

23rd Aug -29th Aug Weekly Compilation

(The Hindu+ Indian Express + PIB + Other World Wide News)

❖ **Kilauea Volcano**

(Source: Express)

Why in News: Scientists are on alert for a possible eruption of Hawaii's Kilauea Volcano within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Kilauea Volcano

- Kilauea, also called Mount Kilauea, is located in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the southeastern part of the island of Hawaii, U.S.A.
- It is an active shield volcano. Historically, it is the most active of the five volcanoes that together form the Big Island of Hawaii.
- Kilauea's slopes merge with those of the nearby volcano Mauna Loa on the west and north.
- It ranks among the world's most active volcanoes. It is an elongated dome built of lava eruptions from a central crater and from lines of craters extending along east and southwest rifts, or fissures.



❖ **Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP Nxt)**

(PIB & Express)

Why in News: NITI Aayog and Cisco have launched the next phase of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) called "WEP Nxt".

WEP Nxt

WEP Nxt is the next phase of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP). It will use Cisco's technology and experience working with India's startup ecosystem to enable more women-owned businesses across the country.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

- It is launched by NITI Aayog in 2017
- It is a one-of-its-kind, unified information portal for women entrepreneurs.
- The portal brings together women from diverse backgrounds and offers them access to a multitude of resources, support and learning.
- The platform caters to six focus areas:
 - Funding & Financial Management,
 - Incubation Connects,
 - Taxation & Compliance Support,
 - Entrepreneur Skilling & Mentorship,
 - Community & Networking and
 - Marketing Assistance

❖ **SAMRIDH Scheme**

(Source: PIB)

Why in News: The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has launched the SAMRIDH Scheme.

SAMRIDH Scheme

Start-up Accelerators of MeitY for product Innovation, Development and growth (SAMRIDH)

- Its aim is to create a conducive platform for Indian Software Product start-ups to enhance their products and secure investments for scaling their business.
- **Implementation: MeitY Start-up Hub (MSH)**

Features of the Scheme

- Firstly, the scheme will focus on accelerating the 300 start-ups by providing customer connect, investor connect, and international immersion in the next three years.
- Secondly, an investment of up to ₹ 40 lakh to the start-up based on the current valuation and growth stage of the Start-Up will be provided through selected accelerators.

India is currently the third-largest Unicorn hub globally, with 63 Unicorns having a total valuation of 168 Billion USD. The program aims to further the Indian start-up growth and create at least 100 unicorns out of the selected startups.

❖ **MANTHAN 2021**

(PIB)

Why in News: Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) have jointly launched MANTHAN-2021.

MANTHAN-2021

- It is organized by Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) in coordination with the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education and AICTE.
- Manthan is a hackathon based on national interests and challenges faced by our intelligence agencies in the fields such as Fake Content Detection, Cybercrime, Image, Video and Data Analytics, etc.

BPR&D

- BPR&D was established in 1970 with the objective of modernisation of police forces. It functions under the aegis of Union Home Ministry. It replaced the Police Research and Advisory Council formed in 1966.
- It is a nodal national police organisation to study, research and develop on subjects and issues related to policing.

Innovation Cell

- Innovation cell is an initiative of the Ministry of Education to foster the culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country.
- It has been established at All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) premises.
- To encourage and nurture young students by exposing them to new ideas resulting in innovative activities in their formative years, fostered through Network of Innovation Clubs (NIC) in Higher Educational Institutions.

❖ Greater Male Connectivity Project

(Hindu)

Why in News: Recently, Afcons, an Indian company, has signed a contract for the largest-ever infrastructure project in Maldives which is the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).

India and Maldives have signed a pact for the construction of a \$500 million Greater Male Connectivity Project.

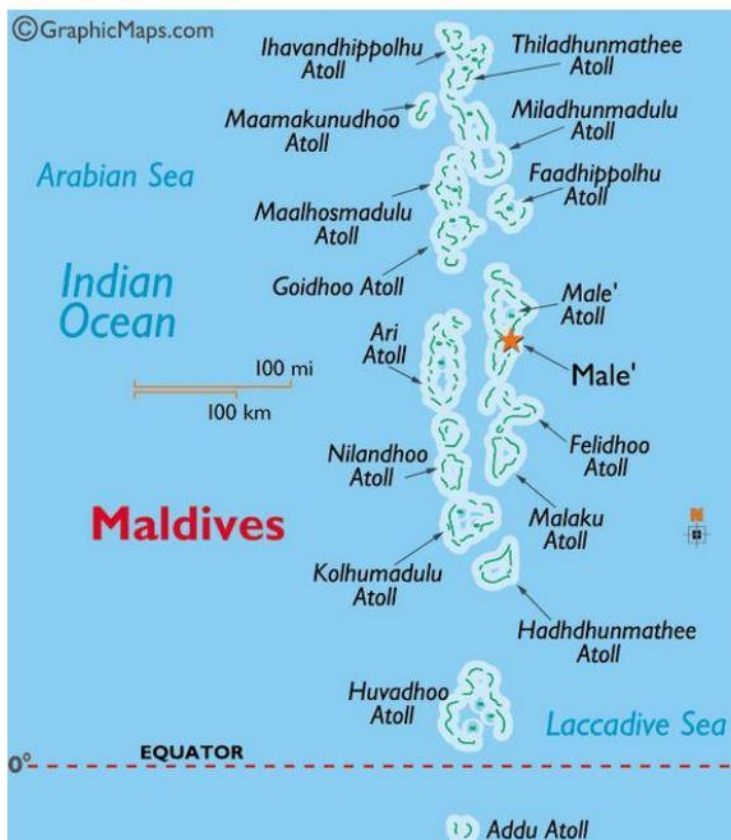
Greater Male Connectivity Project

- Greater Male Connectivity Project is the largest ever infrastructure project in the Maldives.
- **The project involves the construction of a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link that will connect the Maldives capital Malé with the neighbouring islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.**

- The project was funded by India in a grant of \$100 million with a line of credit of \$400 million.

Significance of the Project

- The project is significant because it facilitates inter-island connectivity in the country.
- This is needed as 40% of the entire population of the Maldives lives in Malé making it one of the most densely populated cities in the world.
- Hence, the development of other inhabited islands by inter-connectivity and equipping them with civic facilities would incentivize people to relocate to other islands, reducing the burden on Malé.



❖ North Eastern Region District SDG Index

(Source: PIB)

Why in News: NITI Aayog has released the first edition of the North Eastern Region District SDG Index and Dashboard 2021–22.

North Eastern Region District SDG Index

- It is developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). The index has been developed with the technical inputs from the United Nations Development Program.
- **Objective:** To measure the performance of the districts of the eight North Eastern States on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and their corresponding targets and ranks the districts based on the same.
- Eight states include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura

- The index is based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index; the principal and official tool for monitoring progress on the SDGs at the national and State/ Union Territory levels.
- The index utilizes 84 indicators that cover 15 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) across 50 targets.

Rankings

- **East Sikkim district ranks first in the index, followed by districts Gomati and North Tripura in the second position.**
- Out of the 103 districts considered for the ranking, 64 districts belonged to the Front Runner category while 39 districts were in the Performer category in the composite score and ranking of districts.
- All districts in Sikkim and Tripura fall in the Front Runner category, and there are no districts in the Aspirant or Achiever categories.

❖ e-Shram Portal

(Source: PIB)

Why in News: The Minister for Labour and Employment has formally launched the e-Shram portal.

e-Shram portal

- e-Shram portal has been developed for creating a National Database of the Unorganized Workers(NDUW).
- Its objective is to implement social security schemes for the unorganized workers.

Key Features of the Portal

- There are no income criteria for registering on e-SHRAM as an unorganized worker. However, one should not be an income tax payee. Any worker who is unorganized and aged between 16-59 is eligible to register on the e-SHRAM portal.
- **Documents like the Aadhaar Number, mobile number, Aadhaar linked bank account will be required by the worker to register on the portal.**
- If a worker does not have an Aadhaar linked mobile number, he can visit the nearest Common Service Centre (CSC) and register through Biometric authentication.
- **After registering, workers shall be issued an e-Shram card with a 12 digit unique Universal Account Number (UAN), It will be used to access the benefits of the various social security schemes through this Card anywhere anytime.**

- Moreover, the workers registered on the portal would be given accidental insurance cover. They will be also eligible for Rs 2 lakh on death or permanent disability and Rs 1 lakh in case of partial disability.

❖ **SUJALAM**

(Source: PIB)

Why in News: Ministry of Jal Shakti has recently launched “Sujalam”, a 100 days campaign as part of “Azadi ka Amrit Mahaotsav”. The campaign is meant for Greywater management & ODF sustainability.

Sujalam campaign

- It aims to achieve Open defecation free (ODF) plus status for Villages across the Country in an accelerated manner
- It seeks to create more ODF Plus Villages by Undertaking Waste Water Management at Village Level
- This will be done by creating 1 million Soak-pits and other Greywater management activities.

Focus Area of the campaign

- Organizing Community consultations and Gram Sabha meetings to analyze the current situation
- Pass resolution to maintain ODF sustainability
- Develop a 100 days plan to undertake sustainability and soak pit construction-related activities
- Construction of 1 million soak pits
- Retrofitting of toilets
- Access to toilets for new households

Grey water (Add on Info)

Grey water refers to domestic wastewater that is generated in households or office buildings from streams without faecal contamination. Grey water includes all streams of water except wastewater from toilets. The sources of grey water include showers, sinks, baths, dishwashers and washing machines.

❖ **Animal Discoveries 2020**

(Source: Down to Earth and The Hindu)

Why in News: The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has released a document titled “Animal Discoveries 2020”. ZSI has been publishing this document since 2007.

Key Findings of the Document

- India has added 557 new species to its fauna (animal life). This includes 407 new species and 150 new records. With this, the number of faunal species in India has reached around 1.02 lakh species.
- Among new species discovered, invertebrates constitute the majority when compared to vertebrates. Among invertebrates, insects dominated the most, whereas Pisces and reptiles dominated among vertebrates.

State-wise: The highest number of new species were discovered from Karnataka (66 species), followed by Kerala (51 species). Also in 2020, 46 new species were discovered from Rajasthan and 30 from West Bengal.

State-wise based on New Records: In terms of new records or species recorded in the country for the first time, Arunachal Pradesh had the highest (20 new records).

New Species discovered: Among the new species, some interesting species discovered in 2020 are:

- *Trimeresurus salazar*, a new species of green pit viper discovered from Arunachal Pradesh
- *Lycodon deccanensis*, the Deccan wolf snake discovered from Karnataka;
- *Sphaerotheca Bengaluru*, a new species of burrowing frog named after the city of Bengaluru
- *Xyrias anjaalai*, a new deepwater species of snake eel from Kerala;
- *Glyptothorax giudikyensis*, a new species of catfish from Manipur; and
- *Clyster galateansis*, a new species of scarab beetles from the Great Nicobar Biosphere.

Species recorded for the first time in India: Some newly recorded species include:

- *Myotis cf. frater*, a bat species are earlier known from China, Taiwan and Russia, has been reported for the first time from Uttarakhand in India;
- *Zoothera citrina gibsonhilli*, an Orange-headed thrush earlier known from southern Myanmar to south Thailand (central Malay peninsula), which was reported for the first time from India based on a collection made from the Narcondam island in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

India is a mega bio-diverse country, with 23.39% of its geographical area under forest and tree cover. India is positioned 8th in mega biodiversity countries in the world.

❖ **Eco Sensitive Zone**

(The Hindu)

Why in News: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam as an Eco-sensitive zone (ESZ).

Deepor Beel

- Deepor Beel is a perennial freshwater lake located 10 km south-west of Guwahati city, Assam.
- Deepor Beel was designated a Ramsar site in 2002. It is the only Ramsar site in Assam.
- It is also an important bird sanctuary (IBA) habituating many migrant species.

Deepor Beel constitutes a unique habitat for aquatic flora and avian fauna. About 150 species of birds have been recorded in the sanctuary, out of which two are critically endangered, one endangered, five vulnerable and four near-threatened.

Moreover, Elephants regularly visit the wetland from adjoining Rani and Garbhanga Reserve Forest. Further, the wetland is an integral part of the elephant habitat.

Eco-sensitive zone (ESZ)

- It is an area notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- Notifications declaring areas as ESZ are issued under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986.
- The main aim behind ESZs is to regulate certain activities, to minimise the negative impacts of such activities on the fragile ecosystem surrounding the protected areas.
- Activities prohibited in the eco-sensitive zone are hydroelectric projects, brick kilns, commercial use of firewood, and discharge of untreated effluents in natural water bodies or land areas among others.

❖ **BRICS Agriculture Research Platform**

(The Hindu)

Why in News: The Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has announced the operationalization of the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform.

BRICS Agriculture Research Platform

- The platform was established at the 11th meeting of BRICS Agriculture Ministers under the theme **BRICS Partnership for Strengthening Agro biodiversity for Food Security and Nutrition**.
- It is a global platform that has been set up for strengthening the cooperation in the field of agricultural research & innovations amongst the BRICS member States.
- Its objective is to promote sustainable agricultural development and poverty alleviation through strategic cooperation in agriculture to provide food security in the BRICS member countries.
- The Cooperation will focus on agricultural research, technology, policy, innovations, extension and technology transfer training and capacity building and information sharing.
- The BRICS Nations have appointed their focal points for BRICS-ARP to interact virtually through the platform and identify the common problems and develop joint projects for finding the solutions.
- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is the focal organization from India.**

❖ **Children's Climate Risk Index**

(Source: The Hindu)

Why in News: A recent report by UNICEF has stated the children's across the globe are vulnerable to climate crisis. Article details the findings of the report

Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI)

- **Recently UNICEF along with 'Fridays with Future' launched a new report called "The Climate Crisis Is a Child's Rights Crisis" highlighting the impact of climate change on the lives of children.**
- The report introduces the new Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI), a composite index that ranks nations based on children's exposure to climate shocks, providing the first comprehensive look at how exactly children are affected by the climate crisis

Highlights

- Approximately 1 billion children nearly half the world's child population live in countries that are at an "extremely high risk" from climate impacts
- Almost every single child on the planet has been exposed to at least one climate or environmental stressor, such as air pollution, flooding, heat waves, tropical storms, flooding or drought.
- The report found that children are "highly exposed" to exceedingly high levels of air pollution, water scarcity, heat waves, vector-borne diseases, tropical storms and coastal flooding.

- The 33 extremely high-risk countries for children including the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau collectively are responsible for a mere 9% of global carbon dioxide emissions, reflecting deep inequity regarding who must ultimately deal with the consequences of climate change.

❖ **UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)** **(The Hindu)**

Why in News: The Taliban Sanctions Committee will hold an important meeting to discuss the renewal of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

- UNAMA is a UN Special Political Mission established to assist the state and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.
- UNAMA was established in 2002 by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1401.
- Its original mandate was to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. Reviewed annually, this mandate has been altered over time to reflect the needs of Afghanistan.
- **Bonn Agreement** was the initial series of agreements passed in 2001 and intended to recreate the State of Afghanistan following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Taliban Sanctions Committee is also known as the 1988 Sanctions Committee. The committee oversees the sanctions measures imposed by the Security Council. The Committee comprises all 15 members of the Security Council and makes its decision by consensus. The current Chair of the Committee, for the period ending 31st December 2021, is India.

❖ **Phagocytic Cell** **(Down to Earth)**

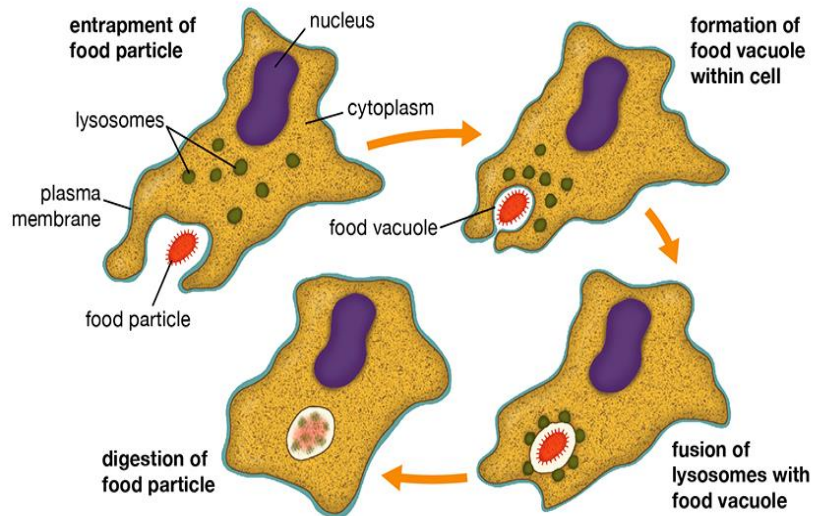
Why in News: A new study has identified for the first time that specialised immune cells (phagocytic cells) exist in certain varieties of sea corals and anemones. These cells help understand how the organisms protect themselves from viruses and bacteria in the marine ecosystem.

Key findings of the study

The newly discovered phagocytic cells were identified in cauliflower coral and starlet sea anemone. At least three percent of the total cell population of these organisms are phagocytic that fight infections.

Phagocytosis

- It is the process by which certain living cells called phagocytes ingest or engulf other cells or particles.
- The phagocyte may be a free-living one-celled organism, such as an amoeba, or one of the body cells, such as a white blood cell.
- In some forms of animal life, such as amoebas and sponges, phagocytosis is a means of feeding.
- In higher animals phagocytosis is chiefly a defensive reaction against infection and invasion of the body by foreign substances (antigens).



Sea anemones

They are sometimes called the 'flowers of the sea', sea anemones are actually beautiful animals, they are a close relative of coral and jellyfish, and are the marine, predatory animals of the order Actiniaria. They are found from the tidal zone of all oceans to depths of more than 10,000 meters.

❖ 'Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) and World Week (Express and PIB)

Why in News: The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) recently hosted a Meet & Mingle session on 'Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM): Stakeholder Engagement on the Stockholm World Water Week 2021.

World Water week

- World Water Week is the leading annual global event for concretely addressing the planet's major water issues. The world water week is hosted and conducted by Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).
- **The theme for 2021 is Building Resilience Faster.**

Integrated River Basin Management

- Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) emphasis on cross-disciplinary coordination of water, land and related resources in a river basin, watershed or catchment to achieve long-term sustainability.
- IRBM highlights the importance of ecosystem function in the long term and reminds us that integration of policies, decisions and costs are necessary across a multitude of sectors.

River Ganga is the largest river basin in India and has recognition of being an international basin. A large section of the Indian population is living in the River Ganga Basin and directly connects with human life in various ways. But the basin faces multi-faceted issues related to ecology, environment, economy, food security and so on. So India needs an IRBM for the Ganga basin.

- The NMCG has developed the Ganga River Basin Management Plan (GRBMP) in a consortium with IITs. The plan covers the issue of pollution and suggested solutions, with a focus on retaining the water quality and quantity.
- The other challenges related to Environmental flow, wetland conservation and development, wildlife protection and so on are key elements covered under the GRBMP
- The GRBMP is being implemented by NMCG in a sustainable manner by involvement with Public-Private Partnerships.

Key points from the NMCG session

- The session mentioned that India should focus on the importance of stakeholder engagement including fisheries, agriculture, forestry, and others with aim of successful implementation of IRBM in the Ganga River Basin.
- There is a need to learn from international experiences and understand the characteristics and challenges faced.
- The current structure having Ganga Prahari and Ganga Mitra at village levels and state level need to be escalated at different scales and regions.
- Adopt a bottom-up approach by empowering the district level government bodies and start initiatives including small rivers as they contribute to Ganga River Basin Management.
- Develop basin wise data collection system, budget-wise approaches to support IRBM implementation and data development on small streams.

❖ Operation Dev Shakti

(Source: PIB)

Why in News: India has given a name to its operation to evacuate its citizens from war-torn Afghanistan. It has called the operation as 'Operation Devi Shakti'.

Operation Devi Shakti

Under this Operation, Indians and foreign nationals are being evacuated from Afghanistan following the Taliban's takeover of the nation.

Former Evacuation Operations of India

- **Operation Raahat:** It was launched by the Indian Armed Forces, to evacuate Indian citizens and foreign nationals of 41 countries from Yemen during the 2015 Yemen Crisis.
- **Operation Maitri:** It was a rescue and relief operation in Nepal carried out by the government of India and Indian armed forces in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal earthquake.
- **Operation Safe Homecoming:** It was an operation launched by the Indian government in 2011 to evacuate its citizens, fleeing from the Libyan Civil War.
- **Operation Sukoon:** It was an operation carried out by the Indian Navy to evacuate Indian, Sri Lankan and Nepalese nationals from the conflict zone during the 2006 Lebanon War.

❖ Forum for Decarbonizing Transport

(Source: PIB)

Why in News: NITI Aayog and World Resources Institute (WRI), India jointly launched the 'Forum for Decarbonizing Transport' in India as part of the NDC-Transport Initiative for Asia (NDC-TIA) project.

Forum for Decarbonizing Transport

- The forum will be a one-stop platform for initiating dialogues between the stakeholders and partners that will help in achieving specific results in reducing emissions from the transport sector.
- It will work in close coordination with all the stakeholders to formulate strategies and develop appropriate business models to accelerate electric mobility in India.

In India, transport is the third most CO₂ emitting sector with road transport contributing to more than 90% of total CO₂ emissions.

The Indian government through its various policies is promoting de-carbonization of transport with a major focus on electric mobility. Hence, a coordinated effort like this forum will help enable investment, encourage adoption, and ensure fair operation in the EV industry.

NDC-Transport Initiative for Asia (NDC-TIA) project

- NDC-TIA is a joint program of seven organisations that will engage China, India, and Vietnam in promoting a comprehensive approach to de-carbonizing transport in their respective countries.
- It is supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Ministry for the Environment and Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).
- **NITI Aayog is the implementing partner for the India component of the project.**

❖ **Ubharte Sitaare**

(Source: Hindu)

Why in News: Recently, the Ministry of Finance has launched 'Ubharte Sitaare' Alternative Investment Fund to facilitate debt and equity funding to export-oriented MSMEs (Micro Small and medium Enterprises).

Alternative Investment Fund

- Anything alternative to traditional forms of investments gets categorized as alternative investments. In India, AIFs are defined in Regulation 2(1) (b) of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations, 2012.
- It refers to any privately pooled investment fund, (whether from Indian or foreign sources), in the form of a trust or a company or a body corporate or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), which are not presently covered by any Regulation of SEBI governing fund management nor coming under the direct regulation of any other sectoral regulators in India.
- Thus, the definition of AIFs includes venture Capital Fund, hedge funds, private equity funds, commodity funds, Debt Funds, infrastructure funds, etc.

'Ubharte Sitaare' Alternative Investment Fund

Its aim is to provide debt and equity funding to export-oriented MSMEs as well as providing them with the required technological support to make their businesses more competitive.

The fund has been set up jointly by Exim Bank and SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India)

Objectives of the Fund

- To enhance India's competitiveness in select sectors through finance and extensive handholding support
- To identify and nurture companies having differentiated technology, products or processes, and enhance their export business;

- To assist units with export potential which are unable to scale up their operations for want of finance;
- To identify and mitigate challenges faced by successful companies which hinder their exports;
- To assist existing exporters in widening their basket of products and target new markets through a strategic and structured export market development initiative.

Key Features of the Fund

The fund will support Indian companies that are future champions with good export potential. It can be supported even if it is currently underperforming or may be unable to tap its latent potential to grow.

❖ National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) (PIB)

Why in News: The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd has commissioned the largest floating solar PV project in Andhra Pradesh.

Largest Floating Solar PV Project

- The largest Floating Solar PV Project of 25MW is located on the reservoir of Simhadri thermal station in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- This is the first solar project to be set up under the Flexibilisation Scheme.
- The project has the potential to generate electricity from more than 1 lakh solar PV modules. This would not only help to light around 7,000 households but also ensure CO2 emission reduction of at least 46,000 tons every year during the lifespan of this project.
- The project is also expected to save 1,364 million liters of water per annum. This would be adequate to meet the yearly water requirements of 6,700 households.

Flexibilisation Scheme

- Flexibilisation Scheme was launched by the Government of India in the year 2018.
- The scheme allows power generation companies to meet their supply obligations via renewable power instead of thermal power alone.
- Under the scheme, any power generating company having coal/lignite/gas-based thermal generating stations may establish or procure renewable energy generating capacity anywhere in the country, either at existing stations or at new locations.