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Indian Laws and Blocking of Internet Content: Centre vs Twitter

Why in News

Recently, the **government of India reprimanded Twitter (micro-blogging website) for not complying with its order to block more than a thousand accounts** for alleged spread of provocative content and misinformation on the **farmers' protest**.

TOTAL 709 ACCOUNTS DEACTIVATED

➤ **Of 257 handles** that had originally tweeted with the hashtag #ModiPlanning-FarmerGenocide, **126 have been deactivated**

➤ **Of 1,178 handles that government suspected to have links with Khalistani, Pak elements** to spread misinformation and provocative content, **583 deactivated**



➤ IT ministry said 'motivated campaigns' on platform and hashtag around PM were **being run to 'abuse, inflame and create tension in society** on unsubstantiated grounds'

➤ Twitter was **warned of action under IT Act Section 69A[3]**, under which senior company officials can be jailed for up to 7 years, apart from financial penalty

Key Points

- **Current Issue:**
 - The **Centre has issued notice to the micro-blogging site after it restored more than 250 accounts** that had been suspended earlier on the government's 'legal demand'.
 - The government wants the platform (Twitter) to comply with its earlier order of **31st January, 2021** by which it was **asked to block accounts** and a controversial hashtag that spoke of an impending 'genocide' of farmers for allegedly promoting misinformation about the protests, adversely affecting public order.
 - The **micro-blogging site** reinstated the accounts and tweets on its own and later **refused to go back on the decision, contending that it found no violation of its policy.**
- **Law Related to Blocking of Internet Services/Content:**
 - **Information Technology Act, 2000:**
 - In India, the **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000**, as amended from time to time, governs all activities related to the use of computer resources.
 - It covers all '**intermediaries**' who play a role in the use of computer resources and electronic records.
 - The **role of the intermediaries** has been spelt out in separate rules framed for the purpose in 2011- **The Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011.**
 - **Section 69 of the IT Act:**
 - It confers on the Central and State governments the **power to issue directions "to intercept, monitor or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource"**.
 - The **grounds on which these powers may be exercised** are:
 - In the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, defence of India, the security of the state.
 - Friendly relations with foreign states.
 - Public order, or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to these.
 - For investigating any offence.
 - **Process of Blocking Internet Websites:**
 - **Section 69A**, for similar reasons and grounds (as stated above), **enables the Centre to ask any agency of the government, or any intermediary, to block access to the public of any information generated, transmitted, received or stored or hosted on any computer resource.**
 - Any such request for blocking access **must be based on reasons given in writing.**

- **Intermediaries as per the IT Act 2000:**
 - Intermediary is defined in **Section 2(1) (w)** of the IT Act 2000.
 - The term ‘intermediaries’ includes **providers of telecom service, network service, Internet service and web hosting**, besides **search engines, online payment and auction sites, online marketplaces and cyber cafes**.
 - It includes any person who, on behalf of another, **“receives, stores or transmits” any electronic record**. **Social media platforms** would fall under this definition.
- **Obligations of Intermediaries under the Law:**
 - Intermediaries are **required to preserve and retain specified information in a manner and format prescribed by the Centre** for a specified duration.
 Contravention of this provision **may attract a prison term that may go up to three years**, besides a fine.
 - **When a direction is given for monitoring**, the intermediary and any person in charge of a computer resource should extend technical assistance in the form of giving access or securing access to the resource involved.
 - Failure to extend such assistance may entail a **prison term of up to seven years, besides a fine**.
 - **Failure to comply with a direction to block access** to the public on a government’s written request also **attracts a prison term of up to seven years, besides a fine**.
- **Liability of Intermediaries:**
 - **Section 79** of the IT Act 2000 makes it clear that **“an intermediary shall not be liable for any third-party information, data, or communication link made available or hosted by him”**.
Third party information means any information dealt with by a network service provider in his capacity as an intermediary.
 - This **protects intermediaries** such as Internet and data service providers and those hosting websites **from being made liable** for content that users may post or generate.
 - **Sections 79** also introduced the concept of **“notice and take down”** provision.
 It provides that an **intermediary would lose its immunity** if upon receiving actual knowledge or on being notified that any information, data or communication link residing in or connected to a computer resource controlled by it is being used to **commit an unlawful act** and it fails to expeditiously remove or disable access to that material.

- **Supreme Court's Stand Related to Intermediaries in IT Act 2000:**
In *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India (2015)*, the **Supreme Court** read down the provision to mean that the **intermediaries ought to act only upon receiving actual knowledge that a court order has been passed**, asking [them] to expeditiously remove or disable access to certain material.
- **Reason for Intermediaries to Show Compliance to IT Act:**
 - **International Requirement:**
Most nations have framed laws mandating cooperation by Internet service providers or web hosting service providers and other intermediaries **to cooperate with law and order authorities in certain circumstances.**
 - **To Fight Cybercrime:**
 - Cooperation between technology services companies and law enforcement agencies is now deemed a **vital part of fighting cybercrime** and various other crimes that are committed using computer resources.
 - These cover **hacking, digital impersonation and theft of data.**
 - **To Prevent Misuse of Internet:**
The potential of the misuse has led to law enforcement officials constantly seeking to curb the ill-effects of using the medium.

Source:TH

Saksham Portal and Seaweed Mission: TIFAC

Why in News

The **Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC)** has launched **two new initiatives - SAKSHAM** (Shramik Shakti Manch) Job Portal and a **Seaweed Mission.**

TIFAC is an **autonomous organization** set up in 1988 under the **Department of Science & Technology** to look ahead in the technology domain, **assess the technology trajectories, and support innovation** by networked actions in select areas of national importance.

Key Points

- **SAKSHAM Portal:**

- **About:**

- It is a dynamic portal for jobs/mapping the skills of *Shramiks* (workers) vis-a-vis requirements of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (**MSMEs**) and other industries all across the country. It is **an all India Portal**.
 - It will facilitate **creation of 10 lakh blue collar jobs**.

- **Features:**

- **High Technology Enabled:** The portal with the demand and supply data uses algorithm and **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** tools, for geo spatial information on demand and availability of *Shramiks*, and also provides analysis on skill training programmes of *Shramiks*.
 - **Automatic Updation:** The data/information pertaining to the *Shramiks* and the industries (especially MSME) are being updated automatically through various whatsapp and other links.

- **Advantages:**

- **For Workers:** This would **empower Shramiks by projecting their candidature directly to the MSMEs & other employers** and would also **address aspects related to their skill proficiency levels**.
It will **minimise migration of Shramiks** - provide job opportunity in proximate MSMEs.
 - **For Industry:** This would also **eliminate the dependence of industry on the middlemen/labour contractor** for their manpower requirements.

- **Seaweeds Mission:**

- **Background:**

- Out of the global seaweed production of 32 million tons fresh weight valued around 12 billion US dollars, China produces 57%, Indonesia 28% followed by South Korea, whereas **India is having a mere share of 0.01-0.02%**.
 - Despite several advantages, commercial seaweeds cultivation has not taken place in the country at an appropriate scale, as being practiced in South-East Asian countries.

- **About the Mission:**

- It has been **launched for commercial farming of seaweeds** and its processing for value addition towards boosting the national economy.
 - It **envisages following activities:**
 - **Establishing model demonstration farms** over one hectare for cultivation of economically important seaweeds in nearshore and onshore along the Indian coast.
 - **Establishment of seaweed nurseries** for supplying seed material for large scale farming of economically important seaweeds in the country.
 - Establishment and **demonstration of processing technologies/recipes for edible seaweeds** in line with consumer acceptability or cultural food habits.
 - An activity on **seaweed cluster development** including value chain development, supply chain development, collection of data on environmental, economic and social impacts of seaweed projects in the country.

- **Advantages:** By an estimate, if seaweed cultivation is done in 10 million hectares or 5% of the **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** area of India, it can

- Provide **employment** to 50 million people.
 - Set up a **new seaweed industry**.
 - Contribute to **national Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.
 - Enhance **ocean productivity**.
 - **Abate algal blooms**.
 - **Sequester** millions of tons **CO₂**.
 - Could **produce bioethanol** of 6.6 billion litres.

Seaweeds

- **About:**
 - They are the **primitive, marine non-flowering marine algae without root, stem and leaves**, play a major role in marine ecosystems.
 - Large seaweeds form dense underwater forests known as **kelp forests**, which act as underwater nurseries for fish, snails and sea urchins.
 - Some **species of seaweeds** viz. Gelidiella acerosa, Gracilaria edulis, Gracilaria crassa, Gracilaria verrucosa, Sargassum spp. and Turbinaria spp.
- **Location:**
 - Seaweeds, found **mostly in the intertidal region**, in shallow and deep waters of the sea and also in **estuaries and backwaters**.
 - The southern **Gulf of Mannar's** rocky intertidal and lower intertidal regions have rich populations of several seaweed species.
- **Ecological Importance:**
 - **Bioindicator:** When waste from agriculture, industries, aquaculture and households are let into the ocean, it causes nutrient imbalance leading to algal blooming, the sign of marine chemical damage. Seaweeds **absorb the excess nutrients** and balance out the ecosystem.
 - **Iron Sequestrator:** These aquatic organisms heavily rely on iron for photosynthesis. When the quantity of this mineral exceeds healthy levels and becomes dangerous to marine life, seaweeds trap it and prevent damage. Similarly, most heavy metals found in marine ecosystems are trapped and removed by seaweeds.
 - **Oxygen and Nutrient Supplier:** On their part, the seaweeds derive nutrition through photosynthesis of sunlight and nutrients present in seawater. They release oxygen through every part of their bodies. They also supply organic nutrients to other marine life forms.
- **Role in Climate Mitigation:**

Seaweed has a significant role in mitigating climate change. By afforesting 9% of the ocean with seaweed, it is possible to sequester 53 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually. Hence, there is a proposal termed as 'ocean afforestation' for farming seaweed to remove carbon.
- **Other Utilities:**
 - They can be used as **fertilizers** and to **increase aquaculture production**.
 - When livestock is fed with seaweed, **methane emission from cattle may be reduced** substantially.
 - They can be buried in beach dunes to **combat beach erosion**.
 - It is **used as an ingredient** in preparing toothpaste, cosmetics and paints.

Source:PIB

MGNREGS Praised By the Standing Committee on Labour

Why in News

Recently, the **Parliamentary Standing Committee** on Labour in its report “**Social Security and Welfare Measures for Inter-State Migrant Workers**” praised **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** for providing **sustainable livelihood** to the **unskilled workers** including the inter-state **migrant labourers**.

Key Points

- **Standing Committees Observation:**
 - **MGNREGS:**
 - The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 provides for a **specific and significant welfare provision, constitutive of the very idea of citizenship**.
 - There is no “**better scheme**” to provide “**sustainable livelihood**” to unskilled workers.
 - Over 7 crore households (10.43 crore individuals) have already availed of the scheme and 330 crore person days have been created till February 2021 during the current **financial year**. This is the **highest for any year since inception of the scheme in 2006**.
 - **Migrant Workers:**
 - **1.08 crore migrant workers returned to their home** states during the **pandemic**.
 - The **absence of reliable and authentic data/information** on the numbers of migrant workforce and their movement back to their home States following the outbreak of the **Pandemic** has apparently **impacted the relief and rehabilitation measures**.
 - There were a number of appreciable initiatives launched by the Government (**eg: Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana**), which are aimed at benefiting the Migrant Labour.
 - **However, no guidelines were issued** nor enforced for distribution of relief material to stranded Migrant Labourers.
 - **No element of Social Audit** prescribed.

- **Standing Committees Suggestions:**
 - **Instant and Immediate Relief:**
Covid-19 Pandemic and the resultant challenges and lacunae observed in the system must be addressed so as to **strengthen the preparedness to effectively deal with any such emergent situations.**
 - **Credible Database to be Prepared:**
Credible databases of unorganized workers especially that of migrant labourers be put in place to **ensure seamless delivery of relief packages to them at the time of distress.**
Earlier in december 2020, the Government has decided to **create a database of migrant workers, including workers in the informal economy.**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

- **About:** It is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world.
- **Launch:**
 - It was launched on 2nd February 2006
 - The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was passed on 23rd August 2005.
- **Objective:**
The primary objective of the scheme is **to guarantee 100 days of employment** in every financial year to **adult members of any rural household** willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work.
- **Legal Right to Work:**
 - Unlike earlier employment guarantee schemes, the act **aims at addressing the causes of chronic poverty through a rights-based framework.**
 - At least **one-third of beneficiaries have to be women.**
 - Wages must be paid according to the statutory minimum wages specified for agricultural labourers in the state under the **Minimum Wages Act, 1948.**
- **Demand-Driven Scheme:**
 - The most important part of MGNREGA's design is **its legally-backed guarantee for any rural adult to get work within 15 days** of demanding it, failing which an 'unemployment allowance' must be given.
 - This demand-driven scheme enables the self-selection of workers.
- **Decentralised planning:**
 - There is an emphasis on strengthening the process of decentralisation by giving a significant role in **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** in planning and implementing these works.
 - The act mandates **Gram sabhas** to **recommend the works** that are to be undertaken and at least 50% of the works must be executed by them.



Way Forward

- The pandemic has demonstrated the **importance of decentralised governance**. **Gram panchayats need to be provided with adequate resources, powers, and responsibilities** to sanction works, provide work on demand, and authorise wage payments to ensure there are no delays in payments.
- **Social Auditing** creates accountability of performance, especially towards immediate stakeholders. Hence, there is a **need to create awareness regarding government policies and measures in rural areas**.

Source:IE

Disability and Facility of a Scribe: SC

Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** directed the Central government to frame **proper guidelines to regulate and facilitate** grant of a **facility of a scribe** to persons with disability in writing exams.

- Earlier, the SC **observed that persons suffering from disabilities are also socially backward and entitled to the same benefits of relaxation as Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidates** in public employment and education.
- **Scribe** is a person who writes or word processes a student's dictated answers in exams.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - An appeal was filed by a candidate with **Writer's cramp, a chronic neurological condition** which causes extreme difficulty in writing.
 - He was **denied a scribe** for the Civil Services Exam by the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** in 2018, on the ground that he did not come within the definition of person with **benchmark disability**.

- **Court's Ruling:**
 - **Facility of a Scribe:**

Facility of a scribe can be **provided to persons with disabilities other than those having benchmark disabilities** as given under the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD) 2016**.

Benchmark disability refers to having **at least 40% disability** of any type recognized under the RPwD Act 2016.
 - **Directions to Government:**
 - Issued a broader direction to the Union Government in the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) to ensure the framing of proper guidelines which would regulate and facilitate the grant of a facility of a scribe** to persons with disability within the meaning of **Section 2(s) of RPwD Act** where the nature of the disability operates to impose a barrier to the candidate writing an examination.
 - Asked the ministry that while formulating procedures, it may **lay down appropriate norms to ensure that the condition of the candidate is duly certified by such competent medical authority** as may be prescribed so as to ensure that only genuine candidates in need of the facility are able to avail of it.
 - **Section 2 (s)** defines 'person with disability'. It means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others.
 - The **principle of reasonable accommodation** in the Act captures the positive obligation of the State and private parties to provide additional support to persons with disabilities to facilitate their full and effective participation in society.
 - The **2016 Act has a more inclusive definition of "persons with disability"** evidencing a **shift from a stigmatising medical model of disability to a social model of disability** which recognises that it is the societal and physical constraint that are at the heart of exclusion of persons with disabilities from full and effective participation in society.

Writer's Cramp

- Writer's cramp is a specific type of focal dystonia that **affects one's fingers, hand, or forearm**.
- Focal dystonia of the hands is a neurological movement disorder. The **brain sends incorrect information to the muscles**, causing involuntary, excessive muscle contractions. These signals can make one's hands twist into odd postures.
- Writer's cramp is known as a task-specific dystonia. It **happens almost only when one performs a particular activity** like writing or typing.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

- **Definition:**
 - Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
 - **Benchmark disability** refers to having at least **40% disability** of any type recognized under the Act.
- **Types:**
 - The types of disabilities have been **increased from 7 to 21**.
 - The Act added mental illness, autism, spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, chronic neurological conditions, speech and language disability, **thalassemia, hemophilia, sickle cell disease**, multiple disabilities including deaf blindness, acid attack victims and **Parkinson's disease** which were largely ignored in earlier Act.
 - In addition, the Government has been authorized to notify any other category of specified disability.
- **Reservation:**

It **increased the quantum of reservation** for people suffering from disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and from 3% to 5% in higher education institutes.
- **Education:**

Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education. Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education.
- **Accessibility:**

Stress has been given to ensure accessibility in public buildings in a prescribed time frame along with the **Accessible India Campaign**.
- **Regulatory Body:**

The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the State Commissioners will act as regulatory bodies and Grievance Redressal agencies, monitoring implementation of the Act.
- **Special Fund:**

A separate National and State Fund be created to provide financial support to the persons with disabilities.

Source:TH

Bonded Labour in India

Why in News

Recently, fifteen bonded labourers were rescued by the district administration of Guna in Madhya Pradesh. These labourers were being subjected to inhuman treatment and torture by their employer.

Key Points

- **Bonded Labour:**

- It is a practice in which **employers give high-interest loans to workers who work at low wages** to pay off the debt.
- The **Supreme Court of India** has interpreted bonded labour as the **payment of wages that are below the prevailing market wages** and legal minimum wages.
- Bonded labour was **historically associated with rural economies** where peasants from economically disadvantaged communities were bound to work for the landlords.
- Bonded labour is found to **exist in both rural and urban pockets** in unorganized industries such as brick kilns, stone quarries, coal mining, agricultural labour, domestic servitude, circus, and sexual slavery.

- **International Obligations:**

- India is obliged to end modern slavery by 2030 under the **Sustainable Development Goal** (Target 8.7) of ending forced labour, **human trafficking** and **child labour**.
- India has also ratified the **ILO** Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).
- India also **aspires to improve its rank** (53rd out of 167 countries in the year 2018) in the **Global Slavery Index**.

- **Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 21** deals with the Right to Life and Personal Liberty.
- **Article 23** of the Constitution prohibits forced labour.
- **Article 24** prohibits the employment of children (below the age of fourteen years) in factories, etc.
- **Article 39** directs the State to secure the health and strength of workers, men and women, and to see the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.

- **Related Legislations:**

- **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976:**

- The Act extends to the whole of India but implemented by respective state governments.
 - It provides for an institutional mechanism at the district level in the form of Vigilance Committees.

- Vigilance committees advise District Magistrate (DM) to ensure the provisions of this Act are properly implemented.

- The State Governments/UTs may confer, on an Executive Magistrate, the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or second class for the trial of offences under this Act.

- **Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers (2016):**

- Financial assistance to the extent of Rs. 3 lakhs** is provided to released bonded labourers along with other non-cash assistance for their livelihood.

- **Reasons for the Persistence of Bonded Labour:**

- The lack of awareness among workers and employers.
 - Low conviction rates.
 - Social bias towards bonded labour.
 - Migratory nature of bonded labour.
 - Weaker implementation of Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976.
 - Punishment for forced labour (Section 374 of IPC– unlawful compulsory labour) is not appropriate.
 - Lack of proper coordination at the national and regional level, and among governments.

- **Measures Needed to End Bonded Labour:**

- Organising **national campaigns** to provide information to the public on how to report and identify victims of bonded labour.
 - Popularising the National Child Hotline which is partly supported by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, and a national helpline for trafficking victims exists, run by Operation Red Alert.
 - Efficient rehabilitation of rescued victims to prevent them from being forced into bonded labour again.

- Productive and income generating schemes** must be formulated in advance otherwise they will again fall back upon the system of bonded labour after their release.

Source:IE

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change

Why in News

New research from ‘**The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change**’ highlights the benefits to health if countries adopt climate plans - **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** - that are consistent with the Paris Agreement aim of limiting warming to "well below 2°C".

- The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, **published annually**, is an international, multidisciplinary collaboration, dedicated to **monitoring the evolving health profile of climate change**, and providing **an independent assessment of the delivery of commitments** made by governments worldwide under the Paris Agreement.
- The **countries considered** in the modelling study represent 50% of the world’s population and 70% of the world’s emissions – Brazil, China, Germany, **India**, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US.

Key Points

- **Findings of the Study:**
 - It **looked at three scenarios:** carrying on the current path, increasing efforts to achieve the Paris goals, and a more ambitious scenario, which put health at the heart of tackling climate change.
 - Placing **health as a key focus of the NDCs** could present an opportunity to increase ambition and realise health co-benefits.
 - Millions of lives could be saved **annually by 2040** meeting Paris Agreement targets.
 - Adopting policies that are consistent with achieving the Paris Agreement and prioritising health could **save 6.4 million lives due to better diet, 1.6 million lives due to cleaner air, and 2.1 million lives due to increased exercise per year** across nine countries.
 - If **India** can adhere to its commitments, then the study indicates it would be able to **save 4.3 lakh lives due to cleaner air and 17.41 lakh lives due to better diet.**

- **Paris Agreement:**

- **About:**

- It is the **first-ever universal, legally binding global climate change agreement**, adopted at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015.

- **Objective:**

- To keep global temperatures “well below” 2 degrees Celsius (C) compared to pre-industrial times and “seek to limit” even more, to 1.5 degrees C.

- **Long Term Goal:**

- A long-term global goal for **net zero emissions**. Countries have promised to try to bring global emissions down from peak levels as soon as possible.
 - More significantly, they pledged “to **achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases** in the second half of this century”.

- **Mechanism:**

- Before the conference started, more than 180 countries had submitted pledges to cut or curb their carbon emissions through **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)**.
 - The INDCs were recognized under the agreement, but are **not legally binding**.

- **Funding:**

- It stipulates that **developed country Parties shall provide financial resources to assist developing country Parties** with respect to both mitigation and adaptation. **Other Parties** are encouraged to provide or continue to **provide such support voluntarily**.

- **Issues in Achieving the Pledged Targets:**

- **Slow Implementation:**

Most of the nations have been slow to update their national contributions for reducing emissions for 2025-2030, however several have announced net zero emission targets in the recent past.

- **Credibility:**

The plans and policies of nations is not credible enough to meet the long term net zero targets as:

- The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1.5 degrees Celsius Report** indicated that to stay within a reasonable chance of achieving 1.5 degrees C, global CO₂ emissions have to fall by 45% from the 2010 levels by 2030 but current national contributions are not on track for such a fall.
- The **withdrawal of the USA in 2020 from the Paris deal** undermines the universality of the Paris Agreement and impairs states' confidence in climate cooperation. However, the **USA has recently started the process of rejoining the Deal.**

- **Accountability:**

- There is limited or no accountability for the long-term net zero goals and short-term national contributions.
- The transparency framework does not contain a robust review function, and the compliance committee is facilitative and limited to ensuring compliance with a short list of binding procedural obligations.

- **Fairness:**

- Issues of fairness and justice, both between and within generations, are unavoidable.
- There is no mechanism to check that whether the net zero targets, and pathways to net zero are fair or how much are states doing in comparison to others and relative to how much they should.

India's Scenario

- **India's Current Emissions:**

- According to a **United Nations Report**, India's per capita emissions are actually 60% lower than the global average.
- The emissions in the country grew 1.4% in 2019, much lower than its average of 3.3% per year over the last decade.

- **India's INDC, to be achieved primarily, by 2030:**
 - To reduce the emissions intensity of the GDP by about a third.
 - A total of 40% of the installed capacity for electricity will be from non-fossil fuel sources.
 - India also promised an additional carbon sink (a means to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere) of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by the year 2030.
- **Measures taken by India to Control Emissions:**
 - **Bharat Stage (BS) VI** Norms: These are emission control standards put in place by the government to keep a check on air pollution.
 - **National Solar Mission**: It is a major initiative of the Government of India and State Governments to promote ecologically sustainable growth while addressing India's energy security challenge.
 - **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy 2018**: The main objective of the policy is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar photovoltaic (PV) hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources, transmission infrastructure and land.

Source:IE

National Coal Index

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Coal** has started **commercial auction of coal mines** on a **revenue share basis** using the **National Coal Index (NCI)**.

NCI was **rolled out in June 2020**.

Key Points

- **About:**

It is a price index which **reflects the change of price level of coal in a particular month relative to the fixed base year**.

The base year for the NCI is **Financial Year 2017-18**.
- **Compilation:**
 - **Prices of coal from all the sales channels of coal**, including import, as existing today are taken into account for compiling the NCI.
 - The **amount of revenue share** per tonne of coal produced from auctioned blocks would be arrived at using the NCI by means of defined formula.

- **Sub-Indices:** NCI is composed of a set of **five** sub-indices:
 - Three for **Non Coking Coal** and two for **Coking Coal**.
 - The three sub-indices for Non Coking Coal are combined to arrive at the Index for Non Coking Coal and the two sub-indices for Coking Coal are combined to arrive at the Index for Coking Coal.
 - Thus, **indices are separate for Non Coking and Coking Coal**.
 - As per the grade of coal pertaining to a mine, the appropriate sub-index is used to arrive at the revenue share.

Coal

- Coal is the most abundant fossil fuel which **holds 55% of India's energy need**.
- Based on the **uses**, coal is divided into **two types**:
 - **Coking Coal:**
 - This type of coal when subjected to high temperature carbonisation i.e. heating in the absence of air to a temperature above 600 degree Celsius, **forms a solid porous residue called coke**.
 - Coke** is fed into a blast furnace along with iron ore and limestone to produce steel in steel plants.
 - Coking coal is desired to be of **low ash percentage**.
 - **Use:**
 - Mainly used in steel making and metallurgical industries.
 - Also used for hard coke manufacturing.
 - **Non Coking Coal:**
 - These are coals without coking properties.
 - **Use:**
 - This is the coal used in thermal power plants to generate electricity, so it is also known as **steam coal or thermal coal**.
 - Also used for cement, fertilizer, glass, ceramic, paper, chemical and brick manufacturing, and for other heating purposes.
- Coal is **also classified into four ranks: anthracite, bituminous, subbituminous, and lignite**. The ranking **depends on the types and amounts of carbon the coal contains and on the amount of heat energy** the coal can produce.

Source:PIB
