



UN Plans to Promote Renewable Energy

For Prelims: Renewable Energy, Pollution Control measure, United Nations, Greenhouse gasses

For Mains: Future prospect of the renewable energy plan and policy of the Indian government. Associated challenge and concern

Why in News?

Recently, The UN's weather agency [World Meteorological Organization](#) reported that greenhouse [gas concentrations](#), [ocean heat](#), [sea-level rise](#), and [ocean acidification](#) all set new records last year.

- According to the **World Meteorological Organization** Extreme weather has resulted in fatalities, sickness, migration, and economic losses.
- The number of [extreme weather occurrences](#) has been **doubled by 2020**, according to the United Nations.
- The UN's chief launched a **five-point plan to jump-start broader use of renewable energies** in the hopes of reigniting global attention on [climate change](#).

What did the United Nations Secretary General Urge?

- The **United Nations General Secretary** supported **technology transfer** along with lifting the protection on **intellectual property rights** regarding **renewable technologies**.
- Supply chains for [renewable energy technology](#) **should be broadened** which are now concentrated in the hands of the few developed nations in the wake of high rise in the level of pollution and its consequences.
- The **United Nations Secretary-General** urges states to **restructure its energy demand and supply** in ways that favor renewable energy, such as speeding up **solar and wind projects**.
- **Subsidies to fossil fuels** should be removed by the states.
- **Investment** in the field of **renewable energy production** should be prompted to grow at least \$4 trillion dollars a year.

Why should fossil fuel be avoided?

- [Burning of fossil fuels emits hazardous chemicals](#) such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides and other harmful gases are released in the atmosphere.
- **Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides form acid rain:** Quick dissolution of the SO₂ and NO₂ in water resulted in acid rain.
- **Use of fossil fuel should be curtailed** and use of renewable sources of energy should be promoted to keep pollution in Control.
- **Fossil fuel intensifies global warming and climate change** which ultimately leads to extreme weather events.
- **Fossil fuel extraction devastated huge stretches of land** for establishment of infrastructure such as roads, pipelines, processing facilities, and waste storage in addition to the main extraction site.

What is the State of the Climate Report 2021?

- **About:**
 - **The State of the Climate Report for 2021** is published by the **World Meteorological Organisation**.
- **Key Features:**
 - The global mean temperature in 2021 was around 1.11 ± 0.13 °C above the 1850–1900 pre-industrial average.
 - The most recent seven years, 2015 to 2021, were the seven warmest years on record.
 - Global mean sea level reached a new record high in 2021, rising an average of 4.5 mm per year over the period 2013–2021.
 - The compounded effects of conflict, extreme weather events and economic shocks, further exacerbated by the **Covid-19 pandemic**, undermined decades of progress towards improving food security globally.
 - **Carbon dioxide concentration is increasing** in the atmosphere due to continuous growth in fossil fuel combustion.
- According to the report, extreme weather events globally are :
 - **Hurricane or cyclone:** Strong wind, heavy rain.
 - **Dust storm:** Strong winds, arid conditions.
 - **Flood:** Heavy rainfall.
 - **Hailstorm:** Cold or warm temperatures, rain, ice.
 - **Ice storm:** Freezing rain.
 - **Tornado:** Clouds, strong wind, rain, hail.
 - **Blizzard:** Heavy snow, ice, cold temperatures.
- **Risks and impacts:**
 - **Food Security Challenges:**
 - The number of undernourished people in the world significantly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, from 650 million people in 2019 to 768 million people in 2020.
 - Global warming has exacerbated the issues of food insecurity in the less developed countries.
 - **Humanitarian Impacts and Population Displacement:**
 - Refugees, internally displaced people and stateless people are often among those most vulnerable to climate and weather-related hazards.
 - Many vulnerable individuals who are displaced end up settling in high-risk areas, where they are exposed to climate and weather hazards at a range of scales.
 - **Climate Impacts on Ecosystems:**
 - Ecosystems are degrading at an unprecedented rate, limiting their ability to support human well-being and harming their adaptive capacity to build resilience.
 - Climate change is also affecting climate sensitive species. There is evidence that temperature-sensitive plants are flowering and starting to produce leaves earlier in spring and dropping their leaves later in autumn.

What are the Shortcomings and Associated Lacunae?

- **Clean energy is not a cheap source of energy:** If we want to attain the goal of net zero emissions, we must first make renewable energy affordable to middle-income and poor countries.
- **Accelerated accumulation of the carbon dioxide** in regions such as the Amazon, Africa and southern Asia.
- **Carbon cutting commitment is not achieved by Nations:** Except India, other nations are not able to make carbon-cutting commitments taken at the [United Nations climate meeting](#) in Glasgow, Scotland.

Way Forward

- **Identification of Areas:** Renewable resources, especially wind cannot be set up everywhere, they require specific location.
 - Identification of these specific locations, integrating them with the main grid and

distribution of powers. A combination of these three is what will take India forward.

- **Fossil fuel Subsidy:** Fossil fuel subsidy should be rectified in order to ensure that only the required amount of energy is consumed.
- Investment in **renewable energy generation** should be encouraged.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions

Q. With reference to the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), which of the following statements is/are correct? (2015)

1. It is a Public Limited Government Company.
2. It is a Non-Banking Financial Company.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: C

Exp:

- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) is a Mini Ratna (category-I) GoI enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- It is a Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987 engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy. **Hence, statements 1 and 2 are correct.**

Q. With reference to solar power production in India, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. India is the third largest in the world in the manufacture of silicon wafers used in photovoltaic units.
2. The solar power tariffs are determined by the Solar Energy Corporation of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: D

Exp:

- Silicon wafers are thin slices of semiconductor, such as a crystalline Silicon (c-Si), used for the fabrication of integrated circuits and, in photovoltaics, to manufacture solar cells. China is by far the world's largest producer of Silicon, followed by Russia, the United States, and Brazil. India does not figure among the top five producers of Silicon and Silicon wafers. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Solar tariffs are determined by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission and not by Solar Energy Corporation of India. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

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