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The Great Stupa of Sanchi

External Affairs Minister recently stopped by the replica of the East Gate of Sanchi's Great Stupa standing in front of Humboldt Forum museum in Berlin.

- **Stupa** - A stupa is a Buddhist commemorative monument usually containing sacred relics of the Buddha or other venerable saints.
- The archetypal stupa is a hemispherical structure whose origins can be traced to pre-Buddhist burial mounds found in India. The Great Stupa of Sanchi exemplifies this form.
- **Great Stupa of Sanchi** - It is a Buddhist monument and one of the oldest stone structures in India.
- It is located in the village of Sanchi in the Raisen district of **Madhya Pradesh**.
- It is the largest and oldest structure in a complex of Buddhist monuments comprising numerous other stupas, temples, and monasteries.
- **Construction** - The Great Stupa was built by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. Originally it is about half the size and built from large bricks and mud mortar.
- It is believed it had raised terraces at the base, was enclosed by a wooden railing, and was crowned by a stone umbrella.
- The stupa was enlarged using local **sandstone** during the **Sunga period**, which began about 50 years after Ashoka's death.
- **Walkway** - A circumambulatory walkway was constructed around the stupa which was bounded by a stone railing also known as Vedika.
- Circumambulation or pradakshina is an important part of ritual and devotional practices in Buddhism. A Harmika or square structure was also added to the stupa.
- **Harmika** - The main body of the stupa symbolises the cosmic mountain. It is topped by a 'harmika' to hold the triple umbrella, or 'chhatravali'.
 - It represents the 3 jewels of Buddhism - the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
- The elaborately-carved gateways were added later, in the **1st century BC**. The gateways and the stone balustrade were added later.
- **Gateways** - The gateways at the 4 cardinal points or Toranas are the highlights of the structure, with a series of detailed carvings showing Buddhist symbols and important historical and religious scenes.
- These toranas comprise of two stone pillars surrounded by capitals.
- **Chronological sequence of Gateways** - Southern, Northern, Eastern and Western.
- The sculpture of Buddha in dhyana-mudra at the eastern side of the stupa, added to the site in the 5th century AD by the Guptas.
- During the Gupta period, additional structures were built at Sanchi, including a

Buddhist temple and a lion pillar.

- An inscription celebrating the victory of Chandragupta II is found on the railing of the Great Stupa, which dates back to the fourth century A.D.
- Sanchi is believed to have been an important religious center from the 3rd century BC to the 13th century AD.
- However, it began to decline as a major religious site around the same time that Buddhism itself was declining in the Indian subcontinent.
- The Sanchi Stupa has been a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 1989.



References

1. [The Indian Express | Great Stupa of Sanchi](#)
2. [Indian Culture | Sanchi monument rediscovery](#)

Ideas4LiFE portal

The union government recently launched the Ideas4LiFE portal.

- **Aim** - It is for inviting ideas related to products and services for inducing behavioral changes related to environment-friendly lifestyles.
- **Developed by**- The portal is developed in partnership with **UNICEF YuWaah.**
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The winning ideas under each of the 7 themes of Mission LiFE will be recognized and awarded with attractive prizes for individuals as well as for institutions.
- **Themes**- The initiative is aligned with Mission LiFE and focuses on seven themes
 - Water Conservation
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Waste Reduction
 - E-Waste Management
 - Minimizing Single-Use Plastics
 - Embracing Sustainable Food Practices

- Fostering Healthy Lifestyles

Mission LiFE

- Mission LiFE, or "LiFEStyle For Environment", is a campaign that aims to encourage people to adopt environmentally conscious lifestyles.
- The campaign was announced at the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP26) in 2021.
- **Goals**
 - Mobilizing at least one billion people to take action to protect the environment
 - Making at least 80% of villages and urban local bodies environment-friendly by 2028
 - Encouraging people to engage in small, everyday actions that can halt climate change
- Mission LiFE emboldens the spirit of the ***P3 model*** i.e. Pro Planet People.
- Mission Life, unites the people of the earth as pro planet people, uniting them all in their thoughts.
- It functions on the basic principles of 'Lifestyle of the planet, for the planet and by the planet'.

Reference

[PIB | Ideas4LiFE Initiative](#)

Barak Bhuban Wildlife sanctuary

The National Green Tribunal's (NGT) eastern bench in Kolkata has ordered a stay on road construction work inside the Barak Bhuban wildlife sanctuary in Assam's Cachar district.

- It is situated in Barak valley of **Assam**.
- It is named after the second-largest river in the northeast, the Barak.
- It spreads between the Barak and Sonai rivers.
- **Faunas**
 - The area has 8 recording species of primates like slow loris, rhesus macaque, pig-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque, Assamese macaque, capped langur, hoolock gibbon and phayre's leaf monkey.
 - **Endemic** - King Cobra, Gorals, Himalayan Serow.

Barak valley

- The Barak Valley is a region in the southern part of Assam.
- It is known for its tea cultivation and is nicknamed the "Valley of Peace".
- It is considered part of the ***Indo-Myanmar biodiversity hotspot***.
- The Barak Valley is a ***horseshoe-shaped plain*** bordered by Mizoram, Tripura, Bangladesh, Meghalaya, and Manipur.
- The main city of the Barak Valley is Silchar, which is also the administrative divisional office for the region.

- The Barak Valley is made up of 3 administrative districts - Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi.
- The official languages of the Barak Valley are Bengali and Meitei (Manipuri).
- Assam's first sanctuary 'Borel Wildlife Sanctuary' is in Barak Valley itself.

References

1. [The Indian Express | Barak Bhuban Sanctuary](#)
2. [Hindustan Times | Barak Bhuban Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

Recently, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released its 7th annual report for July 2023 to June 2024.

- **The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** - It is a survey that estimates key employment and unemployment indicators in India.
- **Indicators**
 - Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR),
 - Worker Population Ratio (WPR), and
 - Unemployment Rate (UR)
- **Released by** - The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- It is an initiative of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

Findings of the report

- **Stagnant Unemployment Rate** - The survey shows that there is ***no major change*** in the unemployment rate.
- The unemployment rate remains at 3.2%, like last year.
- Rural unemployment decreased from 5.3% (2017-18) to 2.5% (2023-24), and urban unemployment fell from 7.7% to 5.1% for the same period.
- **Sector-Wise Employment**
 - **Agriculture** - Workforce participation in agriculture has increased for the fourth consecutive year, indicating a shift back to agriculture for employment, possibly due to lack of non-farm job opportunities.
 - **Distribution in agriculture** - There is a ***minor increase*** in the distribution of workers in agriculture.
 - **Manufacturing** - The manufacturing sector shows ***no growth*** in providing jobs compared to previous years.
- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** - The labor force is made up of individuals aged 15 and older, who fall into one of two groups
 - Those who are currently employed
 - Those who are unemployed but eager to work and are actively searching for a job.

Rural areas

Climbed from 50.7% in 2017-18 to 63.7% in 2023-24

Urban areas	Saw an increase from 47.6% to 52.0%
Males in India	Went up from 75.8% in 2017-18 to 78.8% in 2023-24
Females in India	From 23.3% in 2017-18 to 41.7%. 2023-24
Muslim women	Rose from 15% in 2021-22 to 21.4% in 2023-24
Hindu women	Rose from 26.1% in 2021-22 to 33.3% in 2023-24
Sikh and Christian women	19.8% to 26.7% and from 34.2% to 38.3%, respectively during same time line.

- **Concerns** - The Labour economist pointed out that the employment situation remains grim, especially in non-farm jobs.
- The increase in agriculture jobs is seen as a sign of unpaid family labour being counted as employment, which is misleading.
- The manufacturing sector's share in employment has not improved, remaining at 11.4% (down from 12.8% in 2012).
- The construction sector's contribution to employment is stagnant at 12%.

Reference

[The Hindu | Periodic Labour Force Survey](#)

Report on Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions in India

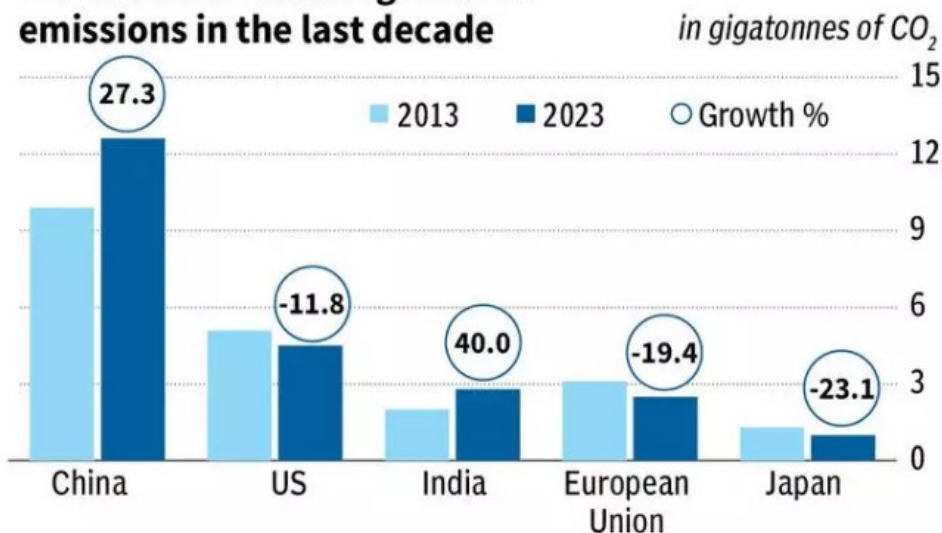
The recent report of European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) says that India emerged as the third-highest CO₂ emitter globally, accounted for 7.8% in 2023.

- The report indicates that GHG emissions increased from 3,270.4 Mt CO₂eq/year in 2014 to 4,133.6 Mt CO₂eq/year in 2023.

GHG emissions are defined as gases released into the atmosphere that trap heat, thus contributing to the greenhouse effect and global warming include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O).

- **Global** - China (30.1 %) ranks the top in 2023 followed by the United States (11.3 %).
- **India** - India's overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have steadily increased over the years, measured in megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year (Mt CO₂eq/yr).

India records fastest growth in emissions in the last decade

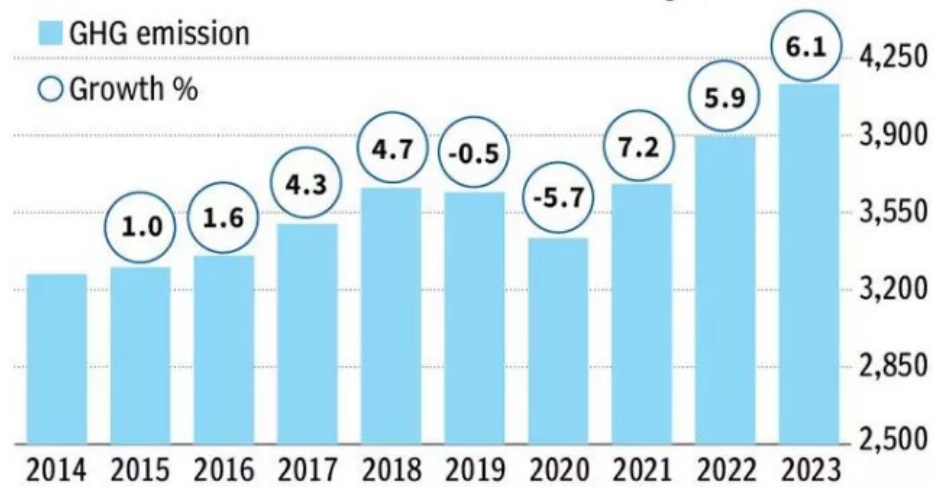


- India has the lowest per capita emissions amongst G20 nation.
- **Primary Contributor of GHG** - Power sector (46.6%), industrial combustion (20.9%), and transportation (11.5%).
 - The increase was particularly steep at 6% in 2023, following growth rates of 5.9% in 2022 and 7.2% in 2021.
 - Over the years, India's total GHG emissions have shown a consistent upward trend, measured in megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent (Mt CO₂eq/yr).
- **Secondary Contributor of GHG** - Burning of fossil fuels, methane emissions from livestock, aluminum and cement production.
- **India's per capita GHG emissions** - It reached 2.9 CO₂eq/cap/year in 2023, up from 2.5 CO₂eq/cap/year
- Fossil fuels accounted for 88% of primary energy consumption in India and 77% of total electricity generation in 2022.
- International Energy Agency report says that CO₂ Emissions in India's carbon emissions have surged during this decade, escalating from 2 Gigatonnes (Gt) in 2013 to 2.8 Gt in 2023, a 40% rise.
- Despite comprising approximately 17% of the global population from 1850 to 2019, India's cumulative contribution to global GHG emissions is only 4%.
- **India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)**
 - It targets a 33 to 35% reduction in emissions intensity of its GDP by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.
 - It establishes an extra carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through enhanced forest and tree cover by 2030.
- **Spearhead** - Global solar alliance, INSPA (International Agency for Solar Policy & Application), uniting all nations situated between the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn.

Emissions surge in India

Greenhouse gas emissions in India are rising sharply

in megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year



Reference

[The Hindu Business Line | India's greenhouse gas emissions](#)



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