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U.S.-India Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP)

- It was established in 2018, recognizing the strategic importance of energy to the U.S.-India bilateral relationship.
- The SEP organizes inter-agency engagement on both sides across four primary pillars of cooperation

i. Power and Energy Efficiency
ii. Oil and Gas
iii. Renewable Energy
iv. Sustainable Growth

- The two countries are also leading joint R&D through the U.S.-India Partnership to Advance Clean Energy-Research (PACE-R) on smart grids and energy storage.

Recent Initiatives of SEP

- Strategic Petroleum Reserves - Recently a MOU has been signed which paves way for India storing oil in the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve to increase their nation strategic oil stockpiles.
- A public-private Hydrogen Task Force to help scale up technologies to produce hydrogen from renewable energy and fossil fuel sources.
- An MoU has been signed to collaborate on India's first-ever Solar Decathlon India in 2021 to prepare the next generation of professionals to design and build high efficiency buildings powered by renewables.
- USAID announced partnership with Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) to develop India's National Open Access Registry (NOAR).
- New areas of research on transformational power generation based on supercritical CO2 (sCO2) power cycles and advanced coal technologies for power generation and hydrogen production, including carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS).

South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE)

- US Agency for International Development (USAID) and India's ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) have announced the launch of a new partnership - SAGE

- Under the partnership, USAID will provide advanced technical knowledge on clean energy development from America's national laboratories to India's technical institutions.
- It will act as a powerhouse of science, engineering and technology for India and the entire South Asia region.
- It will contribute towards achieving the goals of the US government's Asia Enhancing Growth and Development through Energy (Asia EDGE) initiative,
- EDGE is a primary pillar of the US administration's Indo-Pacific vision in South Asia, and the US-India Strategic Energy Partnership.

United Nations Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA)

- The Global Commission on Adaptation was launched in Hague in 2018 by then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.
- Its mandate is to encourage the development of measures to manage the effects of climate change through technology, planning and investment.
- Secretary General Ban Ki-moon leads the group with co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and World Bank CEO.
- It was launched with the support of 17 convening countries including China, Canada and the UK and low-lying countries vulnerable to climate change including Bangladesh and the Marshall Islands.
- The Netherlands initiated the Global Commission on Adaptation to share its knowledge on how it has managed to adopt innovative water management solutions as sea levels rise.
- UNGCA Publishes Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience.
- It will be released in Climate Adaptation Summit in the Netherlands in 2021.

Container Ship to Agartala

- Union Ministry of Shipping inaugurated the first trial movement of a container ship carrying steel and pulses from Kolkata port to Bangladesh's Chattogram port.
- It will transport cargo to Assam and Tripura.
- It will provide a shorter route to connect India's north-east region through Bangladesh.
- This is the first time after 1965 that Bangladesh is allowing its ports to be used as a transit for cargo movement from any part of India to northeastern states.
- It is done under the Agreement on use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for movement of India's transit cargo through Bangladesh.
- India and Bangladesh have enhanced cooperation in shipping and inland water trade, under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade, in addition to the six existing Ports of Call.

ICAR

- Recently Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) celebrated its 92nd foundation day on 16th July 2020.
- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was established in 1929.
- It was a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It is an autonomous organization under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.
- It is the apex body for coordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country.

Buddhist Tourism Initiatives

- Union Ministry of Tourism & Culture has inaugurated the Webinar on "Cross Border Tourism" organized by the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators.
- Various initiatives taken on Buddhist Tourism are as follows

1. Signage in international languages - at important Buddhist sites in the country including signage in Chinese language that have been put up at Sarnath, Kushinagar and Sravasti.
2. Similarly, since Sanchi receives a large number of tourists from Sri Lanka, signage in Sinhalese language have been put up at the Sanchi monuments.
3. Kushinagar Airport - Government of India to declared the Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh as an International Airport which will offer better connectivity to the air-travelers.

- The Association of Buddhist Tour Operators is the association of dedicated inbound tour-operators engaged in promoting Buddhist tourism, with over 1500 members in India & Overseas

Source: PIB, Down to Earth

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