

Abhimanu

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NATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

ADB to provide US \$13 million loan to EESL to promote efficient energy usage in India

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide USD 13 million loans to EESL (Energy Efficiency Services) to promote efficient energy usage in India.
- ADB and the Energy Efficiency Services (EESL) signed a USD 13 million grant, to be provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), for the additional financing of an ongoing ADB-supported project that is promoting end-use energy efficiency.
- The grant, to be administered by ADB, is tied to the USD 200 million ADB-financed Demand-Side Energy Efficiency Sector Project.
- It was approved by the bank in 2016 to finance the installation of millions of energy-efficient lights on streets and homes as well as energy-efficient water pumps across India.

About Funding:

- The ADB funding is helping EESL finance energy service utilities for installing established energy-efficient technologies such as light-emitting diode (LED) street-lights with municipalities while exploring newer technologies and their self-sustaining business models. The existing loan aims to achieve energy savings of around 3,800 gigawatt-hours annually.
- The additional financing for the project through GEF grant will be used by EESL for making investments in new and emerging technologies, including trigeneration, efficient motors and air-conditioners, smart meters/grids, and associated new business models to expand the use of such innovations, as well as to set up an energy efficiency revolving fund.
- This will support the overall objective of the project that is aligned with the goals of the government's National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) and aims to expand the market for energy-efficient technologies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

About NMEEE:

The National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) is one of the eight national missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). The prime objective of the mission is to strengthen the market for energy efficiency by creating conducive regulatory and policy regime and has envisaged fostering innovative and sustainable business models to the energy efficiency sector. By this mission government of India wanted to promote the market for energy efficiency by fostering innovative policies and effective market instruments.

The National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) comprises of four initiatives to enhance energy efficiency in energy intensive industries which are discussed below:

- Perform Achieve and Trade (PAT): Assigning energy reduction targets to large energy intensive industries and distributing Energy Saving Certificates (ESCerts) on achievement of the targets. These ESCerts can then be traded.
- Energy Efficiency Financing Platform (EEFP): Increasing the confidence of financial institutions and investors to support energy efficiency initiatives.
- Market Transformation for Energy Efficiency (MTEE): Promoting adoption of energy efficient equipment's and appliances through innovative business models.

- Framework for Energy Efficiency Economic Development (FEEED): Promoting energy efficiency initiatives by hedging against investment risks.

Yuva Sahakar - Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme”

- To cater to the needs and aspirations of the youth, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has come up with a youth-friendly scheme ‘Yuva Sahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme” for attracting them to cooperative business ventures.

About Scheme:

- The newly launched scheme would encourage cooperatives to venture into new and innovative areas.
- The scheme will be linked to Rs 1000 crore ‘Cooperative Start-up and Innovation Fund (CSIF)’ created by the NCDC. It would have more incentives for cooperatives of North Eastern region, Aspirational Districts and cooperatives with women or SC or ST or PwD members.
- The funding for the project will be up to 80% of the project cost for these special categories as against 70% for others.
- The scheme envisages 2% less than the applicable rate of interest on term loan for the project cost up to Rs 3 crore including 2 years moratorium on payment of principal. All types of cooperatives in operation for at least one year are eligible.
- This scheme is expected to meet the needs of today’s youth.

About NCDC:

- NCDC is a statutory Corporation set up under an Act of Parliament on 13th March 1963.
- The objectives of NCDC are planning and promoting programmes for production, processing, marketing, storage, export and import of agricultural produce, foodstuffs, industrial goods, livestock and certain other notified commodities and services on cooperative principles and for matters concerned therewith or incidental thereto.

NATIONAL POLITY

Government approves mechanism for sale of enemy shares

- The Union Cabinet has approved a mechanism for sale of enemy shares which at the current price is estimated at around Rs 3,000 crore.
- Sale proceeds are to be deposited as disinvestment proceeds in the government account maintained by the Ministry of Finance. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management has been authorised to sell the shares.
- A total number of 6,50,75,877 shares in 996 companies of 20,323 shareholders are under the custody of Custodian of Enemy Property of India (CEPI).
- The decision will lead to monetisation of movable enemy property lying dormant for decades and the proceeds will be used for development and social welfare programmes.

About Enemy properties:

- Enemy properties were those left behind by the people who took citizenship of Pakistan and China. There are 9,280 properties left behind by Pakistani nationals and 126 properties which belonged to Chinese nationals, a ministry official said.

- The government has vested these properties in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India, an office instituted under the Central government.
- A list of all vested enemy properties (movable and immovable) shall be prepared by the custodian for its submission to the Central government within three months from the publication of this order.
- For the purpose of valuation of the immovable enemy property, a valuation committee will be constituted at the district level with the district magistrate as the chairman besides two other official members.
- The committee shall consider the circle rate of the area where the property is situated or a rate fixed by the district administration as a mode of valuation of the property along with other valuation modes.
- The custodian will prepare and submit the state-wise list of the enemy properties along with their valuation to the Central government within one month from the date of receipt of the valuation report from the valuation committee.
- Among the 9,280 properties left behind by Pakistani nationals, the highest 4,991 properties are located in Uttar Pradesh followed by West Bengal which has 2,735 such estates. There are 487 such properties in Delhi. Among the 126 properties left behind by Chinese nationals, the highest 57 are located in Meghalaya followed by West Bengal with 29.

NGT summons Chief Secretaries of 4 States over stubble burning

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Chief Secretaries of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to draw up a plan to provide economic incentives and disincentives to farmers.

Supreme Court on Stubble Burning:

- The problem is required to be resolved by taking all such measures as are possible in the interest of public health and environment protection.
- Incentives could be provided to those who are not burning the stubble and disincentives for those who continue the practice.
- The existing Minimum Support Price (MSP) Scheme must be so interpreted as to enable the States concerned to wholly or partly deny the benefit of MSP to those who continue to burn the crop residue.
- Secretary, Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has also been directed to "find a lasting solution."

About the National Green Tribunal (NGT):

- The National Green Tribunal has been established on 18.10.2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- It is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- The Tribunal shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- The Tribunal's dedicated jurisdiction in environmental matters shall provide speedy environmental justice and help reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts.
- The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the same. Initially, the NGT is proposed to be set up at five places of sittings and will follow circuit procedure for making itself more accessible. New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai shall be the other 4 place of sitting of the Tribunal.

Maternity leave: govt. for incentive scheme

- In a bid to encourage employers, especially in the private sector, to implement the extended 26-week maternity leave law, the Labour Ministry is planning to refund them for seven weeks' worth of wages for women workers with a wage ceiling up to ₹ 15,000 per month.
- The Ministry is in the process of getting budgetary approvals for the ₹400 crore incentive scheme.
- In March 2017, the Centre amended the Maternity Benefit Act to increase paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks for all women employees in establishments employing ten or more people. However, while implementation of the provision was good in the public sector, it was poor for those with private sector or contract jobs.
- There is also a wide perception that private entities are not encouraging women employees because if they are employed, they may have to provide maternity benefit to them, particularly 26 weeks of paid holiday. Therefore, the extended maternity leave has become a deterrent for female employees who are asked to quit or retrenched on flimsy grounds before they go on maternity leave.

About maternity Benefit Act:

- The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017 has increased the duration of paid maternity leave available for women employees to 26 weeks from 12 weeks. However for those women who are expecting after having 2 children, the duration of the leave remains unaltered at 12 weeks.
- The paid maternity leave can be availed 8 weeks before the expected date of delivery. Before the amendment, it was 6 weeks.
- The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017 has extended the benefits applicable to the adoptive and commissioning mothers and provides that woman who adopts a child will be given 12 weeks of maternity leave from the date of adoption.
- The Act has introduced an enabling provision relating to “work from home” that can be exercised after the expiry of 26 weeks' leave period. Depending upon the nature of work, a woman can avail of this provision on such terms that are mutually agreed with the employer.
- The amended Act has mandated crèche facility for every establishment employing 50 or more employees. The women employees should be permitted to visit the facility 4 times during the day.
- The amended act makes it compulsory for the employers to educate women about the maternity benefits available to them at the time of their appointment.
- The act is applicable to all those women employed in factories, mines and shops or commercial establishments employing 10 or more employees.

India's global share of AC units to increase

- According to a recently released report by Rocky Mountain Institute , by 2022, India is likely to have a fourth of the world's air conditioning units, and the risks to climate from this could be huge.

Important highlights:

- If refrigerants used for cooling are left unchecked, they could cause global temperatures to rise by 0.5 degrees Celsius. In order to reduce the impact by one-fifth and ensure that air conditioning units use 75 per cent less electricity, there is a need of technological advancement.
- Around 4.5 billion room air-conditioners are estimated to be installed by 2050 — a nearly four-fold jump from current number and emerging economies will see a five-fold increase.
- India will have over 1 billion installed room air conditioner (RAC) from 26.3 million in 2016. To meet the needs of these ACs, three times more electricity will have to be produced. This alone can raise the temperature of the planet by 0.5 degrees.

Analysis:

- The refrigerants used for cooling are the major contributors to global warming, and if left unchecked, they could cause global temperatures to rise by 0.5 degrees Celsius. About 4.5 billion room air-conditioners are

estimated to be installed globally by 2050 — a nearly four-fold jump from today's installed base, with emerging economies observing a five-fold increase.

- Their use requires lots of dirty energy and emits hydrofluorocarbons, greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere far effectively than carbon dioxide. In fact, AC use in the residential sector alone may increase our planet's temperature by more than half a degree Celsius globally by 2100 as more people around the world rely on air conditioners.
- By 2030 to 2050, heat exposure may cause an additional 38,000 deaths among elderly people a year worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. By 2100, up to 74 percent of the world's population could be exposed to deadly temperatures for at least 20 days a year, per a 2017 study published in Nature.

Anganwadi Workers and POSHAN Abhiyaan

- The National Nutrition Mission or POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to drastically reduce the prevailing high incidence of malnutrition, stunted growth and anaemia. The intention of this programme is to do this through convergence, mass movements and leveraging technology.
- Anganwadi workers (AWWs) are required to feed in details of the beneficiaries and monitor their growth in real time during pregnancy, as well as height and weight of the child once born, in the mobile phones given to them and follow up with SMS alerts to those who are at risk. However, certain fundamental issues need fixing for the programme to be successfully implemented.

Problems associated with Anganwadi Centres (AWCs):

- AWCs lack basic amenities and face infrastructure problems. Around 24% of them lacked their own building and operated from small rented premises, and around 14% lacked pucca buildings. Only 86%, 67% and 68% of AWCs had drinking water facilities, electricity connections and toilets respectively, some of which are either dysfunctional or could not be used due to conditions imposed by landlords. The cumulative effect was that children were forced into cramped, poorly lit and unhygienic spaces, often in searing heat.
- According to the Rapid Survey on Children (2013-14) carried out by the Union ministry of women and child development, 74% of AWCs had functional baby-weighing scales and 23% of them had adult-weighing scales. However, a 2015 evaluation carried out by NITI Aayog had found that over 24% of the AWCs surveyed maintained poor records. To overcome the challenges of the tedious and irregular system of manually maintaining daily registers and monitor growth efficiently, information and communications technology-enabled real time monitoring (ICT-RTM) has been rolled out in POSHAN Abhiyaan districts. This helped identify 12,000 severely malnourished children in 46 districts of six states.
- However, this could be rendered ineffective due to the limited capacities of AWWs to handle smartphones owing to their lack of technological literacy. This is compounded by technical issues like slow servers and data deletion problems, resulting in irregular and improper recording of growth data of children.

Measures to be taken:

- Involving panchayat leaders in construction of AWCs and improvement in the quality of village health sanitation and nutrition
- Vesting more powers in the district administration to fill vacant posts in AWCs to address the manpower crisis in AWCs
- Comprehensive periodical and refresher training of AWWs
- Ensure regular supply of iron/folic acid tablets, allotment of 'take-home rations' and supplementary nutrition

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

'Preventing nutrient loss and waste across the food system Report: FAO.

- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has released a report titled 'Preventing nutrient loss and waste across the food system: Policy actions for high-quality diets'.
- **Important highlights:**
- With one-in-five deaths associated with poor-quality diets, regularly eating poor-quality food has become a greater public health threat than malaria, tuberculosis or measles.
- Approximately one-third of food produced for human consumption never reaches the consumer's plate or bowl. Nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits, vegetables, seafood and meats are highly perishable, rendering them susceptible to losses throughout increasingly complex food production systems.
- Each year more than half of all globally-produced fruits and vegetables are lost or wasted. Moreover, around 25 per cent of all meat produced, equivalent to 75 million cows, goes uneaten.
- To tackle all forms of malnutrition and promote healthy diets, we need to put in place food systems that increase the availability, affordability and consumption of fresh, nutrient-rich food for everyone.
- Reducing food loss and waste, particularly high-nutrient foods, not only has nutritional benefits, but also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and should be a new priority for improving nutrition.
- Taking specific actions to reduce the losses and waste of fresh and nutritious food is a fundamental part of this effort.
- The report proposes a series of policy actions across the entire food system, including educating all concerned; focusing on perishable foods; improving public and private infrastructure; and closing data gaps on food losses and waste.
- In low-income countries, food is mostly lost during harvesting, storage, processing and transportation; while in high-income nations the problem lies in retail and consumer level waste. Together, they directly impact the number of calories and nutrients actually available for consumption.
- Globally, agriculture produces 22 per cent more vitamin A than we require. However, after loss and waste, the amount available for human consumption is 11 per cent less than required. Reducing the loss and waste of nutritious foods could therefore yield substantial health benefits.
- With the value of global food lost or wasted annually, estimated to be around \$1 trillion, cutting down on waste would also yield major economic benefits. Additionally, eating more of the food already produced, would avoid wasting the water, land and energy that went into its production.
- **About Food And Agricultural Organisation:**
- Founded in 1945, FAO is the largest of the UN specialized agencies. It concentrates on finding ways to eliminate the hunger and poverty affecting millions of people in developing countries. FAO provides direct technical assistance through its Field Programmes.
- This assistance is usually directed at specific problems, and can lead to large-scale capital investment in agriculture - essential for development.
- The Organization's Regular Programme allows it to act as a clearinghouse for information, to advise governments on policy and planning and to service meetings of governments and experts on food and agricultural issues.

India votes against UNGA draft resolution on use of death penalty

- India has voted against a UN General Assembly draft resolution on the use of death penalty, saying it goes against the statutory law of the country where an execution is carried out in the "rarest of rare" cases.
- The draft resolution, taken up in the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, Cultural) of the General Assembly Tuesday, was approved with a recorded vote of 123 in favour, 36 against and 30 abstentions.

Analysis

- In India, the death penalty is exercised in 'rarest of rare' cases, where the crime committed is so heinous that it shocks the conscience of the society. Indian law provides for all requisite procedural safeguards, including the right to a fair trial by an independent Court, the presumption of innocence, the minimum guarantees for defence, and the right to review by a higher court.
- Indian laws have specific provisions for commutation of the death penalty in the case of pregnant women and has rulings that prohibited executions of persons with mental or intellectual disabilities, while juvenile offenders cannot be sentenced to death under any circumstances.
- Death sentences in India must also be confirmed by a superior court and an accused has the right to appeal to a high court or the Supreme Court, which has adopted guidelines on clemency and the treatment of death row prisoners, she said.
- Poverty, socio-economic, psychic compulsions, undeserved adversities in life constituted new mitigating factors to be considered by courts in commuting a death sentence to life imprisonment.
- The President of India in all cases, and the governors of states under their respective jurisdictions, have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or, to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of death penalty.

Indo China Talks on Annual Defence and Security

- India and China held the ninth Annual Defence and Security Dialogue in Beijing after a one-year gap due to the Doklam standoff. Both countries agreed to enhance military exchanges and interactions.
- Both sides agreed on enhancing defence exchanges and interactions at different levels between the two militaries,
- The annual dialogue did not take place last year following the 73-day tense standoff between the two militaries at Doklam, which was triggered by the Chinese PLA's plan to build a road close to the narrow 'Chicken's Neck' corridor connecting India's northeastern states in an area also claimed by Bhutan besides China.
- Besides efforts to work out a solution to resolve the boundary dispute spanning 3,488 km, the border talks also focussed on discussions on other aspects of India-China relations.

About Doklam :

- The location of the standoff is Dolam plateau, which is in the Doklam area .
- The Dolam plateau is different from Doklam plateau (which is a disputed area between Bhutan and China, but has no contiguity with India).
- The Doklam plateau lies around 30 km to the north east of Dolam plateau. Doklam is called Donglang in Mandarin.
- The Doklam or Donglang area is close to the northern end of a funnel-shaped valley, called the Chumbi Valley.
- The valley opens out in the Tibet region of China. At its base (in Tibet), the Chumbi 'funnel' is 54 km wide.
- At its tip, the 'funnel' is just 11 km wide. This is Batang La, which lies to the east of Gangtok. The Chumbi 'funnel' measures 70 km from its tip in the south to its base in the north.

Trijunction'

- The trijunction is the point where the borders of India (Sikkim), Bhutan and China (Tibet) meet. The trijunction is disputed — India claims it is at Batang La, while China claims it is around 6.5 km to the south, at Gyumochen.
- Both claims are based on competing interpretations of the 1890 Calcutta Convention between Britain and China.
- As per the agreement between the Special Representatives of India and China in 2012, the two sides have to maintain the status quo until their competing claims are resolved in consultation with the third party, Bhutan. Gyumochen is 20 km as the crow flies from the West Bengal border.

China's 'artificial sun'

- Scientists announced that the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) reactor in Hefei has finally achieved a temperature exceeding 100 million degrees Celsius, setting a new record in fusion technology and bringing us closer to a new age in energy.
- Deep inside the Sun, hydrogen fuses together at temperatures of around 15 million degrees Celsius (27 million degrees Fahrenheit). That's with the added push of concentrated gravity.

About Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST):

- It is an experimental superconducting tokamak magnetic fusion energy reactor in Hefei, China. The Hefei-based Institute of Plasma Physics is conducting the experiment for the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It has operated since 2006. It was later put under control of Hefei Institutes of Physical Science.
- The EAST stands at 11 metres tall, has a diameter of 8 metres and weighs about 360 tonnes.
- It uses a ring to house heavy and super-heavy isotopes — atomic variations — of hydrogen known as deuterium and tritium.
- The isotopes are heated by powerful electric currents within the tokamak, tearing electrons away from their atoms and forming a charged plasma of hydrogen ions.
- Powerful magnets lining the inner walls of EAST then contain the plasma to a tiny area to maximise the chance that the ions will fuse together.
- When the ions fuse they give off a large amount of energy, which can then be harnessed to run a power plant and produce electricity.

SCIENCE AFFAIRS

NASA's Ralph set to visit Jupiter's Trojan asteroids in 2021

- NASA's Ralph — a space instrument that has travelled as far as Pluto — is set to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids, which are remnants from the early days of the solar system.

About Ralph:

- Ralph was first launched aboard the New Horizons spacecraft in 2006 and obtained images of Jupiter and its moons. This was followed by a visit to Pluto where Ralph took the first high-definition pictures of the iconic minor planet.
- In 2021, Ralph is set to journey with the Lucy mission to Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.
- The instrument will fly by another Kuiper Belt object called 2014 MU69 — nicknamed Ultima Thule — in January 2019. Ralph's observations of 2014 MU69 will provide unique insights into this small, icy world.
- The Lucy spacecraft carries a near-twin of Ralph, called L'Ralph, which will investigate Jupiter's Trojan asteroids. The L'Ralph instrument suite will study this diverse group of bodies; Lucy will fly by six Trojans and one Main Belt asteroid — more than any other previous asteroid mission. L'Ralph will detect the Trojan asteroids' chemical fingerprints.
- L'Ralph allows scientists to interpret data provided by the Sun's reflected light that are the fingerprints of different elements and compounds. These data could provide clues about how organic molecules form in primitive bodies, a process that might also have led to the emergence of life on Earth.

About Trojan Asteroids:

- Some asteroids, called Trojans, lie in the same orbit as Jupiter. To have stable orbits, without falling into the planet, they must be 60 degrees ahead or behind the position of the planet, in what are called the Lagrangian points of Jupiter's orbit.
- Both Lagrangian points on Jupiter's orbit are populated with a cluster of asteroids that have been captured over the life of the Solar System.
- Several hundred of such asteroids are now known, and it is estimated that there may be a thousand or more. Curiously, there are many more objects in the leading Lagrange point (L4) than in the trailing one (L5).

Report on Pneumonia and diarrhoea in India

- Recently International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC) has released a 'Pneumonia and Diarrhea Progress report'.

Important highlights:

- India's vaccination coverage to prevent rotavirus infection, a leading cause of severe diarrhoea in young children, was the lowest among the 15 countries which introduced it last year.
- India lost over 2.6 lakh children under five years from pneumonia and diarrhoea in 2016.
- Despite significant reductions in disease in recent years because of improvements in access and use of health interventions, nearly half a million pneumonia and diarrhoea deaths still occurred in two countries - India and Nigeria.
- The number of deaths of children under five years due to pneumonia in 2016 was 1,58,176, while diarrhoea deaths was 1,02,813 .
- 15 nations in order with the highest number of pneumonia and diarrhoea child deaths are India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Chad, Angola, Somalia, Indonesia, Tanzania, China, Niger, Bangladesh, Uganda, and Cote d'Ivoire.
- As of 2017, rotavirus vaccine had not been introduced in eight of the 15 focus countries - Nigeria, DRC, Chad, Somalia, Indonesia, China, Bangladesh, and Uganda.
- Of the seven countries where rotavirus vaccine has been introduced, the median coverage of complete rotavirus vaccine is 58 per cent.
- Among countries that had introduced the vaccine as of 2017, the lowest coverage levels were in Pakistan (12 per cent) and India (13 per cent), both of which had recently started phased national rollouts that had not yet reached all states or provinces.
- Elaborating about the progress in India, home to more under-five pneumonia and diarrhoea deaths than any other country in 2016, has been "mixed".
- Increasing coverage of Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) vaccines, as well as continued scale-up of rotavirus vaccines first introduced in mid-2016, led to a bump in scoring for these interventions since last year's report.
- Introduced in 2017, the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) has been included in only six states to-date. Further scale-up of the vaccine to all states should be considered.
- India's scores for exclusive breast feeding declined as did coverage of ORS. The proportion of children receiving important treatments remains dismally low, with barely 20 per cent receiving ORS for diarrhoeal disease.

Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of India joining as Member of Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme (AMF TCP) under International Energy Agency (IEA) on 9th May, 2018.
- AMF TCP works under the framework of International Energy Agency (IEA) to which India has "Association" status since 30th March, 2017.

- AMF TCP is an international platform for co-operation among countries to promote cleaner and more energy efficient fuels & vehicle technologies. The activities of AMF TCP relate to R&D, deployment and dissemination of Advanced Motor Fuels and looks upon the transport fuel issues in a systemic way taking into account the production, distribution and end use related aspects.

Goal of AMF TCP:

- The primary goal of joining AMF TCP by Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG) is to facilitate the market introduction of Advanced motor fuels/ Alternate fuels with an aim to bring down emissions and achieve higher fuel efficiency in transport sector.
- AMF TCP also provides an opportunity for fuel analysis, identifying new/ alternate fuels for deployment in transport sector and allied R&D activities for reduction in emissions in fuel intensive sectors.
- The R&D work in AMF TCP is carried out within individual projects called "Annex".

Benefits:

- The benefits of participation in AMF TCP are shared costs and pooled technical resources. The duplication of efforts is avoided, and national Research and Development capabilities are strengthened.
- There is an information exchange about best practices, network of researchers and linking research with practical implementation.
- After becoming member, India will initiate R&D in other areas of its interest in advanced biofuels and other motor fuels in view of their crucial role in substituting fossil fuel imports.

GSAT-29

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched its latest communication satellite, GSAT-29, from its second developmental flight GSLV-MkII D2.

About GSAT-29:

- GSAT-29 is a multibeam, multiband communication satellite, launched by ISRO on Wednesday.
- The satellite, weighing 3423 kg, was put into earth's orbit by India's heavy-lift rocket Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-Mk III).
- The satellite, designed for a mission life of 10 years, has been stationed at 55 degrees East longitude.
- It was launched into an elliptical Geo Transfer Orbit (GTO) with a 190 km perigee, the point in the orbit of the moon or a satellite at which it is nearest to the earth, and 35,975 km apogee, the farthest or highest point, with an inclination of 21.5 degrees.
- The spacecraft has been located at 55 degrees East longitude and designed for a mission life of 10 years.
- The GSAT-29 satellite carries communication transponders that will provide communication links in remote areas of India.
- The satellite will provide communication services to the Northeast region and Jammu and Kashmir to facilitate execution of Digital India initiatives, the ISRO has stated.
- The GSAT-29 satellite carries Ka/Ku-band high throughput communication transponders intended to meet the communication requirements of users including those in remote areas. In addition, several new technologies such as Q/V-band payload, data transmission through optical communication link will be demonstrated. This will help in realising future advanced satellites.