

Current Affairs

IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis"

Reference news:

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) said that the IPCC report, released recently, underscored that "there is no time for delay and no room for excuses".

Next Analysis

What are the key observations of the IPCC report?

- Heat waves and humid heat stress will become more intense and frequent over Southeast Asia during the 21st century.
- Both summer and annual monsoon precipitation will increase, with enhanced inter annual variability over Southeast Asia.
- Heat extremes have increased while cold extremes have decreased and these trends will continue over the coming decades.
- Glacier run-off in the Asian high mountains will increase upto mid 21st century and subsequently run-off may decrease due to the loss of Glacier storage.
- Relative sea level around Asia increased faster than global average, with coastal area loss and shoreline retreat. Regional mean sea level will continue to rise.

What is Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)?

- It is an international body **set up in 1988** by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide policymakers with
 - Regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change
 - Impacts and future risks associated with Climate Change
 - Options for adaptation and mitigation for Climate Change
- Membership of the IPCC is open to all members of the WMO and the UNEP.
- IPCC assessments provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate-related policies and also underlie climate negotiation at International level.
- The main objective of UNFCCC is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)

Reference news-

Indian Prime Minister recently announced National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) initiative on palm oil production to help increase farm incomes.

- Rs. 11,000 crores over five year period will be invested in the edible oil ecosystem through this mission

What are the key features of the Scheme?

- **Objective:** To ensure self-sufficiency in edible oil production.
- **Aim:** To reduce import dependence from 60% to 45% by 2024-25, by increasing domestic edible oil production from 10.5 million tonnes to 18 million tonnes which is a 70% growth target.
- Farmers will get all needed facilities, from quality seeds to technology.
- Along with promoting the cultivation of oil palm, this mission will also expand the cultivation of our other traditional oilseed crops.

What is the need for such schemes?

- India is the largest consumer of vegetable oil in the world.
- India's Palm oil imports are almost 60% of its total vegetable oil imports.
- Recently, India's dependence on expensive imports has driven retail oil prices to new highs.
- In India, 94.1% of its palm oil is used in food products, especially for cooking. Thus, palm oil is extremely important to India's edible oils economy.
 - The oil is used in food manufacturing, in beauty products, and as biofuel.
 - Palm oil accounted for about 33% of global oils produced from oil crops in 2014.
 - **Top consumers:** India, China, and the European Union (EU).

Do you know?

- The NMEO-OP's predecessor was the National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm.
- In May 2020, oilseed production had grown 35% from 27.5 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 37.3 million tonnes by 2020-21.

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Tribals in Rajasthan seek more panchayats in scheduled areas

Reference news:

The tribal outfits in Rajasthan have demanded inclusion of over 165 village panchayats of seven districts in **the scheduled areas under the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)**.

- The tribal groups said the population of Scheduled Tribes in these panchayats had crossed 50%, making them eligible to be declared as **scheduled areas**.
- The objective of the demand is to facilitate the control of local communities over minor minerals and minor forest produce as well as development activities in the region.
- It will also ensure statutory protection of the tribal population.
- Consequently, the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, will apply to these areas.
 - The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 or PESA is a law enacted by the Government of India for ensuring self-governance through traditional Gram Sabhas for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India.
- The tribal groups have also been spearheading a movement for creation of a separate State, **Bhil Pradesh**, to be carved out of the tribal-dominated areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
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Permanent Forum of People of African Descent

Reference news:

Recently, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution establishing a Permanent Forum of People of African Descent.

About the UN United Nations Permanent Forum of People of African Descent.

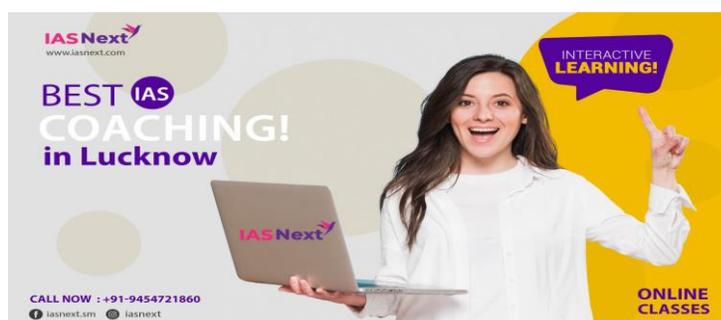
- It would serve as “a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent” and ensure the full political, economic and social inclusion in the societies where they live.
- It would provide expert advice and recommendations, to Human Rights Council & UN agencies, on addressing the challenges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.
- Forum’s first session will take place in 2022.
- The forum will consist of 10 members — five elected by the General Assembly from all regions and five appointed by the Human Rights Council following consultations with regional groups and organizations of people of African descent.
- The resolution also calls for annual reports to the assembly and the council on the forum’s activities, and an evaluation of its operation by the General Assembly after four sessions, based on an evaluation by the Human Rights Council.

Do you know?

- Recently, the International Decade for People of African Descent was also established by the General Assembly, which began on January 1, 2015, and ends on December 31, 2024.
 - The decade is focusing on the themes of recognition, justice and development.
- Member States of the UN adopted the texts at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa and is called **Durban declaration**.

About The Human Rights Council

- It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.
- It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year.
- It meets at the UN Office at Geneva



Daily Topic

The Changing Climate

- **Floods in the Himalayan Region:** The Himalayan region has about 15,000 glaciers, which are retreating at a rate of 100 to 200 feet per decade.
- The melting of the Himalayan glaciers that prompted the floods and landslides in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand have the fingerprints of global warming.
- In 2013, glacial flooding in Kedarnath caused over 6,000 deaths during the monsoon months.
- **Other Events:** In 2003, the European heat wave killed over 70,000 people.
- The years 2015-19 have globally been the warmest years on record.
- The **Amazon** fire of 2019, the **bush fires of 2019-20 in Australia** are some of the most dangerous impacts of changing climate.
- **Global Emission:** The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report 2020** showed that the year 2020 set new records in terms of rise in extreme weather events, including wildfires and hurricanes, and in the melting of glaciers and ice at both poles.
- According to the report, despite a brief dip in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions caused by the [Pandemic](#), the world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century; far beyond the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#) goals.

India and Climate Change

- **One of the Largest Emitters:** For India, **the third-largest carbon emitter after China and the United States**, a decisive switch is needed from highly polluting coal and petroleum to cleaner and **renewable power sources**.
- China has announced carbon neutrality by 2060, Japan and South Korea by 2050, but **India is yet to announce a target**.
- **Global Rankings and Estimates:** The HSBC ranks India at the top among 67 nations in **climate vulnerability** (2018), Germanwatch ranks India fifth among 181 nations in terms of **climate risks** (2020).
- The [World Bank](#) has warned that climate change could sharply diminish living conditions for up to 800 million people in South Asia.
- As per the Emissions Gap Report 2020, over the last decade, China, USA, EU27+UK and India combined, have contributed to **55%** of the total GHG emissions.

Issues Associated

- **No Stringent Policies:** A big worry is that the state and central governments have been diluting, instead of strengthening, climate safeguards for hydroelectric and road projects.

- Studies had flagged ice loss across the Himalayas has been rapidly melting thus increasing the dangers to densely populated catchments, but any hard and fast policy response has been lacking.
- **Lack of Proper Training Programs:** There were no awareness programs or training provided to the people about disaster management by the government in case of the recent Uttarakhand floods.
- **Ignorance by Government:** A 2012 expert group appointed by the government had recommended against the construction of dams in the **Alaknanda-Bhagirathi basin, including on the Rishiganga** and in “the periglacial zone,” but the recommendations were ignored.
Similarly, ignorance of the Kerala government in terms of regulation of mining, quarrying and dam construction in ecologically sensitive places, led to [massive floods](#) and landslides in 2018 and 2019.
- **Ineffective Satellite Monitoring:** Physically monitoring of the entire Himalayan region (or any larger disaster-prone region) is not possible. However, satellite monitoring is possible and radars can help minimise loss. Despite possessing remarkable satellite capabilities, India still hasn't been able to use such imagery effectively for advance warning.

Way Forward

- **Budgetary Allocation:** A vital step should be explicitly including policies for climate mitigation in the government budget, along with energy, roads, health and education.
 - Specifically, growth targets should include **timelines for switching to cleaner energy**. There is also a need to launch a major campaign to mobilise climate finance.
 - **Climate Adaptation:** Even if major economies speed up climate mitigation, such catastrophes will become more frequent due to the accumulated carbon emissions in the atmosphere. Climate adaptation is the way forward here.
 - Disaster management strategies to be synced with the developmental plans such as **infrastructure designing**.
 - Such as in **earthquake prone areas**, building norms and guidelines can be issued or earthquake resistant buildings to be constructed.
 - India's Central and State governments must increase allocations for risk reduction, such as agricultural innovations to withstand **droughts**.
 - In case of **fire prone areas**, an area can be divided into pockets so as to prevent any massive spread of fire.
 - **Detailed Studies:** Detailed studies should be conducted to understand which of the glacial lakes in the Himalayan region are prone to flooding. Such research should feed into **Environmental Impact Assessment** reports and guide decisions on developmental projects in the region

- **Setting up Early Warning Systems:** A relatively low-hanging fruit, but a very effective one, is to set up early warning systems that alert the downstream populations about an impending disaster.
- This has to be **coupled with plans to quickly evacuate local communities** to safer regions.
- Flooding events do not occur all of a sudden; there are ample indications like changes in water level, discharge in the rivers etc which if monitored earlier can help saving a significant number of lives and other damages.

Conclusion

- Sustainable growth depends on timely climate action and for that to happen, policymaking needs to connect the dots between carbon emissions, atmospheric warming, melting glaciers, extreme floods and storms.
 - Events like Uttarakhand and Texas should be treated as lessons to change people's minds and for the public to demand urgent action.
- Disasters cannot be stopped but well-preparedness and strong climate change mitigation policies can definitely help prevent a huge amount of loss.

QUIZ

1. Recently, which organization has inducted its first women officers in combat?

[A] Central Industrial Security Force

[C] Central Reserve Police Force

[B] Indo-Tibetan Border Police

[D] National Security Guard

Answer: B

2. Navies of which two countries have conducted exercise Zayed Talwar 2021?

[A] India and Russia

[C] India and Australia

[B] India and United States

[D] India and UAE

Answer: D

3. Which country has topped the medals tally in Tokyo 2020 Olympics?

[A] China

[C] USA

[B] Japan

[D] Germany

Answer: C

4. Which country hosted the 8th Justice Ministers meet 2021 of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation?

[A] India

[C] China

[B] Tajikistan

[D] Russia

Answer: B

5. Which bank has partnered with IIM Bangalore to provide funding for identified start-ups?

[A] State Bank of India

[C] Canara Bank

[B] Punjab National Bank

[D] Indian Bank

Answer: D [Indian Bank]

6. Who won the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2021?

[A] Sanjay Gupta

[C] Cyrus Poonawalla

[B] Deepak Tilak

[D] Adar Poonawalla

Answer: C

7. On which date, "Muslim Women Rights Day" was observed in India for the first time?

[A] August 12

[C] August 1

[B] July 30

[D] July 26

Answer: C

8. Who is the first Indian woman to win two Olympic medals?

[A] Deepika Kumari

[C] P V Sindu

[B] Manika Batra

[D] Saina Nehwal

Answer: C

9. Who has been appointed as the new Controller General of Accounts (CGA) in August, 2021?

[A] V.N. Kaul

[C] Soma Roy Burman

[B] Rajiv Mehrishi

[D] Deepak Das

Answer: D

10. Which institute has collaborated with the Ministry of Ayush to conduct a study on 'Ashwagandha' for promoting recovery from Covid-19?

[A] Gautam Buddha University

[B] IIT Delhi

[C] Patanjali Ayurveda College

[D] London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

Answer: D