule, must be "zealously protected".

The court held that the sanction to prosecute Saibaba was received on April 6, 2015. By this time, the court had already framed charges against the accused and examined the first witness. Section 45(1) of UAPA states that no court shall take cognizance of any offence under UAPA without the previous sanction of the central or state government or any officer authorised by it.

The Act also states that an authority appointed by the government shall make an independent review of the evidence, before recommending if a sanction can be granted. The high court dealt in detail with the legislature's intent in inserting the requirement of a sanction, and the necessity of an independent review.

"The siren song that the end justifies the means, and that the procedural safeguards are subservient to the overwhelming need to ensure that the accused is prosecuted and punished, must be muzzled by the voice of Rule of Law," the division bench of Justices Rohit Deo and Anil Pansare said. The court said it was also conscious of the death of one accused person, named Pandu Narote, during the pendency of the appeal while in judicial custody in 2022, after he contracted swine flu. His appeal was also allowed.

### **Long wait for release**

After the high court order was pronounced on October 14, 2022, on a Friday morning, the Maharashtra government immediately moved an urgent appeal before the Supreme Court by that evening, mentioned by the Solicitor General of India. By then, family members of those cleared of the charges, including Saibaba, had begun with the release formalities at Nagpur jail.

Arrangements for an unprecedented special sitting were made and the matter was listed on Saturday, a non-working day. A bench comprising Justice M R Shah and Justice Bela Trivedi suspended the high court order, stating that the decision to clear the accused on the grounds of invalid sanction needed to be considered in detail.

Saibaba's lawyers argued that even as the court suspended the order, it could have granted him bail pending proceedings, considering his medical condition. However, the court refused. Six months later, on April 19, 2023, the Supreme Court sent back the case to the high court to consider all issues raised in the appeal and decide the case on merits. The state had argued that the high court did not consider merits in its previous order.

### **The second acquittal**

Nearly a year later, the high court again acquitted Saibaba and others on March 5, 2024, observing that holding a trial under UAPA without adhering to procedural requirements would amount to a "failure to justice".

While holding the sanction as invalid, the court said that the independent authority, the Directorate of Prosecution, had only given a "half-page communication" to justify the recommendation to grant sanction. On Saibaba, it said, "In sum and substance, the prosecution against accused No.6 G.N. Saibaba for want of valid sanction is also totally vitiated."

The court also questioned the credibility of his house being searched. It noted that the police chose an illiterate person to be an independent 'panch' — a witness mandated to be present during search procedures — though many "highly educated witnesses" would have been available, his residence being on a university campus. Further, the police had not proved any conspiracy to commit a terrorist act. He was then released.

### **Pleas on health grounds**



As early as a year after his arrest, Saibaba's lawyers submitted that he had faced health complications, including in his kidney and gallbladder. He was granted temporary bail by the High Court in June 2015 on medical grounds, saying that if not released, there was a chance that his life would be at risk. In December, he was directed to surrender himself to Nagpur jail. In 2016, the SC granted bail again, considering his medical condition, and said that the state opposing his bail was "extremely unfair" as he had never misused his bail previously. Following his conviction under UAPA, Saibaba was arrested again.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

#### 4. What is the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, linked with Baba Siddique's murder and threats to Salman Khan

##### Introduction

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and veteran Maharashtra politician Baba Siddique, 66, was shot dead on Saturday night (October 12). Long associated with the Indian National Congress (INC), he served as a state minister in the Congress-NCP government between 2004 and 2008. Siddique was also known for mingling with top Bollywood stars, including Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan.

Mumbai police confirmed that the three shooters involved in Siddique's killing were linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Here is what to know about the group and its criminal operations.



##### Who is Lawrence Bishnoi?

Lawrence Bishnoi, 31, is the son of a well-off agriculturist from the Dhattaranwali village in Punjab's Ferozepur district. He belongs to the Bishnoi community whose members have settled in Punjab, Haryana and many parts of Rajasthan.

Bishnoi studied till Class 12 and later shifted to Chandigarh in 2010 to pursue a college education. Following enrollment in DAV College, he joined student politics and became president of the Student Organisation of Panjab University (SOPU) between 2011 and 2012.

As per his criminal dossier, the first FIR against Lawrence Bishnoi was for an attempt to murder, followed by another FIR for trespass in April 2010. In February 2011, a case of assault and robbery of a cell phone was registered against him. All three cases were related to student politics.

Eventually, Jaswinder Singh alias Rocky, a gangster-turned-politician from Punjab's Fazilka, joined his group. The group remained active in parts of Rajasthan, in cities like Sri Ganganagar located on the Rajasthan-Punjab border, as well as Bharatpur, under the garb of student politics. Rocky, who also had a criminal background, was assassinated near Parwanoo in Himachal Pradesh in May 2016. Notorious gangster Jaipal Bhullar had taken responsibility for the murder. Bhullar was later gunned down in Kolkata in June 2020.

For many years, the gang has been named in cases of revenge killings as part of gang rivalries. Bishnoi has faced two dozen cases of murders, attempts to murder, extortion and other crimes. Currently, he is lodged in the Sabarmati Central Jail in Ahmedabad and is believed to be operating his gang from inside the jail. The gangster was taken to Gujarat by the state's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) in connection with a case of cross-border drug smuggling.

#### **Who is the Lawrence Bishnoi gang known to target?**

Recently, the gang allegedly targeted a Delhi-based Afghan national named Nadir Shah to reportedly send a message to his associate, who was not responding to their extortion demands. Before that, the Bishnoi gang was believed to be involved in the murder of a gym owner in Delhi.

Perhaps most infamously, Lawrence Bishnoi made headlines when Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala was shot dead in 2022. Goldy Brar, a gang member, claimed responsibility for the murder. Brar first went to Canada in 2017 and was based out of the country. Other aides of Bishnoi are also believed to be in Canada and the United States.

In a social media post, purportedly by Goldy Brar, it was claimed that Moosewala's murder was a revenge killing, carried out to avenge the murder of youth Akali Dal leader Vikramjit Singh, aka Vicky Middukhera. Earlier this year, Brar was declared a designated terrorist by the Centre under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

For many months now, the Bishnoi gang's plans have reportedly involved targeting Salman Khan and sending him death threats. In April, multiple bullet rounds were allegedly fired outside the actor's house in Mumbai. Since then, police vans have been deployed in the area and the actor has a security detail attached to him.

#### **What has the police said about the Bishnoi gang?**

With Mumbai's underworld gangs led by Dawood Ibrahim, Chhota Rajan and Ravi Pujari, among others, largely neutralised over the past decade and a half, police suspect the Bishnoi



gang, which has so far been active mainly in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and (western) UP, is attempting to step into this vacuum.

A police officer also said that Bishnoi's aims are often associated with Khan reportedly shooting a blackbuck in Rajasthan, because of the animal being revered by the Bishnoi community. However, the officer added that targeting Khan may be an attempt by the gangster to gain notoriety.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Internal Security

Source: Indian Express

PrepMate