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Output Pact Proposal

- The latest round of meetings among the OPEC+ group has stalled as the UAE has pushed back proposals making an increase in crude oil supply conditional on an extension to an output agreement.
- [**OPEC+ countries** are non-OPEC countries which export crude oil. They are Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.]
- **Story behind** - In April 2020, the OPEC+ group of countries had entered into a two-year agreement to cut crude production steeply - to deal with a sharp fall in the price of oil as a result of the pandemic.
- The initial production cut by OPEC+ was about 10 million barrels per day or about 22% of the reference production of OPEC+ nations.
- In November 2020, however, the price of Brent crude started climbing consistently buoyed by the steady rollout of vaccination programmes.
- However, it maintained lower levels of production despite crude oil prices reaching pre-Covid levels, which boosted rising prices further.
- **Recent issue** - The UAE agreed that there was a need to increase crude oil production from August 2021.
- But it didn't agree to a condition by the OPEC Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) that the two-year production agreement be extended by six months.
- The UAE noted that the baseline reference production levels of crude oil were unfair and that it would be open to extending the agreement if baseline production levels were reviews to be fair to all parties.

Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- OPEC is a permanent intergovernmental organization of 13 oil-exporting developing nations.
- It was founded in 1960 by five countries - Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- In accordance with its Statute, the mission of the OPEC is to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its Member Countries.
- It should ensure the stabilization of oil markets in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers.

Report on UDISE+ 2019-20

- Union Education Minister released the Report on United Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20 for School Education in India. (Reference Year for the present publication is 2019-20)
- **Total Students** - In 2019-20, total students in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary have crossed 26.45 crore.
- This is higher by 42.3 lakh compared to 2018-19.
- Enrolment of Divyang students has increased by 6.52% over 2018-19.
- In 2019-20, enrolment of girls from primary to higher secondary is more than 12.08 crore. This is an increase by 14.08 lakh compared to 2018-19.
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio** at all levels of school education has improved in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19.
- **Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)** - In 2019-20, 96.87 lakh teachers have been engaged in school education. The PTR has improved at all levels of school education.
- **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** - Between 2012-13 and 2019-20, the GPI at both Secondary and Higher Secondary levels have improved.
- Improvement of GPI has been most pronounced at the higher secondary level, which has gone up to 1.04 in 2019-20 from 0.97 in 2012-13.
- **Amenities** - There is an improvement in the number of schools having functional electricity, computers, internet facility, handwash facility in 2019-20.
- More than 82% schools conducted medical check-up of students in 2019-20, an increase by more than 4% compared to previous year 2018-19.
- More than 84% schools in India had a library/reading room/ reading corner in 2019-20, an improvement of nearly 4% compared to 2018-19.

UDISE+ System

- It is Management Information Systems (MIS) on school education developed in 2018-19 by the Ministry of Education.
- It is a **system of online data collection** from the schools that helps measure the education parameters from classes 1 to 12 in government and private schools across India.
- It is an improved version of UDISE, which was initiated in 2012-13.
- It was developed to overcome the issues related to manual data filling in paper format and subsequent feeding at the block or district level, which was in practice in the UDISE system.

NIPUN Bharat Programme

- National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and

Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat Programme is undertaken by Department of School Education and Literacy.

- It will ensure that every child in India necessarily attains **foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN)** by the end of **Grade 3**, by 2026-27.
- It aims to cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 3 to 9.
- This National Mission, which has been launched under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha, will focus on,
    1. Providing access and retaining children in foundational years of schooling; Tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes;
    2. Teacher capacity building; and
    3. Development of high quality and diversified Student and Teacher Resources/Learning Materials.
- The goals of the Mission are set in the form of **Lakshya Soochi** or Targets for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy.
- In order to generate greater awareness among the parents, community, etc. the **Lakshyashas** been developed from Balvatika to Grade 3.
- [Balvatika is the preparatory class that a child will take prior to age 5.]
- The Laskhyas are based on the learning outcomes developed by the NCERT and international research and ORF studies.
- A special package for foundational literacy and Numeracy under **NISHTHA** is being developed by NCERT. Around 25 lakh teachers at pre-primary to primary grade will be trained this year on FLN.
- **Implementing agency** - NIPUN Bharat initiative will be implemented by school education department of Union government.
- A 5-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at national, state, district, block, and school levels across all states and Union territories.

Project BOLD

- The project “Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought” (BOLD) is an initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) that seeks to create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones.
- It has been launched as part of KVIC’s “Khadi Bamboo Festival” to celebrate 75 years of independence “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”.
- It is the first of its kind exercise in India which was launched from the tribal village NichlaMandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- The saplings of special bamboo species – Bambusa Tulda and Bambusa Polymorpha specially brought from Assam – have been planted over 16 acres of vacant arid Gram Panchayat land.
- KVIC is set to replicate the Project at Village Dholera in Ahmedabad district in Gujarat and Leh-Ladakh region by August 2021.

- **Significance** - It is a scientific exercise that will reduce desertification and provide livelihood and multi-disciplinary rural industry support. It will be havens of sustainable development and food security.
- **Reasons for selecting Bamboos** - Bamboos grow very fast and in about three years' time, they could be harvested.
- They conserve water and reduce evaporation of water from the land surface - An important feature in arid and drought-prone regions.

Harit Dhara

- It is an anti-methanogenic feed supplement developed by an Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institute - National Institute of Animal Nutrition and Physiology (NIANP), Bengaluru.
- When given to bovines and sheep, it cuts down their methane emissions by 17-20%, and also results in higher milk production and body weight gain.
- **Emission** - An average lactating cow or buffalo in India emits around 200 litres of methane per day, while it is 85-95 litres for young growing heifers and 20-25 litres for adult sheep.
- **Methane Production by Cattle** - Methane is produced by animals having rumen, the first of their four stomachs.
- In Rumen, the plant material they eat - cellulose, fibre, starch and sugars - gets fermented or broken down by microorganisms prior to further digestion and nutrient absorption.
- Carbohydrate fermentation leads to production of CO_2 and hydrogen.
- These are used as substrate by archaea - microbes in the rumen - to produce methane, which the animals then expel through burping.
- **Working** - Harit Dhara acts by decreasing the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea for reduction of CO_2 to methane.
- It has been prepared using condensed and hydrolysable tannin-rich plant-based sources abundantly available in the country.
- Tropical plants containing tannins (bitter and astringent chemical compounds) are known to suppress or remove protozoa from the rumen.
- Rumen Fermentation continues as before, but due to Harit Dhara, there is more production of propionic acid now in proportion to acetic and butyric acid in this fermentation.
- Since propionic acid provides much of the energy for lactose (milk sugar) production and body weight gain, there is economic benefit for farmers.

Open Network for Digital Commerce

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has initiated a project on Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

- The task has been assigned to the Quality Council of India (QCI).
- ONDC aims at promoting open networks developed on open sourced methodology, using open specifications and open network protocols independent of any specific platform.
- It will digitize the entire value chain, standardize operations, promote inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiencies in logistics and enhance value for consumers.
- An advisory council has been constituted to advise the Government on measures needed to design and accelerate adoption of ONDC.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express

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