

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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NITI AAYOG'S REPORT ON POVERTY

In Context: Quoting **Niti Aayog's report on poverty**, the Union Finance Minister said 13.5 crore Indians have escaped multidimensional poverty in the last five years.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS HIGHLIGHTED

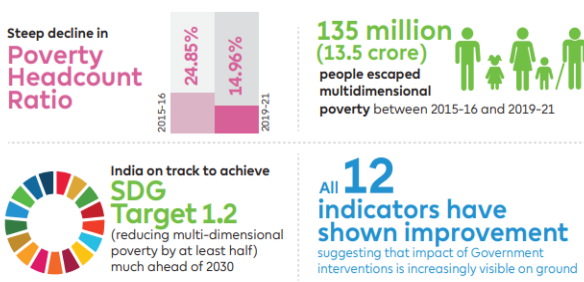
Over the last eight years, India has become the **fifth largest economy from being the tenth largest in 2015**.

- The service sector and the software services are doing very well.
- Because of the **Make in India programme** and also because of the PM's production-linked incentive scheme, the manufacturing sector is also significantly contributing to the economy.
- The **Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)** has been in expansionary territory for more than 29 consecutive months, which indicates sustained growth of manufacturing.
- **Direct tax collection grew by 21.82%** this year till November 9 and monthly GST collections stabilised at Rs 1.6 lakh crore in a sign of economic growth.

Niti Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index

- It measures simultaneous deprivations across the three equally weighted dimensions of health, education, and standard of living that are represented by 12 SDG-aligned indicators.
 - ♦ These include nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, maternal health, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, assets, and bank accounts.
- The 2023 report is prepared based on the latest **National Family Health Survey of 2019-21** and is the second edition of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

Highlights: MPI Progress Report 2023



Key Highlights

- 13.5 crore Indians escape Multidimensional Poverty in 5 years.
- Steep decline in the number of multidimensionally poor from 24.85% to 14.96% between 2015-16 and 2019-21.
- Rural areas saw the fastest decline in poverty from 32.59% to 19.28%.
- Uttar Pradesh registered the highest decline in the number of poor with 3.43 crore, followed by Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.
- Improvements in nutrition, years of schooling, sanitation, and cooking fuel played a significant role in bringing down poverty.

HISTORY OF POVERTY MEASUREMENT IN INDIA

- **Pre Independence:** In 1901, Dadabhai Naoroji initiated early efforts to assess poverty by publishing a book titled '**Poverty and Un-British Rule in India**,' wherein he pioneered the estimation of poverty through the cost of maintaining a subsistence diet.
- **First Five-Year Plan (1951-1956):** The Planning Commission of India was established in 1950, and during the first Five-Year Plan, the emphasis was on estimating the minimum level of living necessary for maintaining basic human needs.
- **Alagh Committee (1979):** Proposed the use of a composite index that considered both income and consumption expenditure.
- **Tendulkar Committee (2009):** The committee recommended a new method that included factors such as health and education in addition to consumption expenditure.
- **Rangarajan Committee (2014):** The Rangarajan Committee recommended the use of a new set of criteria for determining the poverty line. It suggested that both calorie intake and non-food expenditure should be considered in the estimation of poverty.

Governments Efforts

- Flagship programmes like the **Poshan Abhiyan and Anaemia Mukh Bharat** have contributed to reduced deprivations in health.
- Initiatives such as **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** and **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** have improved sanitation across the country.

- The provision of subsidized cooking fuel through the **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** has positively transformed lives, with a 14.6 percentage points improvement in cooking fuel deprivations.
- Initiatives like **Saubhagya, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), and Samagra Shiksha** have also played a major role in significantly reducing multidimensional poverty in the country.

Conclusion

- India continues to maintain the momentum of the fastest-growing major economy, with all sectors contributing significantly to economic activities.
- The remarkable progress achieved through extremely low deprivation rates especially for electricity, access to bank accounts and drinking water, reflects the Government's unwavering commitment to improving citizens' lives and creating a brighter future for all.

Source: *IE*

ITALY PULLS OUT OF BRI PACT

Context: Italy had recently withdrawn from the **Belt and Road infrastructure initiative(BRI)**.

Why is Italy Pulls out?

- **Mounting pressure from the United States and the European Union** since it has joined the BRI.
 - ♦ European countries are pivoting toward “**de-risking**” their economies and are reluctant to deepen economic dependence on China.
- **Putin's actions in Ukraine and China's implicit alignment with Russia** have engendered skepticism about China's intentions.
- The BRI has already experienced retrenchment, as countries that once eagerly embraced it **grapple with mounting debt**.
 - ♦ The “**debt diplomacy,**” as seen in **Sri Lanka in 2017**, where an entire port had to be handed over to China because Sri Lanka could not repay its loans.

China's Belt and Road initiative(BRI)

- China began the Belt and Road Initiative in **2013** under President Xi Jinping.
 - ♦ It aims to revive the ancient trade routes crossing **to and from China—from Rome in Europe to East Asia**.

- **Objective:** The Chinese government aims to provide loans for infrastructure projects to various countries.
 - ♦ But it is more than that as it involves:
 - The export of Chinese capital, labor, technology,
 - The use of the Yuan and
 - The development of new ports, industrial hubs, special economic zones and military facilities, under Beijing's auspices.
- **Members:** As of December 2023, the number of countries that have joined the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China is **151**.
- **India's stand: India opposed the BRI** as it included the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**, which connected Kashgar in China with the Gwadar port in Pakistan via Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEEC)

- During the New Delhi G20 Summit, the governments of India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Germany, Italy, the European Union and the United States signed the MoU regarding India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC).
- The IMEEC seeks to bolster communication as well as transport links between Asia and the West. This would see the establishment of rail and shipping networks and more. In this respect, the IMEEC resembles the BRI.

Source: *TH*

DISTRESS IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY

In News: Textile industry in India is in **distress due to the low demand**.

About

- In the past couple of months, many factories across the textile value chain have either shut down and disposed of machinery.
- Reductions in working hours for labourers have impacted wages; and the share of textiles and apparel in the Index of Industrial Production has shrunk.

Textile Industry in India

- **Share in Domestic Trade:** The domestic apparel & textile industry in India contributes approx. **2.3 % to the country's GDP, 13%** to industrial production and **12%** to exports.
- **Share in Global Trade:** India has a **4%** share of the global trade in textiles and apparel.
- **Export:** India is the world's 3rd largest exporter of Textiles and Apparel.
- **Production of Raw Material:** India is one of the largest producers of cotton and jute in the world. India is also the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric comes from India.
- **Employment Generation:** The textiles and apparel industry in India is the 2nd largest employer in the country.

Challenges Faced by the Textile Industry

- **Expensive Raw Material:** Raw material (fibre) constitutes 60-70% of manufacturing cost, which has turned expensive in India impacting the competitiveness of the industry severely.
- **Cotton Price Fluctuations:** India is a major producer and consumer of cotton. Fluctuations in cotton prices can impact the cost of production for textile manufacturers.
 - ◆ Managing these price fluctuations is crucial for cost control and profitability.
- **Imports from Bangladesh:** With Bangladesh having **duty-free access** to the Indian market, those garments are available at **15-20% less cost in India**.
 - ◆ When fabric is imported, jobs are lost in cotton, spinning, knitting, compacting, and processing segments in India.
- **Competition in the International Market:** The overall cost difference between Indian and Bangladesh garments should be about 2-3%, but the labour costs are lesser in Bangladesh by almost 30%.
 - ◆ With Bangladesh having duty-free access to the EU, Indian exporters are unable to make inroads.
- **Infrastructure Constraints:** Infrastructure challenges, including inadequate transportation systems, power shortages, and outdated technology, can hinder the efficiency of the textile manufacturing process.

- **Technology Upgradation:** Many textile units in India still use outdated machinery and technology.
 - ◆ Upgrading technology and adopting advanced manufacturing processes are necessary to improve productivity and product quality.

Initiatives by Government of India for the Growth of the Textile

- **Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS):** In order to promote ease of doing business in the country to achieve the vision of generating employment and promoting exports through "Make in India" with "Zero effect and Zero defect" in manufacturing, ATUFS was launched in **2016** to provide credit linked Capital Investment Subsidy (CIS).
- **Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SAMARTH):** To address the skilled manpower requirement across textile sector, the scheme was formulated, under the broad policy guidelines of **"Skill India"** initiative and in alignment with the framework adopted for skilling programme by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The scheme is approved for implementation till March, 2024.
- **National Technical Textile Mission:** Creation of National Technical Textiles Mission for a period of **4 years** (2020-21 to 2023-24) was approved for developing usage of technical textiles in various flagship missions, programmes of the country including strategic sectors.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** - The PLI Scheme for Textiles to promote production of Manmade Fibre (MMF) apparel, MMF Fabrics and Products of Technical Textiles in the country.
- **PM-MITRA:** To attract investment for 'Make In India' initiative and to boost employment generation through setting up of 7 PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks in Greenfield/Brownfield sites with world class infrastructure including plug and play facility for a period of seven years upto 2027-28.
- **Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP):** SITP is designed to promote textile industry clusters by providing infrastructure support, including common facilities, utilities, and services.
 - ◆ The goal is to encourage a more organized and efficient approach to textile manufacturing.

- **Integrated Skill Development Scheme (ISDS):** ISDS focuses on skill development in the textile sector to address the industry's labor challenges.
 - ♦ It aims to provide training to workers and enhance their employability, contributing to the overall growth of the sector.
- **Political Manipulation:** Deepfakes have the potential to be used in political campaigns to create misleading content. This could influence elections and public perception.
- **Identity Theft:** Deep fakes can be used for identity theft, where someone's voice or face is manipulated to create fake audio or video recordings for malicious purposes, such as impersonation or fraud.

Way Ahead

- The industry continues to hope for a revival in demand but, what the industry needs urgently is policy intervention at the Centre and State-levels and holistic measures to improve competitiveness.
- So, on the lines of the 'Make in India' campaign, the government should encourage purchase of Indian textiles.
- While the current volume of imports are not much compared with the overall size of the domestic market, diversion of these orders to local manufacturers will bolster production.

Source: TH

REGULATING DEEP FAKES AND GENERATIVE AI

Context: The center has announced to introduce draft regulations, to address the issue of deep fakes.

What are Deep Fakes?

- Deep Fakes are digital media — video, audio, and images, edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- They incorporate hyper-realistic digital falsification and can be used to damage reputations, fabricate evidence, and undermine trust in democratic institutions.

Concerns of Deep Fakes

- **Building mistrust:** Deep fake videos can be used to spread misinformation and propaganda.
- **Violence against Women:** The use of deepfakes to perpetrate technology -facilitated online gendered violence has been a rising concern. A 2019 study conducted by AI firm Deeptrace found that a staggering 96% of deep fakes were pornographic, and 99% of them involved women.
- **Security Risks:** Deep Face technology can be used by cybercriminals for phishing attacks, making it harder for individuals to distinguish between genuine and fake communications.
- **India does not have any specific laws** to address deepfakes and AI-related crimes, but provisions under the existing legislations could offer both civil and criminal relief.
- **Section 66E of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act)** is applicable in cases of deepfake crimes that involve the capture, publication, or transmission of a person's images in mass media thereby violating their privacy.
- **Section 66D of the IT Act** punishes individuals who use communication devices or computer resources with malicious intent, leading to impersonation or cheating.
- **Sections 67, 67A, and 67B of the IT Act** can be used to prosecute individuals for publishing or transmitting deep fakes that are obscene or contain any sexually explicit acts.
- The IT Rules, also prohibit hosting '**any content that impersonates another person**' and require social media platforms to quickly take down '**artificially morphed images**' of individuals when alerted.
 - ♦ In case of failure they risk losing the '**safe harbor protection**' — a provision that protects social media companies from regulatory liability for third-party content shared by users on their platforms.
- **Indian Penal Code, 1860, (IPC):** Sections 509 (words, gestures, or acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman), 499 (criminal defamation), and 153 (a) and (b) (spreading hate on communal lines) can also be resorted to for cybercrimes associated with deep fakes.
- **Copyright Act of 1957: Section 51** prohibits the unauthorized use of any property belonging to another person and on which the latter enjoys an exclusive right.

Lacuna in the existing Rules

- **Reformative rather than preventive:** The IT Rules only addresses instances wherein the illegal content has already been uploaded and the resultant harm has been suffered. Instead, there has to be more focus on preventive measures.
- **Lack of deeper understanding:** The current regulations only focus on either online takedowns in the form of censorship or criminal prosecution but lack a deeper understanding of how generative AI technology works and the wide range of harm that it can cause.
- **Burden on the victim:** The laws place the entire burden on the victim to file a complaint. For many, the experience that they have with the local police stations is less than satisfactory in terms of their investigation, or the perpetrator facing any kind of penalty.

International practices

- **The DEEP FAKES Accountability Bill, 2023**, recently introduced in Congress requires creators to label deep fakes on online platforms and to provide notifications of alterations to a video or other content. Failing to label such 'malicious deep fakes' would invite criminal sanction.
- **The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** created a Detect Fakes website to help people identify deepfakes by focusing on small intricate details.
- **The Cyberspace Administration of China** rolled out new regulations to restrict the use of deep synthesis technology and curb disinformation.
- **The European Union (EU)** has strengthened its **Code of Practice on Disinformation** to ensure that social media giants like Google, Meta, and Twitter start flagging deepfake content.

Way Ahead

- AI governance in India cannot be restricted to just a law and reforms have to be centered around establishing standards of safety, increasing awareness, and institution building.
- India's regulatory response should be formed while keeping in mind the young and thriving startup ecosystem. There should also not be any curtailment of free speech under the garb of regulating AI technology.
- The benefits of AI need to be assimilated in a way that improves human welfare on every metric while limiting the challenges it imposes.

Source: TH

NATIONAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY ROADMAP FOR PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION

In News: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh released a flagship document on '**National Circular Economy Roadmap for reduction of Plastic waste in India**'.

About:

- It is a **collaborative exercise** between leading research institutions from **India and Australia** on a roadmap **for India's transition** to a **circular economy** in the Plastics sector.
- India and Australia are active participants in the negotiations for formulation of a **Global Plastics Treaty** to be finalized next year.

Need for Policy Roadmap

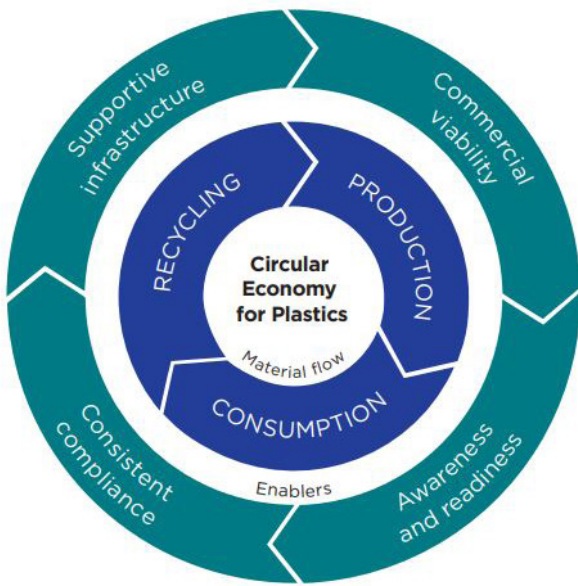
- India has a population of more than 1.4 billion and generates **26,000 tonnes of plastic waste – every day**.
- Among the largest producers of polymers, India generates more **plastic waste** than any economy except the USA and European Union.
- Currently, only **8 percent** of plastic in India gets recycled, **29 percent is mismanaged**, and the rest is incinerated or dumped.
- A significant share of household waste is plastic, with 50% to 80% of that plastic being collected, and **only 40% of that segregated for resource recovery**.

Circular Economy for Plastics sector

- Plastic waste, when not properly managed, often ends up in oceans and adds to marine pollution.
- The alternative is to strive for a **circular economy of plastics**. A circular economy would use as little virgin plastic as possible and **maximise the use of recycled material**.

National Circular Economy Roadmap for Reduction of Plastic waste

- Key roadmap findings show that **by 2035:**
 - ◆ Two thirds of all plastics used could be recycled.
 - ◆ Single-use plastics could be phased out.
 - ◆ Diverting plastic waste into resources could lead to 20-50 percent less greenhouse emissions.
 - ◆ There would be improved air quality.



- **Supportive Infrastructure:** Build a digital backbone of data, linking material flow information from virgin plastics manufacture.
- **Effective Recycling:** Radically improve India's recycling capability, with government-finance-research-industry collaboration.
- **Sustainable Consumption:** Choose products with minimal plastics that are recyclable and made with recycled content.
- **Awareness and Readiness:** Establish a 'zero-waste' culture at industry, in offices, and at home.
 - ◆ Tighten waste management policies in industry, administrative and commercial establishments.

Benefits of the Roadmap

- **By 2035**, landfill would be reduced by **30%**, as single-use plastics are phased out completely.
- Leads to a **cleaner environment**, **20-50%** less greenhouse emissions.
- It will **integrate the informal sector into the formal economy**.
- It is supporting a cultural shift from **'use and throw'** to one in which future generations value the environment.
- Creating **new secondary markets** for used plastics in construction and manufacturing.
- Accelerate India's progress on the SDGs and its commitments under the **Global Plastics Treaty (2024)**.
- Offer an example for emerging economies of the Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America, to support **transformative change at global scale**.

GLOBAL & INDIAN INTERVENTIONS IN CURBING PLASTIC WASTE

- Global Tourism Plastics initiative
- European Union' Directive on Single-Use Plastics
- MARPOL Convention
- Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2018 introduced the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- India has banned the production, use, and sale of single-use plastics.
- Beach clean-up drives
- India is a signatory to MARPOL (International Convention on Prevention of Marine Pollution).
- Project REPLAN

Source: **PIB**

JT-60SA : LARGEST NUCLEAR FUSION REACTOR

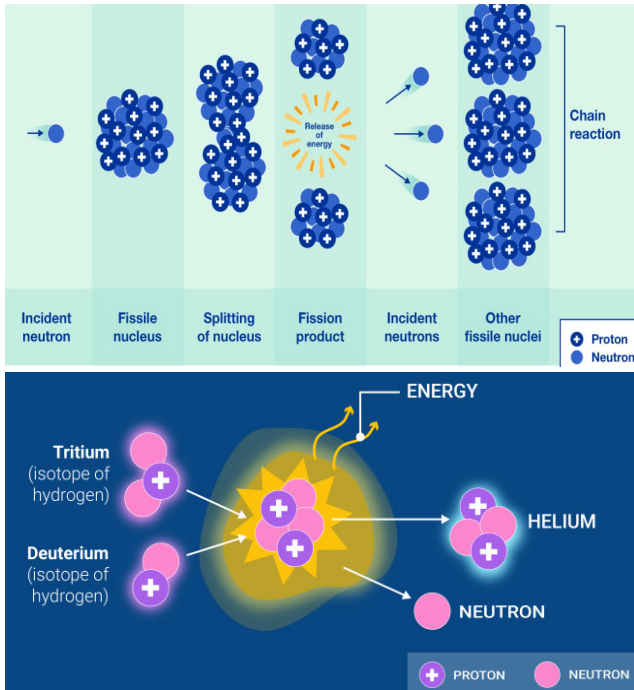
Context: Japan has unveiled the world's largest operational experimental nuclear fusion reactor, **JT-60SA**, in Naka, near Tokyo.

More about the News

- **JT-60SA** is a joint international fusion experiment being **built and operated by Japan and the European Union**.
- It is a six-story-high **tokamak**, designed to contain and control plasma heated to a staggering **200 million degrees Celsius**.
 - ◆ It is an upgrade to the previous JT-60. SA stands for **'Super, Advanced'**.
- **Objective of JT-60SA:** To investigate the feasibility of fusion as a safe, large-scale and carbon-free source of net energy – with more energy generated than is put into producing it.

Nuclear Energy

- It is a form of energy released from the nucleus, the core of atoms, made up of protons and neutrons. This source of energy can be produced in two ways:
 - ◆ **Fission:** when nuclei of atoms split into several parts, and
 - ◆ **Fusion:** when nuclei fuse together.
- The fusion of two nuclei of a heavier isotope of hydrogen, called tritium produces at least four times as much energy as the fission of a uranium atom which is the normal process of generating electricity in a nuclear reactor.



- Fusion differs from fission, the technique currently used in nuclear power plants, by fusing two atomic nuclei instead of splitting one.

Advantages of Fusion over Fission reactors

- Fusion energy stands out for its safety advantages over fission, as it carries no risk of catastrophic accidents like the Fukushima disaster in 2011 and generates minimal radioactive waste.
- Fusion has the potential to become a key component for energy mix in the second half of this century
- **Nuclear power and climate change:** Nuclear power is a low-carbon source of energy, because unlike coal, oil or gas power plants, nuclear power plants practically do not produce CO₂ during their operation.
 - ♦ Nuclear reactors generate close to one-third of the world's carbon free electricity and are crucial in meeting climate change goals.

Challenges associated with fusion

- **Achieving High Temperatures:** Nuclear fusion requires extremely high temperatures, millions of degrees Celsius, to allow atoms that would otherwise repel each other to fuse.
- **Sustaining the Reaction and shorter time for the experiment:** Once the reaction starts, it needs to be self-sustaining (referred to as a **burning plasma**).

- ♦ The fusion reactions currently being run in labs last for barely a few seconds. It is difficult to sustain such extreme high temperatures for prolonged periods.
- **Creating a Viable Technology:** The technology has long struggled with daunting challenges. The goal is to turn nuclear fusion into a cheap and carbon-free energy source.
- **Handling the Fuel:** Current efforts focus on fusing a pair of **hydrogen isotopes — deuterium and tritium** — which releases much more energy than most fusion reactions and requires less heat to do so.
- **Infrastructure Challenges:** Different techniques are being used to recreate nuclear fusion.
 - ♦ **Tokamak** uses powerful magnets to turn fuel into a superheated plasma where fusion may occur.
 - ♦ Another technique involves **firing a laser** at a small capsule filled with deuterium-tritium fuel.
- **Future potential:** Use of the fusion process for generating electricity at a commercial scale is still two to three decades away.

INTERNATIONAL THERMONUCLEAR EXPERIMENTAL REACTOR (ITER)

- It is the world's largest tokamak, a magnetic fusion device that has been designed to prove the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale and carbon-free source of energy based on the same principle that powers our Sun and stars.
 - ♦ The tokamak is an experimental machine designed to harness the energy of fusion.
- **The ITER Members:** China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States.
- **Objective:** To investigate and demonstrate burning plasmas in which the energy of the helium nuclei produced by the fusion reactions is enough to maintain the temperature of the plasma, thereby reducing or eliminating the need for external heating.

Source: Wionews

GLOBAL COOLING WATCH REPORT 2023

Context: At the COP28, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Arab Emirates and the Cool Coalition launched the Global Cooling Pledge.

About

- The Global Cooling Watch report, **Keeping it Chill: How to meet cooling demands while cutting emissions** was released by the UN Environment Programme led Cool Coalition. The report is released in support of the Global Cooling Pledge.
- **It lays out sustainable cooling measures in three areas:** passive cooling, higher-energy efficiency standards, and a faster phase down of climate-warming refrigerants.
- The Global Cooling Watch report demonstrates the potential and the pathways to achieve near-zero emissions from cooling.

Key Finding

- The cooling sector accounts for **20 percent of electricity use**. Implementing a slew of measures to make the global cooling sector sustainable could cut predicted 2050 greenhouse gas emissions by **60 percent**.
- **The G20 countries**, according to the report, represent 73 per cent of the potential for reducing cooling emissions by 2050.
- **In the case of India** effective life-cycle refrigerant management could mitigate around 2 billion tonnes of CO₂e emissions by 2050.

Pathways to get to near-zero emissions

- The world can deploy nature-based and passive cooling measures such as **insulation, natural shading and ventilation**. Adopt higher efficiency standards, including minimum energy performance standards and labeling.
- It proposed to **accelerate the phasedown of climate-warming hydrofluorocarbon (HFC)** faster than what is required under the **Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol**.
- Steps such as accelerating the uptake of low-global warming potential technologies in all new equipment and refrigerant life-cycle management to prevent leakages and end-of-life emissions can reduce **HFC emissions by 50 per cent in 2050**.
- The report also highlights that **more than 40 countries**, including India, have developed

National Cooling Action Plans (NCAPs), and 25 others are at various stages of preparing theirs as well.

KIGALI AGREEMENT

- **The Kigali Amendment** is an international agreement to reduce the consumption and production of HFC.
- This is expected to prevent the emissions of up to **105 billion tonnes of CO₂** of greenhouse gasses, avoiding up to **0.5 degree Celsius** of global temperature rise by 2100.

National Cooling Action Plans (NCAPs)

- NCAPs are an important tool to assist countries in **identifying pathways to integrate comprehensive action to reduce energy related emissions from cooling**, aligned with plans related to emissions from refrigerant transition.
- They also offer an opportunity for a country to consider how to improve access to cooling and address additional SDGs.

India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)

- **ICAP** was launched in **2019**.
- **Objective:** It provides an integrated vision towards cooling across sectors encompassing inter alia reduction of cooling demand, refrigerant transition, enhancing energy efficiency and better technology options with a 20 year time horizon.
- The India Cooling Action seeks to;
 - ♦ Reduce cooling demand across sectors by **20% to 25% by 2037-38**,
 - ♦ Reduce refrigerant demand by **25% to 30% by 2037-38**,
 - ♦ Reduce cooling energy requirements by **25% to 40% by 2037-38**,
 - ♦ Recognize “cooling and related areas” as a thrust area of research under national S&T Programme,
 - ♦ Training and certification of 100,000 servicing sector technicians by 2022-23, synergizing with Skill India Mission.

Source: DTE

FACTS IN NEWS

“ADOPT A HERITAGE 2.0” PROGRAM

In Context: Deadline for Submission of Applications for the “**Adopt a Heritage 2.0**” Program has been decided as 31st December 2023.

About

- ASI had launched the “**Adopt a Heritage 2.0**” programme on 4th September 2023.
- The programme seeks collaboration with the private/public sector companies / trusts / societies / NGOs etc. through their CSR funding who intend to provide, develop, and maintain ‘amenities’ at centrally protected monuments and sites

About ‘Adopt a Heritage:

- The ‘Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan’ scheme is an initiative of the **Ministry of Tourism**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India**.
- It was launched in September 2017 on **World Tourism Day** .
- Under it, the government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms as well as individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites across India.
- There is no financial bid involved. The corporate sector is expected to use **corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds** for the upkeep of the site.

Source: *PIB*

SANTINIKETAN

News: The controversial plaques at Santiniketan that did not feature Rabindranath Tagore’s name have been removed by the Visva-Bharati University.

Geography

- **Location:** Santiniketan, popularly known today as a university town, is located in the **Birbhum district in West Bengal**.
- **Rivers:** The area is flanked on two sides by the rivers, the Ajay and the Kopai.

History

- Santiniketan was earlier known as **Bhubadanga**. It was established by **Maharshi Debendranath**

Tagore in 1862, and later expanded by his son, **Rabindranath Tagore**.

- In **1901**, Rabindranath Tagore chose a vast tract of land and started a school on the ‘**Brahmacharya Ashram**’ modeled on the ancient Indian Gurukul system. The school was upgraded to a University and was renamed **Visva Bharati in 1921**.
- In **1951**, Visva Bharati was declared to be a **central university** and an institute of national importance.

Cultural Significance

- **Rabindranath Tagore** penned many of his literary classics (namely Tagore songs, poems, novels etc) here.
- The Santiniketan campus is adorned by splendid sculptures, frescoes, murals, and paintings of **Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Ramkinkar, Binodbehari Mukhopadhyay** and others.
- Santiniketan stands out as a unique cultural destination, where Rabindranath Tagore tried to bring the world together through architecture, arts and the landscape design.

Source: *TH*

LONG TERM LOW EMISSION/CARBON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (LT-LEDS)

In News: The Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy and Power has informed the **Long Term Low Emission/Carbon Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)** submitted to **UNFCCC by Government of India**.

Long Term Low Emission Measures

- Specifying the **minimum share of consumption** of non-fossil resources by designated consumers up to **2029-30**.
- **Importance of Schemes** such as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM), Solar Parks Scheme, Solar Rooftop Phase II, 12000 MW CPSU Scheme Phase II.
- Launch of **National Green Hydrogen Mission** with an aim to reduce the consumption of imported fossil fuels.
- Target of **20% ethanol blending** in Petrol by 2025 was advanced by 4 years (from 2030 to 2025-26).
- The introduction of a mandate of **5% Compressed Biogas** to be utilized for all entities.

- The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** initiatives, including Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) program, Standards and Labelling (S&L) scheme, and the provisions under the Energy Conservation Building Code, which enable reductions in consumption of fuel and energy.

Other Steps

- Launch of the **National Bioenergy Programme (NBP)** in 2022 to be implemented in two phases.
- **GOBARDHAN scheme** implemented by Ministry of Jal Shakti, a financial assistance upto Rs.50.00 lakh per district for setting up of **community biogas plants** in villages, blocks/district.
- The Ministry of Power has notified the SAMARTH Mission (National Mission on Use of Biomass in Thermal Power Plants) for promoting the **blending of biomass in the existing coal powered thermal power plants**.
- Central Pollution Control Board provides financial support for setting up of **Biomass Pellet plants** in the NCT of Delhi, states of Punjab and Haryana and NCR districts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Source: **PIB**

ASOLA BHATTI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Context: Delhi HC expressed concern about 'risk' of holding an event inside **Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary**.

About

- It is on the Southern Delhi Ridge of **Aravalli hill range** on Delhi-Haryana border .
- Historical place around sanctuary are **Surajkund and Anangpur Dam** (both in Haryana), Tughlaqabad Fort and Adilabad ruins (both in Delhi), Chhatarpur Temple (in Delhi)
- It recorded 25 species of mammals including Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Striped Hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*)

Source: **IE**

HANUKKAH

Context: The Prime Minister of India has extended Hanukkah greetings to Jewish people in India and around the world.

About the Hanukkah

- Hanukkah (*or Chanukah in Hebrew*) is the Jewish Festival of Lights.
 - ♦ The word '**Hanukkah**' means '**Dedication**' in Hebrew.
- It starts on the 25th day of Kislev, the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is celebrated in November or December every year, and lasts for eight days.
- It is celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, playing dreidel, singing songs, and preparing delicious food.

Source: **PIB**

AGNI-1 MISSILE

Context: Recently, the training launch of the 'Agni-1' took place successfully from APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha.

About

- Originating from India's **Integrated Guided Missile Development Program** (1983), Agni-I is part of a series of missiles that includes Prithvi, Nag, Akash, and Trishul.
- **Type and Range:** The Agni-I is an Indian short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) with a specified range of 700 km.
- **Payload and Nuclear Capability:** The missile has a specified range of 700 km and an estimated payload capacity of 1,000 kg, enabling it to carry nuclear warheads.
- **Propulsion:** Single-stage, solid propellant

IGMDP (Integrated Guided Missile Development Program)

- **Idea by:** Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam; approved by GOI in 1983.
- **Aim:** Attain self-sufficiency in the field of missile technology.
- Five missiles developed under this:
 - ♦ Agni Series
 - ♦ Prithvi (Ballistic Missiles)
 - ♦ Nag (3rd gen Anti-tank missile)
 - ♦ Akash (Medium Range Surface to Air)
 - ♦ Trishul (Short range Surface to Air)

Source: **PIB**

CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

Context: Recently, Lok Sabha Passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill.

About

- The bill falls under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- The Bill proposes amendments to the Central Universities Act, 2009, which is the legislation that establishes central universities for teaching and research in various states.
- The Bill **establishes Central Tribal University in Telangana:**
 - ♦ The Tribal University will be named as the '**Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University.**'
 - ♦ The **university's territorial jurisdiction** will extend to the state of Telangana.
 - ♦ The **primary objective** of the university is to provide avenues for higher education and research facilities, with a specific focus on the tribal population of India.

Source: TH

ARTICLE 99 OF THE UN CHARTER

Context: Amid **Israel's ongoing military attacks on the Gaza Strip**, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has invoked **Article 99 of the UN Charter in a bid to establish a ceasefire.**

Article 99 of the UN Charter

- **Article 99 states:** "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."
- It is seen as a **discretionary power.**
- **Precedents:** Past examples include the upheaval in the **Republic of the Congo in 1960** following the end of Belgium's colonial rule and a **complaint by Tunisia in 1961 against France's naval and air forces** launching an attack.

Source: IE

