

DIWALI OR DEEPAVALI, ALSO KNOWN AS THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, IS ONE OF THE MOST AUSPICIOUS HINDU FESTIVALS CELEBRATED WITH MUCH POMP AROUND THE COUNTRY.



About:

- Diwali, which is the festival of lights, stands for the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and falls on the day of 'amavasya' or new moon in the Hindu month of Kartik.

- It usually falls in mid-October and mid-November on Kartik Amavasya.
- The festival is extended over five days, beginning with Dhanteras and ending with Bhai Dooj.

History and Significance:

- According to Hindu mythology, the legends associate Diwali with Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya with his wife, Mata Sita, and brother, Lakshman, after spending 14 years in exile and defeating the King of Lanka, Ravan.
- People of Ayodhya marked the occasion by lighting rows of lamps and diyas.
- The tradition has continued to date and is celebrated as the festival of Diwali.

Regional Variations:

- In Chennai and Tamil Nadu, people observe Narak Chaturdashi.
- In West Bengal, devotees worship Goddess Kali rather than Goddess Lakshmi on the third day of Diwali.

A RENEWABLE ENERGY REVOLUTION, ROOTED IN AGRICULTURE

Context

- The first bio-energy plant of a private company has commenced its commercial operations in Sangrur district of Punjab recently.

- The plant will produce Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) from paddy straw, thus converting agricultural waste into wealth, indicating the beginnings of a renewable energy revolution rooted in agriculture.

About the plant

- Constructed by Verbio AG, one of Germany's leading bio-energy companies, the plant will utilize about 2.1 million tonnes of a total of 18.32 million tonnes of paddy straw annually.
- The plant will daily produce about 600-650 tonnes of fermented organic manure, which can be used for organic farming and will also reduce stubble-burning on 40,000-45,000 acres translating into an annual reduction of 1.5 lakh tonnes of CO₂ emissions.
- This project to use paddy straw to produce CBG is one that is replicable across India, and can transform the rural economy.

Background

- It has become common practice among farmers in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh to dispose of paddy stubble and the biomass by setting it on fire to prepare fields for the next crop, which has to be sown in a window of three to four weeks.
- Since this practice is spread over millions of hectares, the resultant clouds of smoke engulf the entire National Capital Territory of Delhi and neighbouring States for several weeks between October to December.

Impact of stubble burning

- **Pollution:** It emits large amounts of toxic pollutants in the atmosphere containing harmful gases like methane (CH₄), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Volatile Organic compounds (VOC) and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.
 - These pollutants after dispersal adversely affect human and livestock health by causing a thick blanket of smog.
- **Soil Fertility:** Husk burning on the ground destroys the nutrients in the soil, making it less fertile.
- **Heat Penetration:** The heat generated by stubble burning penetrates into the soil, leading to the loss of moisture and useful microbes.

- **Soil biochemistry:** Stubble burning alters the soil properties like soil temperature, pH, moisture, available phosphorus and soil organic matter.

Measures taken to contain stubble burning

- **Penal action:** Crop residue burning was notified as an offence under the Air Act of 1981, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and various appropriate Acts.
 - In addition, a penalty is being imposed on any offending farmer. Village and block-level administrative officials are being used for enforcement.
- **Broad plan:** The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) had developed a framework and action plan for the effective prevention and control of stubble burning.
 - It includes **in-situ management**, e., incorporation of paddy straw and stubble in the soil using heavily subsidised machinery, supported by crop residue management (CRM) Scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
 - **About CRM Scheme:** The Central Sector Scheme aims to address the problem of air pollution caused due to stubble burning by subsidizing the machinery required for in-situ management of crop residue.
- **Pusa Decomposer:** It is a microbial consortium of fungal species (both in liquid and capsule forms) developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), that has been found effective for rapid in-situ decomposition of paddy straw.
- **PAU Smart Seeder machine :** The Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) Smart Seeder has been included in the Crop Residue Management (CRM) subsidy scheme recently.
 - The **PAU smart seeder** manages paddy residues by incorporation and surface mulching and thus smartly retains the benefits of both Happy Seeder and Super Seeder in a single machine.
 - **About Happy seeder machine:** It is a tractor-operated machine that cuts and lifts the paddy stubble (straw) while simultaneously sowing the wheat crop and spreading the cut straw as mulch over fields.

- **About Super-seeder machine:** It helps plough the standing paddy residue and sow seeds for the next wheat crop, in a single operation. The machine is technologically superior to the Happy Seeder and is more expensive.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Information dissemination via kisan camps, trainings and workshops, apart from campaigns through various print media, televised shows and radio telecast, informing farmers about the alternative usage of crop residue and health effects of crop residue burning .
- **Crop Diversification:** Long-term efforts aimed at diversification of cropping techniques, is being attempted through cultivation of alternate crops (apart from rice/paddy and wheat) that produce less crop residue and have greater gap periods between cropping cycles.
- **SATAT scheme:** The Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation scheme aims at setting up Compressed Bio-Gas production plants and makes them available in the market for use in automotive fuels by inviting Expression of Interest from potential entrepreneurs.
- The Indian Biogas Association has recommended setting up testing labs in all States to achieve the SATAT target, which aims to establish 5,000 compressed biogas (CBG) plants by 2025.

LIKE MINDED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LMDC) GROUP

Union Minister for Environment Forest and Climate change recently participated in Ministerial Meeting of Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC).



About:

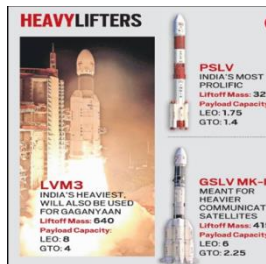
- It comprises of around 18 developing countries from Asia and other regions.
- India is part of the LMDC grouping along with Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and others.
- It represents about 50 per cent of the world's population.
- It usually presents a common front at climate negotiations.

ISRO'S HEAVIEST ROCKET SUCCESSFULLY PLACES 36 SATELLITES IN ORBIT

In News:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) heaviest rocket Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3 or GSLV Mark 3) has successfully orbited 36 satellites of U.K.-based OneWeb.
- It was launched under LVM3-M2 / OneWeb India-1 Mission.
- LVM3-M2 is the dedicated commercial satellite mission of New Space India Limited (NSIL).
- NSIL is a Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Space, Government of India.

India's rockets



- India currently has three operational launch vehicles:
 - **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle or PSLV;**
 - The PSLV has been the most commonly used, having carried as many as 53 successful missions since 1993.
 - Only two flights of PSLV have failed.
 - **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle or GSLV Mk-II;**
 - GSLV Mk-II has been used in 14 missions, of which four have ended in failures.
 - **Launch Vehicle Mark-3 or LVM3**
 - The LVM3 has flown five times, including the Chandrayaan 2 mission, and has never disappointed.
 - In addition, ISRO has been working on a reusable launch vehicle (RLV). Unlike other rockets, the RLV would not end up in space as waste.
 - It can be brought back and refurbished for use multiple times.

About GSLV MKIII (now renamed as Launch Vehicle Mark 3):

- GSLV MkIII is configured as a three stage vehicle with two solid strap-on motors, one liquid core stage and a high thrust cryogenic upper stage.
- **Characteristics of GSLV MKIII:**
 - Performance capability of 4.3 ton to GTO
 - Payload capability to support 10 ton to LEO missions

- A low Earth orbit (LEO) is an orbit that is relatively close to Earth's surface at an altitude of between 160 to 2,000 km.
 - Cost effective
 - Improved reliability, operability and redundancy management
 - Future growth potential of payload with minimal design changes
- Later, the payload capability of GSLV MKIII will be increased upto 6 tons to GTO.
- A satellite in the GTO, orbits (at an altitude of ~37,000 km) the Earth once per day, keeping the satellite in roughly the same area over the ground.
 - To support manned missions (like Gaganyaan mission) of Indian Space Programme
- Human rated GSLV MkIII is identified as the launch vehicle for Gaganyaan mission.
- Gaganyaan programme aims at carrying three Crew to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and bring them back safely to a predetermined location on Earth.

RISHI SUNAK BECOMES BRITAIN'S FIRST NON-WHITE PRIME MINISTER


In News:

- United Kingdom got its first-ever non-white Prime Minister in Rishi Sunak, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer and Britain's youngest Prime Minister in recent times.
- Sunak, 42, is of Indian descent and was born to parents who migrated to Britain from East Africa.

The way to No. 10

Rishi Sunak on Tuesday made history by becoming Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister. Charting his rise to the top:

<p>2015: Sunak is elected Conservative MP for Richmond, Yorkshire</p> <p>2018: Under Prime Minister Theresa May, he is given his first ministerial job as number three at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</p> <p>July 2019: He endorses Boris Johnson for PM and is rewarded by the new leader with a job as Treasury Minister under then Chancellor Sajid Javid</p> <p>February 2020: After Javid resigns over a power battle, Johnson promotes Sunak to the role of Chancellor – making him the first</p>	<p>Minister of Indian origin to hold one of the highest offi in the British government</p> <p>July 2022: Sunak resigns a Chancellor</p> <p>July 8: He launches bid to succeed Johnson</p> <p>July 20: He races ahead wii 137 votes as the front-runnn to face off Liz Truss</p> <p>September 5: Truss defeats Sunak in th Conservative Part leadership race to become the new</p> <p>October 19: Tru resigns amid an open revolt</p> <p>October 25: Sunak becomes Britain's fir Indian-origin Prime Mini</p>
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Rishi Sunak took charge as the 57th Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He takes over the reins at a time when the UK is facing one of its gravest economic and political crises in recent times.

He is the country's third PM in 50 days after first Boris Johnson and then Liz Truss were forced from office by a rebellion within the ruling Conservative Party.

Challenges faced by Sunak

- **A Stagnant Economy**

- In terms of overall output (in US\$), the economy has been largely stagnant since the start of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis.
- The decision to leave the EU made matters worse. It became tougher for the UK to trade with its closest trading partners in Europe.
- The higher compliance costs hit small businesses. Several businesses were forced to move out of the UK in order to protect their market share.
- The Covid disruption and the war in Ukraine further affected the British economy.

- **Derailed Government Finances**

- According to one report, in 2018–19, revenues were sufficient to cover day-to-day (current) spending.
- However, spendings made to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic and associated lockdowns derailed the government finances.
- This essentially meant that in the years to come, the government would have to cut spending.

- **Growing Cost of Living Crisis**

- The war in Ukraine set off an unexpected energy price inflationary spiral.
- The UK's retail inflation, which typically stayed below 2.5%, skyrocketed to double-digit historic highs.
- Coming on the back of reduced incomes and livelihoods, this inflationary pressure reduced the purchasing power of citizens.

- **Decision of Truss government**

- The Truss-Kwasi Kwarteng decision to increase spending (including giving tax cuts to the richest) by simply borrowing more further aggravated the situation.
- This spooked the markets; investors sold British assets such as gilts (government bonds) and currency.

- **Re-establishing political stability**

- Having a well-established polity is a key reason why developed countries such as the UK get the best terms in international trade and business.
- But the Conservative Party is a deeply divided house today.

- Hence, uniting the Tories is the necessary first step for any economic decision-making to be taken seriously by the markets.

India-U.K. ties under Sunak

- India's bilateral relations with the U.K. may well be poised to see greater two-way exchanges under Sunak.
 - His vision for India-U.K. bilateral ties has gone beyond the opportunity for the U.K. to sell things in India, wanting **Britain to also learn from India**.
 - This vision was presented by Sunak when he was a Chancellor.
 - Sunak has openly called China the biggest enemy of the UK.
 - This assumes significance as India shares contentious geopolitical relations with China.
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STATE GOVERNMENTS CANNOT ENTER INTO BROADCASTING ON THEIR OWN: I&B MINISTRY

In News:

- The Information and Broadcasting Ministry issued an advisory stating that no Ministry or department of the governments at the Centre, States and Union Territories and their associated entities should enter into broadcasting or distribution of broadcasting activities in future.

News Summary:

- In its latest advisory, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has said that the Centre, States, UTs and their related entities will need to “extract themselves” from existing broadcast distribution activities.
- This process will need to be completed by **December 31, 2023**.
- Under the existing policy guidelines, government universities, colleges, schools, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, certain autonomous bodies and agricultural universities are eligible to set up community radios.

- The move may have political implications as among those could be impacted by the advisory are Kerala's KITE VICTERS and KITE VICTERS Plus Tamil Nadu's Kalvi TV and Arasu Cable, Andhra Pradesh government's IPTV.
- Further, **entry of Central/State/UT Governments into the business of broadcast for educational purposes should be done through the Prasar Bharati route only.**
- The Ministry issued this advisory, majorly on the basis of the recommendations made by the TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India).

What were the recommendations made by TRAI?

- The TRAI had recommended to I&B Ministry that Centre, States, UTs and their related entities should not be allowed to enter into the business of broadcasting and/or distribution of TV channels.
- As **Prasar Bharati** is an independent statutory body, TRAI has recommended that while it should fulfil the legitimate aspirations of government entities with regard to broadcasting activities, it should also maintain an arm's length relationship with governments.
- TRAI had relied on the spirit of the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations and the Supreme Court's judgement in the case of Cricket Association of Bengal (1995) in its recommendations.
- **Sarkaria Commission's recommendation –**
 - The Sarkaria Commission was set up in 1983 by the central government to examine the central-state relationship on various portfolios.
 - The commission had recommended that **for controlling the "centrifugal" tendencies, the demand for either a concurrent or an exclusive power to the States regarding broadcasting could not be supported.**
- **Cricket Association of Bengal case (1995) –**
 - In this case, the Supreme Court had observed that **state control really meant governmental control, which in turn meant control of the political party or parties in power for the time being.**
 - It had further observed that public service broadcasting should be in the hands of a corporation (such as **Prasar Bharati**) set up under a statute and the constitution of such a corporation should

be such as to ensure their impartiality in political, economic and social matters and on other public issues.

- **Broadcasting in Union List of Indian Constitution**

- Entry 31 of Union list, mentioned in Seventh Schedule, mentions - Posts and telegraphs; telephones, wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communication.

About Prasar Bharati:

- Prasar Bharati is India's largest public broadcasting agency.
- It is a statutory autonomous body set up by the **Prasar Bharati Act, 1990**.
 - The Act brought both DD (Dur Darshan) and AIR (All-India Radio) under the ambit of the corporation Prasar Bharati.
- **Functions of Prasar Bharati –**
 - To maintain the country's unity and integrity as enshrined in the Constitution of India.
 - To ensure that citizens' right to be informed of national and international events and news are fulfilled.
 - To spread literacy, agricultural development, and to promote health and the environment.
 - To cover sporting activities to promulgate sportsmanship spirit among the citizens.
 - To cover and propagate the diversity in the country.
 - To serve the rural and weaker sections of society including children, disabled, etc.
 - To conduct research and development so that television and radio broadcasts are regularly updated.
- The President of India appoints the chairman and the other Members of the organisation.
- Headquarters – **New Delhi**

UNITED NATIONS DAY

United Nations Day is celebrated on October 24.



About:



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- It marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the U.N. Charter.
- With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations officially came into being.

United Nations Charter:

- The Charter of the United Nations is the founding document of the United Nations.
 - It was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24 October 1945.
 - The United Nations can take action on a wide variety of issues due to its unique international character and the powers vested in its Charter, which is considered an international treaty.
 - As such, the UN Charter is an instrument of international law, and UN Member States are bound by it.
 - The UN Charter codifies the major principles of international relations, from sovereign equality of States to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations.
 - The mission and work of the Organization have been guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter, which has been amended three times in 1963, 1965, and 1973.
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