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Current affairs summary for prelims

12 April, 2024

Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor (CCRM) 2024

Context: *The CCRM 2024 report by New Climate Institute evaluated climate goals of 51 major global companies.*

➢ **Climate Targets Assessment:**

- The Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor (CCRM) 2024 evaluated climate targets set by 51 major companies.
- These companies collectively generated $6.1 trillion in revenue in 2022.
- They self-reported greenhouse gas emissions of 8.8 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2022.
- This amount roughly equals the combined annual emissions of India, Russia, and Brazil.
- Their emissions represent approximately 16% of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2022.

➢ **Emissions Reduction Progress:**

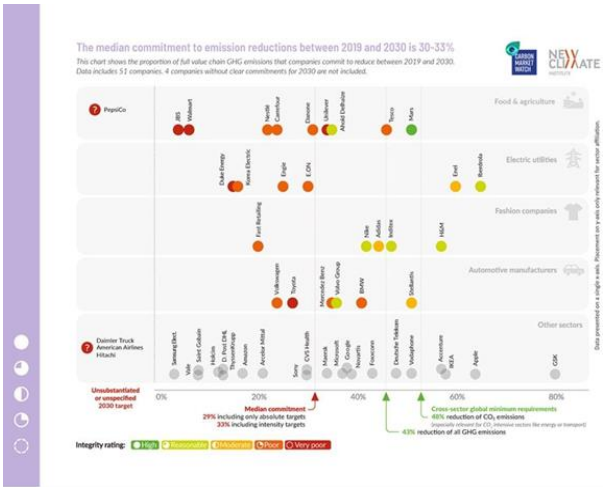
- The collective emissions reduction target for 2030 is only 30% compared to 2019 levels.
- Only 7 companies have targets to reduce emissions by more than 50% by 2030.
- Some companies, such as Walmart and Volkswagen, lack updated or clear emission reduction plans.
- Conversely, companies like Danone, Iberdrola, Mars, and Volvo Group have relatively robust emission reduction plans.

➢ **Loopholes and Accountability:**

- Companies may rely on contentious solutions and carbon offsets to meet their targets.
- The proposed Voluntary Carbon Market Initiative and Science Based Targets initiative may provide loopholes for companies to bypass Scope 3 emissions accountability.
- Testing flexible offsetting showed that it could erase accountability for Scope 3 emissions.

➢ **Overreliance on Voluntary Reporting:**

- Climate targets set by companies are voluntary and assessed by validation frameworks.
- Examples of validation bodies include SBTi, Transition Pathways Initiative, and MSCI Net Zero Tracker.
- While voluntary reporting encourages target setting, it lacks accountability mechanisms.
- A more stringent accountability system is needed for true emissions reduction from private corporations.



Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules

Context: *DGCA has contacted Indian airlines about implementing new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules, which address pilot stress and fatigue.*

➢ **Background and Deferment of New FDTL Rules:**

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) deferred the implementation of new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules from June 1.
- This decision followed instructions from the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) on March 22.
- The new implementation date remains unspecified, allowing airlines to continue following existing rules until their own schemes are approved.

➢ **Concerns and Opposition from Airlines:**

- Airlines resisted the new rules due to concerns about requiring 20-25% more pilots and potential capacity cuts of 15-20%.
- The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA) sought a one-year postponement of the new rules, notified in January, through a letter to the DGCA in February.

➢ **Pilot Dissatisfaction and Legal Proceedings:**

- Pilots and their associations expressed dissatisfaction with the deferment and lack of a fresh compliance deadline.
- The Delhi High Court directed the DGCA to indicate a tentative implementation date in the next hearing scheduled for May 8.

➢ **Importance of FDTL Rules and Pilot Concerns:**

- Flight crew fatigue and stress can lead to human errors and jeopardize safety.
- Pilots have voiced concerns about fatigue due to extended flying hours, erratic rostering, and high crew utilization levels, exacerbated by rapid network expansion efforts by airlines.

➢ **Overview of New FDTL Rules:**

- The new rules increase mandatory weekly rest periods for pilots from 36 to 48 hours.
- They also reduce night flying by extending the definition of "night" and limiting the number of night landings per crew.
- Compliance requires airlines to hire and train more pilots or scale back operations, impacting their business and operations.

➢ **Current FDTL Regulations in India:**

- Current FDTL rules, issued by the DGCA in 2019, include maximum flight duty periods, mandatory rest periods, and guidelines for scheduling night operations.
- These regulations are based on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and practices of the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

➢ **Responsibilities and Accountability:**

- The regulations prohibit flight crew from operating flights beyond prescribed limitations or if fatigued.
- Airlines are responsible for maintaining fatigue management systems, providing training, and addressing fatigue-related incidents.
- Pilots are accountable for refusing assignments that exceed limitations or if fatigued.

CDP-SURAKSHA

Context: *The government introduced CDP-SURAKSHA, a platform for disbursing subsidies to horticulture farmers under the Cluster Development Programme (CDP).*

➢ **Introduction of CDP-SURAKSHA:**

- The government introduced CDP-SURAKSHA to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers under the Cluster Development Programme (CDP).
- The platform aims to boost India's horticulture sector, which contributes nearly one-third to the agriculture gross value addition (GVA).
- CDP-SURAKSHA is a digital platform acronym for “System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance.”
- It enables instant subsidy disbursal to farmers' bank accounts using e-RUPI vouchers from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- Features include database integration with PM-KISAN, UIDAI validation, e-RUPI integration, and geo-tagging.

➢ **Functionality of CDP-SURAKSHA:**

- Farmers, vendors, implementing agencies (IA), and cluster development agencies (CDA) have access to the platform.
- Farmers can order planting material based on their requirements and contribute their share of the cost.
- Upon payment, an e-RUPI voucher is generated, which the vendor receives for supplying the material.
- Farmers verify delivery, after which the IA releases payment to the vendor.

➢ **Difference from Previous System:**

- Unlike the old system where farmers bought materials and then sought subsidy release, CDP-SURAKSHA provides subsidies upfront.
- Vendors receive payment only after farmers verify delivery.

➢ **Cluster Development Program (CDP):**

- CDP is a component of the central sector scheme of the National Horticulture Board (NHB).
- It aims to develop horticulture clusters, promoting integrated and market-led development activities.
- 55 horticulture clusters have been identified, with 12 selected for the pilot phase and others in various stages of development.
- The initiative covers approximately 9 lakh hectares and 10 lakh farmers, attracting private investment estimated at Rs 8,250 crore.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Garudan Thookkam

Recently, the devotees take part in 'Garudan Thookkam' at the Sarkara Devi Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

About Garudan Thookkam:

- Garudan Thookkam, also known as Garudan Parava, is a **ritual art form** that takes place in some Kali temples in Kerala, India.
- The art form is **known for its vibrant costumes, headgear, and makeup,** which transform ordinary people into majestic performers.
- The performers wear **costumes that mimic Garuda,** an eagle and dance to percussions.
- The dancers then have hooks pierced into their backs and carried around the temple for the deity's blessing.
- The ritual includes **18 rhythmic patterns**, and the performers are carried in procession on bullock carts, boats or hand-pulled carts.
- The practice is popular in the Bhadrakali temples of Kottayam, Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Idukki districts.

EA-Earth Action

Recently, EA Earth Action published a report projecting that approximately 220 million tonnes of plastic waste will be generated worldwide in 2024.

About EA-Earth Action:

- EA-Earth Action is a **Swiss-based research consultancy** that provides solutions and initiatives to address the plastic pollution crisis.
- It annually **publishes the Plastic Overshoot Day Report,** which provides crucial insights into the global plastic pollution crisis.
- The organization employs data-driven methodologies to assess plastic consumption patterns, waste management capacities and environmental impacts.
- It categorizes countries **based on the Mismanaged Waste Index (MWI),** which measures the imbalance between plastic production and waste management capacity.
- According to EA, **India ranks fourth in MWI, with 98.55%** of generated waste being mismanaged.
- India is among the **12 countries**, along with **China**, **Brazil**, Indonesia, Thailand, Russia, Mexico, the United States, Saudia Arabia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran and Kazakhstan, which are responsible for 52 per cent of the world's mismanaged plastic waste.

Angara-A5

Recently, Russia achieved a significant milestone with the test launch of Angara-A5, its first post-Soviet space rocket, from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the far eastern Amur region.

About Angara-A5

- Angara-A5 is a significant space **rocket developed by Russia** to **replace the Proton M** as its heavy-lift launch vehicle.
- It is **a three-stage rocket** with a weight of approximately 773 tonnes and **can carry payloads of up to 24.5 tonnes into space**.
- It is designed to be **more environmentally friendly**, **utilizing less damaging fuels** and **Russian-made components.**
- The Angara project is of utmost national importance for Russia as it ensures independent access to space without relying on foreign launch sites like **Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.**

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Ural Mountains

Recently, severe flooding in the Ural mountains on the continental borders of Asia and Europe has led to questions about its connection to climate change.

- The Ural Mountains serve as a **natural boundary between Europe and Asia**, extending from the Arctic Ocean to the Ural River and into Kazakhstan.
- They are considered one of the **world's oldest mountain ranges,** with significant geological and cultural importance.
- They are known for their rich mineral deposits, including **gold**, **platinum** and **coal**.
- They have been a major mineral base for Russia since the 18th century.
- The region is one of the **largest centers of metallurgy** and heavy industry production in Russia.
- These Mountains are **divided into five parts**: Southern, Middle, Northern, Pre-Polar (the highest) and Polar.
- The average altitudes of the Urals are around 1,000–1,300 meters (3,300–4,300 ft), with the **highest point being Mount Narodnaya** which reaches a height of 1,894 meters (6,214 ft).
- The **Ural is the third-largest river in Europe** after the Volga and the Danube.
- The **Tobol** is a tributary of the **Irtysh**, which in turn flows into the Ob.
- The **Ob-Irtysh** river system is the **seventh-longest** in the world.

Place in News

Zimbabwe

Recently, the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) reported that a scientist in Zimbabwe has developed a method to produce methanol and other energy materials using carbon dioxide obtained from industrial activities.

Zimbabwe (Capital: Harare)

Location: Zimbabwe, a **landlocked country** is located in southern Africa.

Political Boundaries: Zimbabwe shares its borders with **Mozambique (East), Botswana (West and Southwest), Zambia (North)** and **South Africa (South)**.

Physical Features:

- **Victoria Falls**, one of the **world's largest waterfalls** on the **Zambezi River,** located on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Zimbabwe has experienced two **major post-Gondwana erosion cycles** (known as **African** and **post-African**).
- **Subtropical** type of climate is found in Zimbabwe.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Which countries are identified as the top five contributors to global mismanaged plastic waste according to the Plastic Overshoot Day report from EA Earth Action? **– China, USA, India, Brazil, and Mexico**
- Which river ranks as the third-largest in Europe, following the Volga and the Danube? **– Ural**
- What position did IIT Bombay secure recently in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject for 2024 in the field of Engineering and Technology? **– 45th with an overall score of 79.1 out of 100**
- Which article of the Indian Constitution broadly supports the concept of a curative petition? **– Article 137**
- Which hospital in India recently achieved the milestone of conducting successful piezoelectric Bone Conduction Hearing Implants (BCI)? **– Command Hospital, Pune**