

AIR Spotlight: World Environment Day - Challenges Under India's G20 Presidency

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio News on air. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation.

This article is about the discussion on: '**On the Occasion of World Environment Day: Climate Agenda & Challenges Under India's G20 Presidency**'.

Participants:

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Context - Under India's G20 Presidency, climate change is a key priority with a primary focus towards not only climate finance and technology but also ensuring energy transition for developing nations across the world. India offers the world - Mission LiFE with an aim to adopt environmentally conscious practices.

Introduction

Environmental problems cover a vast ambit of issues such as mining, biodiversity loss, land degradation, pollution (land, water, air, soil), conservation of resources etc. India's G20 presidency promotes Mission LiFE- Lifestyle for Environment and aims to bring an integrated, comprehensive and consensus driven approach to address climate change and pursue sustainable growth. There is an urgent need to arrest land degradation, biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems as 23% of the global land area is no longer productive for agricultural use because of resource extraction and waste.

India at COP26 (2021)

India at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties ([COP26](#)) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, expressed to intensify its climate action by presenting to the world five nectar elements (Panchamrit) of India's climate action.

- India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030.
- India will meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.
- The country will reduce the total projected carbon emission by one billion tonnes by 2030.
- The carbon intensity of the economy would be reduced to less than 45% by 2030.
- The country would become carbon neutral and achieve net zero emissions by 2070.

India is seen as an emerging renewables and storage powerhouse and is one of the few countries on track to meet its targets. India has the potential to lead the world in solar electricity as it receives an enormous amount of sunshine which is less expensive than coal fired power plants. However, India needs to enhance its solar manufacturing capacity as it cannot just rely on large-scale solar deployment by importing solar equipment.

India imports 80% of its oil requirements, by switching to electric vehicles and powering them with solar energy, wind energy, hydrogen fuel and even coal will significantly reduce its oil dependence on other countries. Switching to EVs would save the government \$60 billion in imports by 2030. It would also reduce carbon emissions as EVs have zero tailpipe emissions as compared to cars using fossil fuels. The country aspires to achieve 30% electrification of its entire vehicle fleet by 2030.

ISA (International Solar Alliance) and CDRI (Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure)-

Apart from resolutely addressing climate change domestically, India has launched international coalitions such as ISA ([International Solar Alliance](#)) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

- ISA aims to address issues related to climate mitigation by managing energy access, security and transition with solar projects.
- Coalition for Disaster Risk Infrastructure ([CDRI](#)) brings together nations, multi-lateral agencies and public-private partners to address issues of infrastructure resilience more systematically and resiliently.
- At COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021, new initiatives under CDRI and ISA, viz, Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) and Green Grids Initiative—One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG) were also launched.
- Along with Sweden, India co-leads the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) for voluntary low carbon transition of hard to abate sectors.

Circular Economy -

A circular economy path adopted by India could bring in substantial annual benefits, along with reduction in pollution. The ability to maximise resource efficiency, minimise the consumption of finite resources as well as the impetus to the emergence of new business models will lead the country towards self reliance.

- In a circular economy, things are made and consumed in a way that minimises the use of the world's resources, cuts waste and reduces carbon emissions. Circular economy is an alternative to traditional linear economies where things are made, consumed and thrown away.
- For example, fly ash is a residue obtained mainly from coal fired power plants and can be used to make bricks (with other components like gypsum and lime). Fly ash bricks are lighter, stronger

and reduce plastering costs by 30%. Moreover, by putting fly-ash to productive use, pollution of water, air and soil is reduced.

Millets - Good for the Environment

Climate change is impacting agricultural production, food stability and nutritional security across multiple countries. Indian agriculture is also experiencing the severity of climate change. Given the gravity of this situation, it is imperative to create strategic and sustainable scientific solutions- a way forward is the inclusion of millets among our farming and food options.

- Millets are the traditional food crops of India. Millets are resilient food crops and require only one-third of water needed to grow rice, wheat and sugarcane.
- Millets can grow well in relatively arid environments with less irrigation and fewer inputs.
- Millets are energy rich foods with higher levels of calcium, iron, zinc, potassium, protein and amino acids. They have a lower Glycemic index (GI) property and can help in preventing type 2 diabetes.

India is leading in climate performance or efforts to mitigate climate crisis among G20 nations.