



## Green Initiatives: Saudi Arabia

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### Why in News

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Recently, Saudi Arabia launched **Saudi Green Initiative** and **the Middle East Green Initiative** to combat the threat of **climate change**.



### Key Points

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- **Background and G20 Summit:**

- One of the main pillars of the Saudi **G20** presidency was to **safeguard the planet**.

In 2020, **G20 introduced initiatives** like establishing a **Global Coral Reef Research and Development Accelerator Platform** and the **Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) Platform**.

- Saudi Arabia reiterated that it is committed to lead regional efforts to address climate change and has been making steady progress in this direction.

Saudi Arabia established the **Environmental Special Forces in 2019**.

- **Saudi Green Initiative:**

- **Aim:**

- To **raise the vegetation cover, reduce carbon emissions, combat pollution and land degradation, and preserve marine life.**

- **Features:**

- **10 billion trees** will be planted in the Kingdom.
    - To **reduce carbon emissions by more than 4% of global contributions**, through a **renewable energy programme** that will generate 50% of Saudi's energy from renewables by 2030.
    - Saudi Arabia is working towards **raising the percentage of its protected areas to more than 30% of its total land area**, exceeding the global target of 17%.

- **Middle East Green Initiative :**

- **Aim:**

- To preserve marine and coastal environments, increase the proportion of natural reserves and protected land, **improve the regulation of oil production, accelerate the transition to clean energy and boost the amount of energy generated by renewables.**

- **Features:**

- Saudi Arabia will work with the **Gulf Cooperation Council** countries and regional partners to plant an additional 40 billion trees in the West Asian region.

- It represents 5% of the global target of planting one trillion trees and reducing 2.5% of global carbon levels.

- Saudi Arabia will **convene an annual summit called the Middle East Green Initiative** which will host leaders from the government, scientists and environmentalists to discuss the details of implementation.
    - In partnership with participating countries, **innovative methods will be researched** to irrigate from treated water, cloud seeding and other purpose-driven solutions such as planting native trees which requires support for three years to grow and will then be able to survive on their own with natural irrigation.

- **Current Support:**

- Saudi Arabia has been sharing its expertise and know-how with its neighbouring countries to **reduce carbon emissions resulting from hydrocarbon production in the region by 60% and globally by 10%.**

- Saudi Arabia currently operates the **largest carbon capture and utilisation plant in the world**, it also operates one of the **region's most advanced CO<sub>2</sub>-enhanced oil recovery plants** that captures and stores 8,00,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

- **Appreciating Indian Efforts:**
  - Saudi Arabia also appreciated India's remarkable commitments to tackle climate change as India is on track to achieve its **Paris Agreement** targets.
  - India's **renewable energy capacity is the fourth largest in the world.** India has an ambitious target of achieving **450 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030.**
- **Related Indian Initiatives:**
  - **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**
  - **Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) emission norms**
  - **UJALA scheme**
  - **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**
  - **International Solar Alliance**
  - **Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure**

## Way Forward

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- Saudi Arabia hopes that the launch of the two Initiatives marks the **beginning of a green era** and that these **initiatives provide momentum to other countries to unify their efforts to save our planet.**
- Economic prosperity cannot be achieved at the cost of the environment. It is critical for us, as an industry, to shift from 'pollute-first, clean-up later' attitude and **commit to preserving our diminishing natural resources.**
- The intent and aspiration to align economic efforts with the environment should not be restricted to the government. **Collaboration between the industry, government and regulatory bodies will help in evaluating decisions on economic viability and environmental benefits.**

**Source:TH**