# Beginning of Green Era

## Why in news?

Recently, Saudi Arabia has launched the Saudi Green Initiative and Middle East Green Initiative to combat climate change.

## Why it was announced now?

- In the G20 summit presided by Saudi Arabia, one of the main pillars of the agenda was safeguarding the planet.
- The summit highlighted how climate change had negatively impacted the planet, people's lives and their well-being.
- Initiatives like establishing a Global Coral Reef Research and Development Accelerator Platform was announced in the summit.
- G20 leaders also acknowledged the Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) Platform as a tool towards affordable, reliable, and secure energy and economic growth.
- Saudi Arabia committed to lead regional efforts to address climate change and is making steady progress in this direction.

## What is the initiative all about?

- **Saudi Green Initiative** aims to raise the vegetation cover, reduce carbon emissions, combat pollution, land degradation and preserve marine life.
- As part of the initiative, 10 billion trees will be planted which reduces carbon emissions by more than 4% of global contributions.
- This will be made through a renewable energy programme that will generate 50% of Saudi's energy from renewables by 2030.
- It is also working towards raising the percentage of its protected areas to more than 30% of its total land area, exceeding the global target of 17%.
- As part of the **Middle East Green initiative**, it will work with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and regional partners to plant an additional 40 billion trees in the West Asian region.
- It represents 5% of the global target of planting one trillion trees and can reduce 2.5% of global carbon levels.
- Saudi Arabia will share its expertise and know-how with its neighbouring countries to reduce carbon emissions resulting from hydrocarbon production in the region by 60% and globally by 10%.

## What are the benefits of this initiative?

- Saudi Arabia currently operates the largest carbon capture and utilisation plant in the world, turning half a million tonnes of $CO_2$ annually into products such as fertilizers and methanol.
- It also operates one of the region's most advanced $CO_2$-enhanced oil recovery plants that captures and stores 8,00,000 tonnes of $CO_2$ annually.
- It believes that nature-based solutions will play an important role in removing carbon as part of the CCE.
- Earlier it joined International Solar Alliance to promote cooperation in the renewable energy sector.
- To ensure momentum and continuity, it proposes to convene an annual summit called the Middle East Green Initiative.
- The aim is start implementing the plan in the fourth quarter of this year and continue for the next two decades.
- It also recognised the scarcity of financial resources to irrigate the terrain.
- Therefore, in partnership with participating countries, it aims to research innovative methods.
- This includes irrigation from treated water, cloud seeding and other purpose-driven solutions such as planting native trees.

## How it will help Vision 2030 plan?

- In 2016, Saudi Arabia unveiled Vision 2030, a comprehensive road map to improve the quality of life of the citizens of the country.
- As part of this, Saudi Arabia carried out a comprehensive restructuring of the environmental sector and established the Environmental Special Forces in 2019.
- With NEOM and The Line, Saudi Arabia has already redefined the idea of sustainable habitats.
- Recently Public Investment Fund pumped in $15 billion in the NEOM project and another $10 billion in renewable and solar energy projects.
- This will realise the Saudi Arabia's goal of Vision 2030 and become one of the major producers of renewable energy with a capacity to generate 9.5 GW by 2023.

**Source: The Hindu**



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