

# NEWS TODAY

## INDIA LAUNCHES GLOBAL BIOFUEL ALLIANCE (GBA) AT G20 SUMMIT

- GBA, an initiative by India, aims to serve as a catalytic platform, **fostering global collaboration** for the advancement and widespread adoption of biofuels.
- **GBA Members includes**
  - **7 G20 countries:** Argentina, Brazil, Canada, **India** Italy, South Africa, USA.
  - **4 G20 invitee countries:** Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, UAE.
  - **8 Non- G20 countries:** Iceland, Kenya, Guyana, Paraguay, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Finland.
  - **12 International organizations:** World Bank, ADB, WEF, World LPG Organization, UN Energy for All, UNIDO, Biofutures Platform, ICAO, IEA, International Energy Forum, IRENA, World Biogas Association.
- **Significance of GBA**
  - **Expedite global uptake of biofuels** through promoting **technology advancements** and **reducing dependence** on fossil fuels.
  - Facilitate **development, adoption and implementation** of internationally recognized **standards, codes, sustainability principles and regulations** to incentivize biofuels adoption and trade.
  - Aligns with India's goal of transitioning to alternative fuels and **achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.**
- **Concerns with GBA**
  - **Resistance to Transfer of Technology** from developed nations like US.
  - **Environmental concerns** like land-use changes to grow crops, water exploitation, etc.
  - Establishing a **sustainable funding mechanism** and addressing **import restrictions** on biofuels.

### ABOUT BIOFUEL

- Biofuels are renewable energy **fuels derived from biomass** like crop stubble, plant waste and municipal solid waste. It is **used in place of or in blend with, diesel, petrol** for applications like transportation etc.
- **India's Biofuels initiatives**
  - **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) initiative** to set up 5000 BioCNG plants by 2023-24.
  - **GOBAR-Dhan scheme** to set up 500 new compressed biogas plants.
  - **SAMARTH** (Sustainable Agrarian Mission on use of Agro-residue in Thermal Power Plants) scheme.

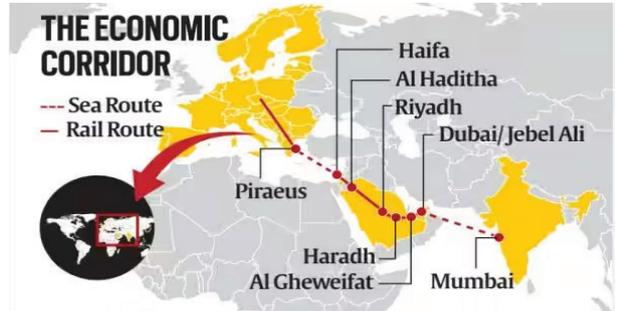
## G20 LEADERS SUMMIT ADOPTS NEW DELHI DECLARATION

### Key highlights

| Theme   | Details  |
|---|--|
| <b>Strong, Sustainable, Balanced, and Inclusive Growth</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generic Framework for Mapping Global Value Chains</b> to help members identify risks and build resilience.</li> <li>• <b>Financial Inclusion Action Plan</b> for rapidly advancing financial inclusion of individuals and MSMEs.</li> </ul>      |
| <b>Accelerating Progress on SDGs</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening <b>Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)</b> and <b>Group on Earth Observations Global Agricultural Monitoring (GEOGLAM)</b> for greater transparency to avoid food price volatility.</li> </ul>                              |
| <b>Green Development Pact for Sustainable Future</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Need of USD 5.8-5.9 trillion in pre-2030 period</b> required for developing countries, in particular for their needs to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Multilateral Institutions for 21st Century</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>UNGA 75/1 (UNSC reforms)</b> agreed for the first time in G20.</li> <li>• Roadmap for implementing the recommendations of <b>G20 Independent Review of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) Capital Adequacy Frameworks.</b></li> </ul>         |
| <b>Technological Transformation and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Global DPI Repository</b> to share best practices and experiences in development and deployment of DPI.</li> <li>• Joint Roadmap to support a <b>coordinated and comprehensive policy and regulatory framework for crypto-assets.</b></li> </ul> |
| <b>International Taxation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaffirms commitment to <b>twin pillars of international tax package.</b> (Profit allocation and nexus and Global Minimum Taxation)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Gender Equality and Empowering All Women And Girls</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a <b>full-fledged working group on women empowerment</b> to prioritize gender equality, women empowerment, and leadership.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>For Planet, People, Peace and Prosperity</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address the <b>adverse impact of Russia-Ukraine war on global economy</b> and welcome constructive initiatives that support a <b>comprehensive, just, and durable peace in Ukraine.</b></li> </ul>  |

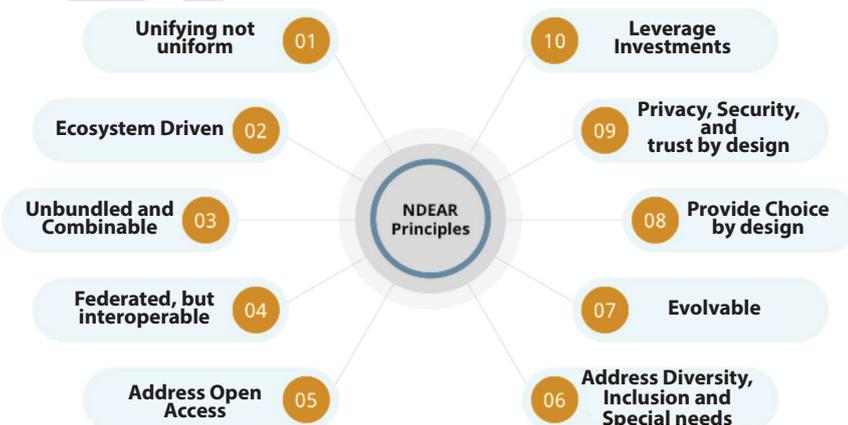
## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU) WAS SIGNED TO ESTABLISH INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC)

- MoU was signed between **India, US, Saudi Arabia, European Union, UAE, France, Germany and Italy**.
- IMEC is envisioned as a **network of transport corridors to aid economic growth** through **integration** between **Asia, Arabian Gulf, and Europe**. It includes:
  - **Railway lines** (make **trade** between India and Europe **40% faster**).
  - **Electricity cable and a clean hydrogen pipeline** to foster clean energy trade.
  - **High-speed data cable** to link innovative digital ecosystems in the world and create business opportunities.
- IMEC is a **part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)** announced in **2021 during the G7 summit in the UK**.
  - **PGII**, launched for funding infrastructure projects across the world, is seen as a **counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
    - **BRI**, launched in 2013, aims to **revive the ancient trade routes crossing to and from China**—from Rome in Europe to East Asia.
    - It led to **debt trap** to many partner countries. **Italy** now plans to **withdraw from it**.
- Another project announced under PGII is **Trans-African Corridor**.
  - It will connect **port of Lobito in Angola** with **Katanga province in Congo** and **copper belt in Zambia**.



## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MoE) ASKS STATES TO OPEN VIDYA SAMIKSHA KENDRAS (VSKs) UNDER NATIONAL DIGITAL EDUCATION ARCHITECTURE (NDEAR)

- VSK is aimed at **leveraging data and technology** to bring a leap in learning outcomes. It will act as a **data repository** which will have **data from all schemes run by MoE**.
  - Currently, a **VSK centre is housed in Central Institute of Educational Technology** building in National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) campus.
- Objective of VSK**
  - **Monitor real-time status of various projects/ activities** under ambit of Samagra Shiksha.
  - **Keep track of enrolled students** including **learning outcomes** from National Achievement Survey, **dropouts** data, support required by teachers and schools, etc.
  - **Setup centralized helpdesk for grievance redressal mechanism** for stakeholders of School ecosystem.
  - **Monitor and track field level academic and non-academic activities** at state level and empower administrators and teachers in the field to take data driven decisions.
- NDEAR aims to facilitate achieving the **goals of National Education Policy 2020 through a digital infrastructure** for innovations by, through and in the education ecosystem.
  - NDEAR is under the aegis of **MoE in collaboration with Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology**.



## AFRICAN UNION (AU) JOINS AS A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE G20 UNDER INDIA'S PRESIDENCY

- AU, launched in **2002 in Durban, South Africa** consists of **55 member states** of the African Continent.
  - It is a **successor of Organisation of African Unity**.
  - Aims to achieve **greater unity and solidarity between African countries** and accelerate its **political and socio-economic integration**.
- Significance of inclusion of AU:**
  - **G20 more representative:** G20, which earlier comprised 19 countries and the European Union, now represents about **88.9% of global GDP and 78.9% of global population**.
  - **Voice to Global South:** Strengthens the voice of Global South (developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America) **in multilateral forums**.
    - At the beginning of presidency, India also consulted 125 nations to express the voice of the Global South.
  - **Strategic gain for India:** Helpful for India to **counter China's influence** in Africa.
- Other achievements of India's Presidency:**
  - Adoption of Delhi Declaration with **100% consensus** (India was able to **bridge the divisions among great powers** that have sharpened since the **Bali summit late last year**).
  - Presidency made **"India world-ready and the world India-ready"**.
  - **India has more than doubled substantive work** from previous presidencies.
- India now **handed over the G20 Presidency gavel to Brazil**.



# MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (MoEF&CC) FORMS CENTRAL EMPOWERED COMMITTEE (CEC) ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- MoEFCC, exercising power under **Environment (Protection) Act (1986)**, constituted a **permanent statutory CEC**.
  - It will **replace an ad hoc CEC formed in 2002** for monitoring implementation of SC's order in **TN Godavarman vs Union of India (1996)**.
  - Ad hoc CEC has been reporting to SC on steps taken for **removal of encroachment, compensatory afforestation**, and other conservation issues.
- Key highlights about CEC**
  - Composition:**
    - Chairman and 3 Expert Members** selected for **3 years** (extendable once upto age of 60).
    - Chief Coordinating Officer CCO** a serving officer not below rank of **DIG of Forests/Director in GOI**.
    - Chairman and CCO should have **experience in Environment, Forest and Wildlife** (and 1 expert member for each).
  - Functions:**
    - Monitor implementation of SCs orders** and place **reports of noncompliance** before Centre.
    - Deal with any **applications made by any aggrieved person**.
    - Jurisdiction:** Whole country
    - Deferment of State:** If State is differing with CEC's recommendation, it shall be referred to Centre whose decision **shall be final and binding**.
- Concern:** Lack of representation from civil society (ad hoc panel comprised of two members of NGOs).

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)

- India will soon **allow cross-border bill payments** via BBPS for NRIs in UK.
  - The BBPS is already available to NRIs living in **Oman, Kuwait, UAE and Bahrain**.
  - Allowing cross-border bill payments is part of India's larger **digital payment push**.
- BBPS is a **Centralised Bill Payment System** for recurring payments (Electricity, Gas, DTH, Water, Telecom Postpaid, FASTag etc.)
- It was launched by **National Payments Council of India (NPCI)**.
  - NPCI is owned by a **consortium of banks**, aimed at creating **robust payments and settlement systems**.
  - It has also launched **UPI**.



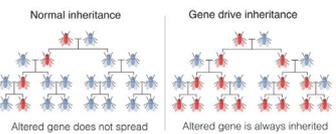
### Matsya 6000

- Under **project Samudrayaan**, Indian scientists are planning to send three people **6000 meters underwater** in an **indigenously developed submersible** called '**Matsya 6000**'.
  - Samudrayaan mission** is part of **Deep Ocean Mission**.
- Matsya 6000** is being designed and developed by **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai** under Ministry of Earth Sciences.
  - It will facilitate in **exploring deep sea mineral resources rich in Nickel, Cobalt, Rare Earths, Manganese**, etc., and collection of samples, for further analysis.
  - It has an **endurance of 12 hours** under normal operation and 96 hours in case of emergency for human safety.



### Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD's) Initiatives to Reshape Disability Rights Landscape

- DEPWD will launch 5 initiatives to **foster inclusivity, advance disability rights, and harness technology** to improve lives of PwDs.
- Initiatives include:**
  - MoU with Council of Architecture:** To mandate universal accessibility courses in Bachelor of Architecture programs.
  - Release of Anonymous Data of UDID (Unique Disability ID):** To facilitate data-driven decision-making in disability sector.
  - PM Daksh Portal:** Comprehensive digital platform for PwDs seeking training and employment opportunities, etc.
  - Pathways to Access- Courts on Disability Rights:** Compilation of notable Supreme Court and High Courts judgments into a booklet.
  - Online Case Monitoring Portal by CCPD (Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities):** To handle grievances filed by PwDs.

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <p><b>Goa Roadmap for Tourism</b></p>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● G20's Delhi Declaration underlined the significance of '<b>Goa Roadmap for Tourism</b>' as a vehicle to achieve SDGs.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It identifies <b>five priority areas</b> in Tourism - <b>Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs, and Destination Management.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Delhi Declaration also noted the launch of '<b>Travel for LiFE</b>' initiative, which nudges tourists and tourist businesses to take simple actions having tremendous significance for environment protection and climate action.</li> <li>● Further, Ministry of Tourism and UN World Tourism Organization has launched <b>G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard</b> which will serve as a <b>global repository</b>, showcasing <b>best practices and case studies</b> of sustainable tourism practices and policies from G20 nations.</li> </ul> |
|  <p><b>Marrakesh</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Morocco has experienced an earthquake of 6.8 magnitude with its <b>epicentre near Marrakesh.</b></li> <li>● Marrakesh is situated west of the foothills of <b>Atlas Mountains.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ancient section of Marrakesh - <b>Medina</b> - has been designated as a <b>UNESCO World Heritage Site.</b></li> <li>➤ Marrakesh Agreement, establishing the <b>World Trade Organization</b>, was signed in 1994.</li> <li>➤ World Intellectual Property Organization administered <b>Marrakesh Treaty</b> makes the production and international <b>transfer of specially-adapted books for people with blindness or visual impairments</b> easier.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
|  <p><b>Gene-drive technology</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gene drive technology has been used in outdoor trials in India, Brazil, and Panama to <b>genetically manipulate mosquitoes.</b></li> <li>● <b>Gene drive</b> is a type of genetic engineering technique that <b>modifies genes and selectively inherits certain genes.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It can be used to <b>exterminate insects such as mosquitoes</b> that can spread malaria, dengue, and Zika virus.</li> <li>➤ Gene drives can be used to <b>control invasive species like rodents.</b></li> <li>➤ It does <b>not follow Mendelian inheritance rule</b> which refers to certain patterns of <b>how traits are passed from parents to offspring.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
|  <p><b>DCGI issues alert on two fake drugs</b></p>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DCGI flagged safety alerts against falsified versions of <b>Defitalio and Adcetris drugs</b> in four countries including India.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Defitalio</b> is used for treatment of a serious condition where <b>vessels in the liver are blocked.</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Adcetris</b> is used for treatment of a type of <b>blood cancer.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● DCGI <b>heads the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CDSCO, under the <b>Ministry of Health and Family Welfare</b>, is the Central Drug Authority under the <b>Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
|  <p><b>Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE)</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MOXIE, <b>NASA's oxygen-generating instrument</b> on <b>Perseverance Mars Rover</b>, has successfully completed its Mars mission.</li> <li>● MOXIE produces <b>molecular oxygen through an electrochemical process that separates one oxygen atom from each molecule of carbon dioxide</b> pumped in from Mars' thin atmosphere.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It has proved to be a <b>viable technology for astronauts on Mars to produce oxygen for fuel and breathing.</b></li> <li>➤ It was developed by researchers at <b>Massachusetts Institute of Technology.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
|  <p><b>Konark Sun Temple</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Also known as Black Pagoda, the Temple is <b>situated in Puri (Odisha)</b>, and is dedicated to <b>Sun God.</b></li> <li>● It was established in <b>13th century by King Narasimhadeva-I of Eastern Ganga dynasty.</b></li> <li>● It is built in <b>Kalinga architecture</b> and designed as a <b>Chariot drawn by 7 horses and has 12 pairs of wheels</b> (signifying 12 months of year).</li> <li>● Each wheel consists of 8 wider spokes and 8 inner spoke that <b>represent the 8 time divisions</b> of the day.</li> <li>● It is a <b>UNESCO World Heritage Site.</b></li> </ul>   |
|  <p><b>'Banglar mati, Banglar jol'</b></p>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● West Bengal declared <b>Rabindranath Tagore's</b> Banglar mati, Banglar jol as its <b>state anthem.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ West Bengal Assembly also passed resolution making <b>Poila Baishakh</b> (first day of the Bengali calendar i.e. April 15) as the <b>statehood day.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Song was written during the <b>Banga Bhanga movement</b> against the partition and <b>promotes communal harmony</b> through <b>Raksha Bandhan.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tagore also composed <b>Amar sonar Bangla</b> (national anthem of Bangladesh) and <b>Vande Mataram</b> (national song of India).</li> <li>➤ He won <b>Nobel Prize</b> for Literature in 1913 for his <b>collection Gitanjali.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |