

07/04/2024

TOPICS COVERED

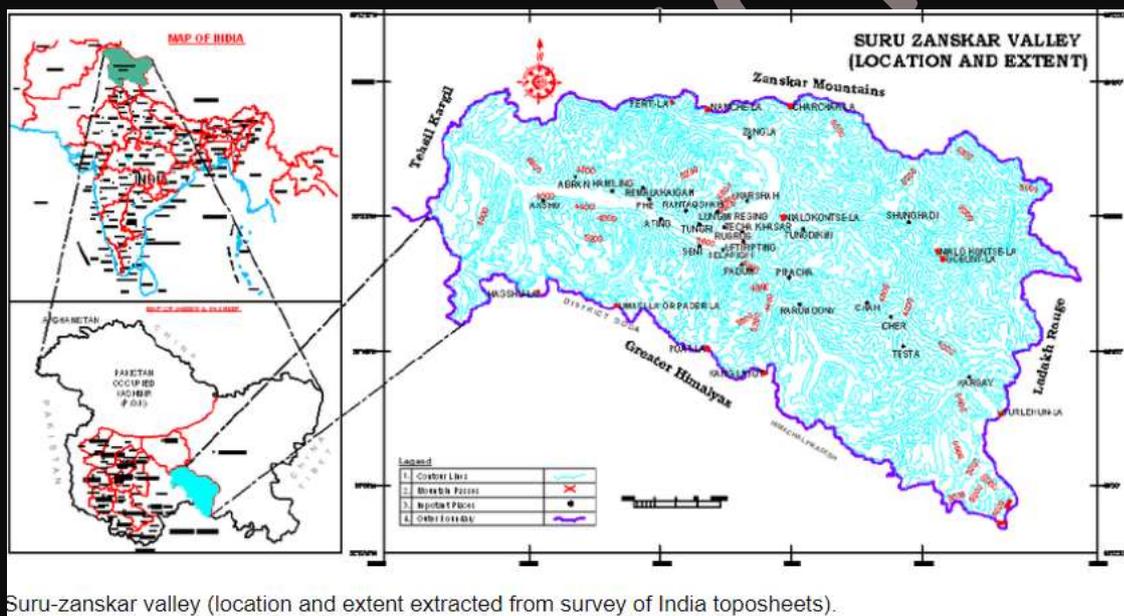
1. States offer up thousands of hectares of 'degraded' forest land for green credits (GS Paper III: Environment)
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All-weather road gives a strategic fillip to Ladakh (GS Paper III: Internal Security)

The Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road allows surface movement from Leh to Lahaul-Spiti through the world's highest tunnel at Shinku La Pass at 16,580 feet, which is currently under construction

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) achieved a significant milestone in Ladakh by connecting Himachal Pradesh and Leh through the Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road.
- This accomplishment is crucial for bolstering the security forces stationed in the region and enhancing India's strategic depth along the border with China and Pakistan.
- The newly constructed road opens up the remote Zaskar Valley, providing a secure ordnance depot away from potential adversaries.
- The road facilitates surface movement from Leh to Lahaul-Spiti via the Shinku La Pass tunnel, currently under construction at an altitude of 16,580 feet.
- Once completed, the tunnel will be the world's highest and ensure all-weather connectivity to Ladakh, addressing logistical challenges during harsh winters.

- Security forces currently stockpile ration and ammunition in advance due to the lack of all-weather roads, unlike China, which has developed such infrastructure near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The Nimmu-Padam-Darcha road, located 298 km from Manali, Himachal Pradesh, offers the shortest compared with the currently operational Manali-Leh road (428 km) and Srinagar-Leh road (439 km).
- The completion of the Shinkula tunnel in Ladakh's Zaskar Valley will enable faster and safer mobilization of troops to the region compared to existing routes near the Pakistan and China borders.
- Some locals express concerns about the project's impact on the landscape and cultural heritage of Zaskar.
- Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk acknowledges the strategic importance of the road but expresses worries about its potential impact on Zaskar's rich culture and heritage.
- Social activist Mustafa Haji questions the necessity of constructing four lanes on the Kargil-Zaskar section and highlights concerns about tree cutting in the Suru Valley.
- The Zaskar Range in Kargil separates the Zaskar Valley from the Indus Valley and is home to a unique indigenous culture.
- The Suru River, originating from the Zaskar Range, flows through Kargil.



States offer up thousands of hectares of 'degraded' forest land for green credits (GS Paper III: Environment)

Chhattisgarh, M.P. account for 40% of the 3,853 hectares of degraded forest land identified by ten States for green credit programme; credits can be used to offset compensatory afforestation obligations

- The Union Environment Ministry introduced the **Green Credit Programme (GCP)** with specific rules.
- Ten states have identified degraded forest land totaling approximately 3,853 hectares for the GCP.
- **Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh contribute significantly, accounting for about 40% of the available forest land.**
- **Under the GCP, registered entities can finance afforestation projects in degraded forest areas.**
- State forest departments will conduct the actual afforestation work.
- After two years, each planted tree may be worth one 'green credit' following evaluation by the International Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE).
- These green credits can be utilized by companies that have utilized forest land for non-forest purposes to fulfill compensatory afforestation obligations.

Compensatory afforestation

- **Laws mandate industries or institutions granted permission to clear forest land for non-forest purposes to provide equivalent non-forest land to forest authorities.**
- They must also pay for afforestation on the provided land.
- The non-forest land should ideally be close to the razed forest tracts; otherwise, degraded forest land may be used.
- **Companies must compensate for the lost value of the forest ecosystem, known as the 'net present value.'**
- Obtaining contiguous non-forest land for compensatory afforestation is challenging, especially in states like Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
- These states historically diverted large tracts of forest land for mining, making it difficult to find suitable non-forest land nearby.
- **The Compensatory Afforestation Fund, funded by environmental compensation paid by companies, remains largely unspent due to the unavailability of suitable land for afforestation.**

Creating new land banks

- Green credits incentivize private investments in tree plantation, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's calls for sustainable lifestyles.
- However, assigning a monetary value to green credits poses challenges, according to experts.
- Linking green credits to compensatory afforestation activities is even more complex.
- **The program can inadvertently create land banks, which may be diverted to commercial entities, potentially increasing forest land diversion.**
- **Compensatory afforestation laws aim to discourage forest land appropriation for commercial purposes, but the green credit scheme may counteract this goal.**

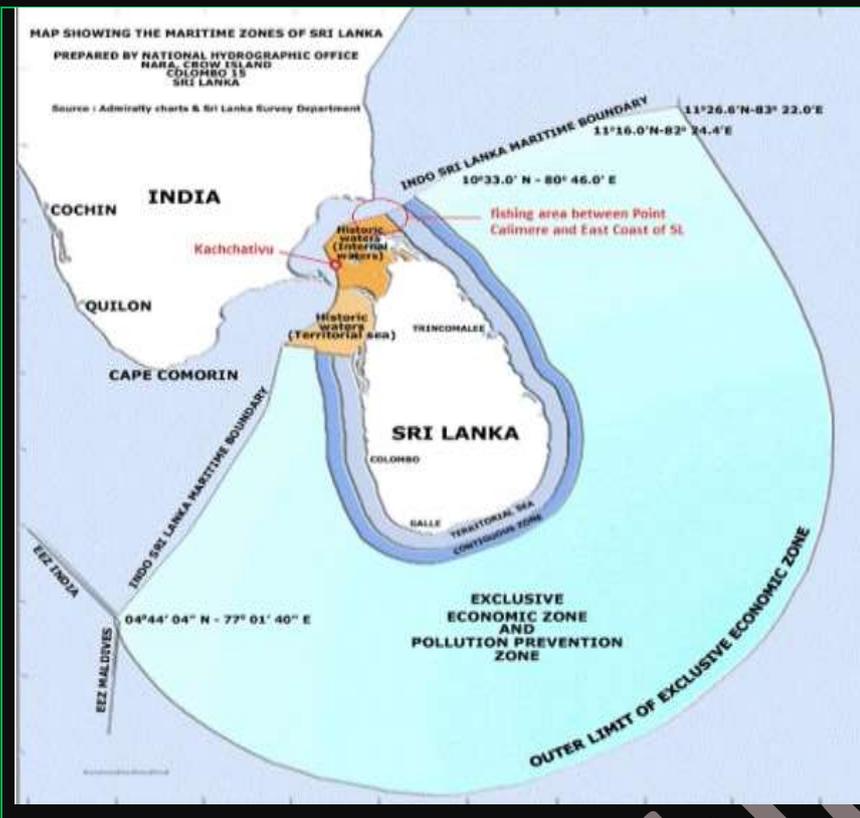
'Does not absolve responsibility'

- Bhanudas Pingale, leading the program at ICFRE, stated that the scheme is in its pilot stage, with State and Central government entities as the current applicants.
- The green credit scheme does not exempt institutions from their obligation to provide suitable land for compensation, according to Pingale.
- The scheme aims to encourage corporate social responsibility actions and regeneration, not just compensatory afforestation.
- There may be revisions to provisions such as the two-year timeframe to approve land as credit-generating, as the program progresses.

Why are Katchatheevu pacts being questioned? | Explained (GS Paper II: IR)

What triggered the controversy? Who owns the island? How was the issue settled? What were India's gains? Will revisiting bilateral pacts solve the fishermen's issue? What has been the response in India, especially in Tamil Nadu? What about Sri Lanka?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress party of irresponsibly giving away the Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka.
- He made this statement on a social media platform 'X' on March 31, citing a media report based on documents obtained through a Right to Information Act application.
- The documents were received by K. Annamalai, the Tamil Nadu president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar supported Modi's allegation during a media conference, emphasizing the need for a solution.
- Jaishankar pointed out that the bilateral agreements signed by India and Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976, under Congress and DMK governance respectively, showed indifference towards Katchatheevu island and compromised Indian fishermen's rights in the Palk Strait.



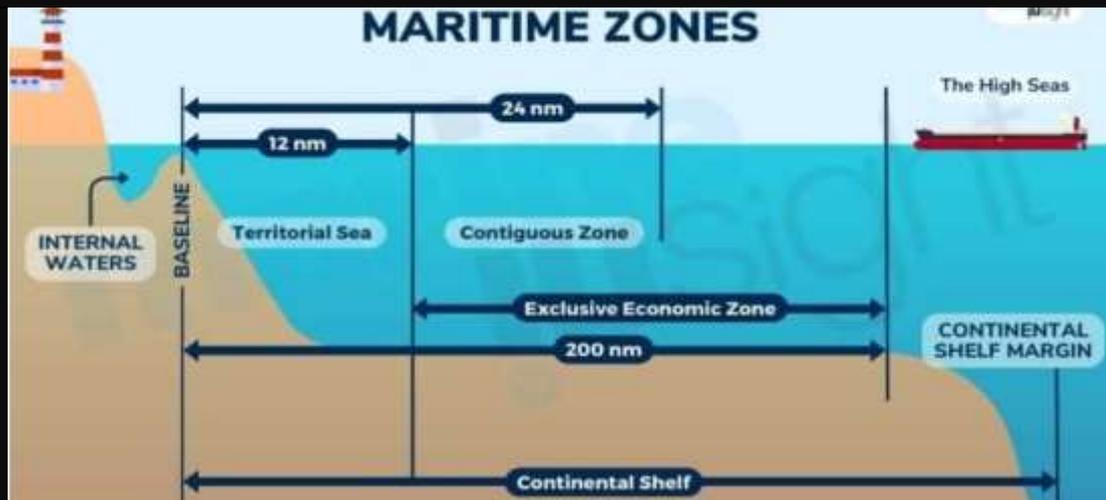
Where is Katchatheevu?

- Katchatheevu is a small, uninhabited island.
- It covers an area of approximately 285 acres.
- The island is situated in the Palk Strait.
- It lies about 14.5 km south of Delft Island.
- Katchatheevu is located approximately 16 km northeast of Rameswaram.
- The island is barren and lacks drinking water or infrastructure.
- The only structure on the island is a Catholic shrine dedicated to St. Anthony.

What was the dispute?

- The dispute over ownership of Katchatheevu began in 1921 between the British colonial governments of Madras and Ceylon.
- Negotiations between the two sides lasted for five decades until they were settled in 1974 and 1976.
- Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi of India and Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka signed bilateral agreements during this time.
- These agreements declared Katchatheevu as part of Sri Lanka's territory.
- They also established a maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal to define exclusive economic zones for both countries.
- Under the agreements, India and Sri Lanka have sovereign rights over resources in their respective exclusive economic zones.

Fishing vessels and fishermen from both countries are prohibited from fishing in each other's waters, territorial sea, and exclusive economic zone.



- Despite the territorial dispute, Tamil Nadu fishermen visit Katchatheevu annually in March for the St. Anthony's festival.
- The 1974 agreement permits Indian fishermen to access the island for rest, drying of nets, and the festival, but fishing activity is prohibited.

What did India get?

- In the past, New Delhi was perceived as benefiting diplomatically by maintaining close ties with Sri Lanka.
- This diplomatic relationship was crucial as Sri Lanka was leaning towards China during that time.
- After the liberation of Bangladesh, India aimed to strengthen ties with Sri Lanka, especially considering the issue of citizenship for stateless Indian-origin Tamils in Sri Lanka.



- As part of the diplomatic negotiations, New Delhi gained sovereign rights over Wadge Bank, a location rich in marine resources near Kanniyakumari.
- Recently, the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas invited offers for oil and gas exploration in India, including around Wadge Bank.

- However, this move faced criticism from local residents of Kanniyakumari and environmentalists due to concerns about potential negative impacts on the marine ecosystem.

Are fishermen arrests related to the island?

- **Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu face frequent arrests by the Sri Lankan Navy for fishing illegally in Sri Lanka's territorial waters.**
- **These arrests often occur beyond Katchatheevu, close to Sri Lanka's northern shores.**
- Northern Sri Lankan fishermen, also Tamil-speaking, have been demanding their fishing rights since the end of the civil war in 2009.
- **They oppose the bottom-trawling fishing method used by Indian fishermen, which depletes marine resources and hampers post-war recovery efforts.**
- **India has promoted mechanized trawler fishing, leading to resource depletion along Tamil Nadu's coast and pushing Indian fishermen towards Sri Lankan waters.**
- Despite a 2016 agreement between the two governments to phase out bottom trawling, Indian fishermen continue the practice.
- **The conflict between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen is primarily about fishing methods and territorial rights, not about Katchatheevu.**
- Retrieving Katchatheevu is not a solution to this ongoing conflict.

What has been the response?

- Opposition parties, particularly the Congress, criticized PM Modi's remarks about Katchatheevu, citing the government's stance in 2015 that previous agreements didn't involve territorial acquisition or cession.
- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin questioned PM Modi's silence on Katchatheevu during his tenure as Prime Minister.
- **Former Indian diplomats warned that challenging past agreements could harm India's credibility and strain relations with Sri Lanka.**
- **Former National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon cautioned against reopening the 50-year-old agreement, calling it a potential "self-goal."**
- Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry stated that there's no need to revisit the issue resolved five decades ago.
- Sri Lankan Fisheries Minister Douglas Devananda accused India of acting in self-interest to limit Sri Lankan fishermen's access around Katchatheevu.
- Fishermen from both countries expressed concern over the remarks and emphasized the urgent need to address the ongoing fisheries conflict, which threatens marine ecosystems and livelihoods.

What is the outlook on women's employment? (GS Paper III: Employment)

What does the India Employment Report, 2024 state about key labour market indicators? Why is women's participation in the labour force low? What are the recommendations to bring about a change in women's job prospects?

The story so far:

- The India Employment Report, 2024, was released by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization.
- According to the report, key labor market indicators have shown improvement in recent years.
- The indicators include the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Workforce Participation Rate (WPR), and Unemployment Rate (UR).
- Between 2000 and 2019, these indicators showed a long-term deterioration.
- However, they improved thereafter, which coincided with periods of economic distress, including the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The improvement was observed except for two peak pandemic quarters.

What about women's participation?

- The female Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in India is significantly lower than that of males.
- In 2023, the male LFPR was 78.5, while the female LFPR was only 37.
- Globally, the average female LFPR is 49 according to World Bank data.
- The female LFPR had been declining steadily since 2000, reaching 24.5 in 2019, before slightly increasing, especially in rural areas.
- Despite these modest improvements, employment conditions for women remain poor.
- Amit Basole, an Economics professor at Azim Premji University, suggests that the increase in female LFPR is mostly in rural areas and self-employment, often involving unpaid work.
- He explains that this trend likely stems from economic slowdowns before COVID-19 and the pandemic itself, leading to more women entering the labor force.
- Some hypotheses suggest improvements in measuring women's work and increased non-farm employment for men, leading women to substitute for men in agriculture.
- However, conclusive evidence regarding the causes is still lacking.

Where are women employed?

- The India Employment Report highlights that women are primarily responsible for the rise in self-employment and unpaid family work.
- Nearly two-thirds of the additional employment created after 2019 consists of self-employed individuals, with women predominantly working as unpaid family workers.
- The proportion of regular employment, which had been steadily increasing since 2000, started declining after 2018.

- Globally, South Asia, including India, has the highest rate of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET), averaging 29.2% between 2010 and 2019.
- India specifically has a significant portion of young people classified as NEET, with a higher rate among women compared to men

What are some of the reasons for low women's participation in the labour force?

- Economists and women's rights experts identify multiple barriers hindering women's careers or job opportunities.
- These barriers include **a lack of job availability, women being burdened with caregiving responsibilities, low wages, patriarchal attitudes, and safety concerns.**
- Jayati Ghosh, in her book "The Making of a Catastrophe," notes a significant decline in women's labor force participation rates between 2004 and 2018.
- Ghosh attributes part of this decline to **increased participation in education among women aged 15 to 19 but highlights a broader trend of women being pushed out of employment due to a scarcity of paid work.**
- Amit Basole suggests both supply and demand side factors contribute to the decline in women's LFPR.
- **India's growth pattern, which lacks job-intensive sectors, combined with social norms restricting women's mobility and caregiving roles,** limits their ability to seek employment opportunities.
- **Concerns about public safety and transportation** further constrain women's job options, as noted by Ghosh.
- Claudia Goldin's research, recognized with the 2023 Economics Nobel Prize, highlights various factors affecting the supply and demand for female labor.
- These factors include opportunities for balancing work and family, decisions regarding education and child-rearing, technological advancements, legal frameworks, the structural transformation of the economy and societal norms.

- **Technological advancements:** These are improvements and innovations in technology that have changed the way people work.
- For example, advancements in automation and digital technology have created new job opportunities for women.
- They have also made it easier for women to work remotely or pursue flexible work arrangements, which can help them balance work and family responsibilities more effectively.
- Additionally, technology has facilitated access to education and training, enabling women to acquire new skills and qualifications for employment.
- **Legal frameworks:** These are laws and regulations put in place by governments to protect the rights of workers, including women. These laws may include anti-discrimination laws that prohibit employers from discriminating against women based on their gender.
- They may also include laws mandating equal pay for equal work, ensuring that women are paid the same as men for doing the same job.
- Furthermore, legal frameworks may establish policies such as maternity leave and childcare support, which can help women juggle work and family responsibilities.

- Overall, these legal protections create a more supportive environment for women to participate in the workforce and advance in their careers.
- Goldin emphasizes that women's choices are often constrained by **marriage and domestic responsibilities**, a phenomenon observed not only in the U.S. but also in countries like India.

What needs to change?

- Economists emphasize the necessity of interventions in both the demand and supply sides of **the labor market to address women's employment** challenges.
- On the demand side, policies promoting labor-intensive sectors in manufacturing and higher productivity services are crucial.
- Public investment in safety and transportation infrastructure is essential to create conducive environments for women to work outside the home.
- Additionally, public investment in **affordable child and elderly care facilities** is vital to support women in **balancing caregiving responsibilities with employment**.
- These interventions aim to enable women to access **better-paying job opportunities** and participate more actively in the labor force.

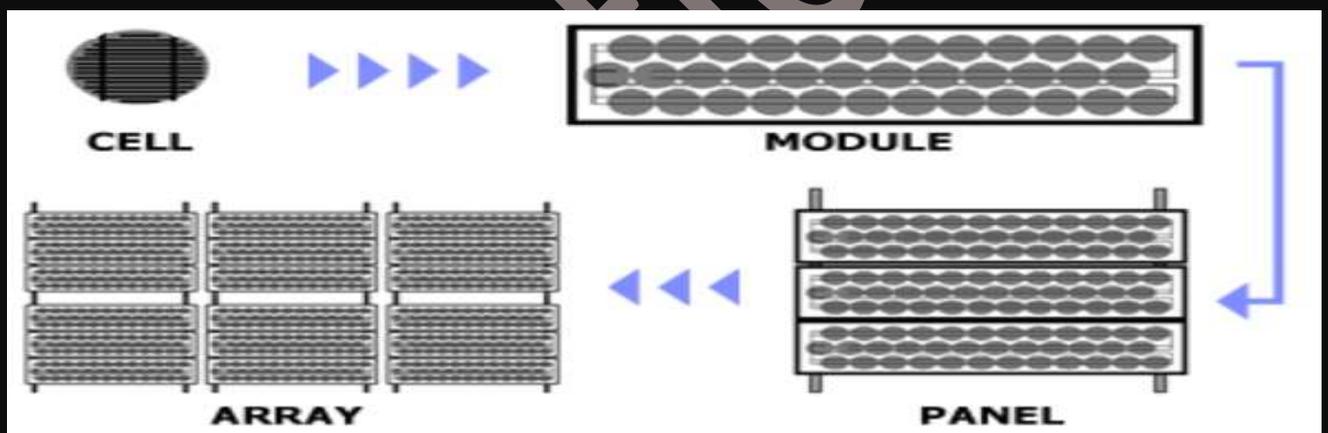
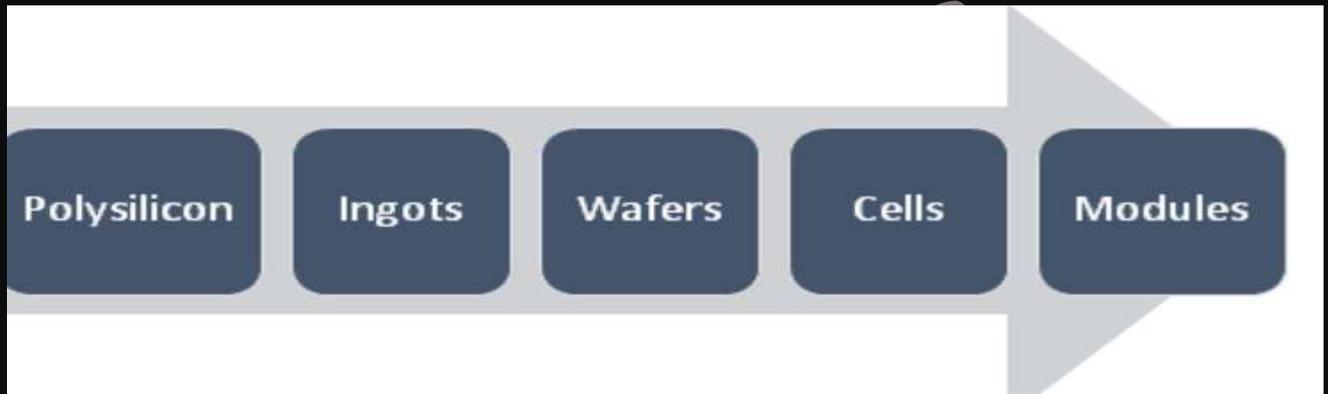
Will new solar power rules boost production? | Explained (GS Paper III: S&T, Manufacturing Sector)

What is the Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules Order?

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in India has introduced a new executive order.
- The order is called "**The Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (Requirements for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2019.**"
- It came into effect from April 1.
- The purpose of this order is to **encourage and support India's solar module manufacturing industry**.
- The order aims to regulate the production and sale of solar photovoltaic modules.
- It **mandates compulsory registration** for manufacturers producing these modules.
- This registration requirement is **intended to ensure quality control and adherence to standards**.
- By implementing this order, the **government aims to promote domestic manufacturing and reduce reliance on imports in the solar energy sector**.

What is the context of the executive order?

- The MNRE issued the order in 2019.
- It mandates solar module makers to undergo **inspections by the National Institute of Solar Energy**.
- Approval from this inspection certifies a company as a genuine manufacturer of solar panels.
- **This is to distinguish between true manufacturers and mere importers or assemblers.**
- India's solar industry heavily relies on imports from China despite claims of indigenous production.
- **Solar modules are crucial components, made up of multiple solar panels.**
- **Solar panels, in turn, are assemblies of solar cells.**



- India aims to significantly increase solar installations by 2030.
- However, local production of solar cells and modules falls short of demand.
- **India also lacks the capacity to produce raw materials like ingots and wafers, relying on imports for these components.**

Why is India reliant on imports?

- India aims to **reduce reliance on fossil fuels by sourcing 500 GW of electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.**
- This plan includes generating at least **280 GW from solar power alone.**
- To achieve this, approximately **40 GW of solar capacity needs to be added annually until 2030.**

- However, over the last five years, India has **only managed to add around 13 GW of solar capacity.**
- The COVID-19 pandemic is cited as a factor affecting the progress towards these targets.
- India's solar industry faces challenges in meeting the demand for solar panels and component cells domestically.
- **China** dominates the global supply of solar components, **controlling nearly 80% of the market.**
- The creation of a list of approved solar module manufacturers aims to regulate imports and boost domestic production.
- **Tensions between India and China** have also influenced the decision to reduce reliance on Chinese imports.
- Meeting solar energy targets remains a significant challenge for India due to limited domestic production capacity.

If the list is voluntary why pay to be on it?

- Being on the Approved Models and Manufacturers (AMM) list allows companies **to compete for government tenders in solar energy programs.**
- These tenders include flagship programs like the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**, aimed at subsidizing rooftop solar installations for around one crore households.
- Eligibility for the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and other schemes requires certification as a domestic manufacturer on the AMM list.**
- Another scheme, **PM KUSUM**, focuses on providing solar pumpsets and rural electrification, with eligibility for manufacturers tied to being certified as genuine local manufacturers.
- The **Production Linked Incentive Scheme, worth ₹24,000 crore, aims to incentivize domestic manufacturing of solar panels and components.**
- To qualify for incentives under this scheme, companies must be recognized as genuine local manufacturers.
- Currently, 14 major companies have become eligible for incentives to manufacture solar modules totaling 48 GW.
- However, these restrictions apply only to new projects, and facilities commissioned before March 2024 can still use imported modules.

Is India's manufacturing capacity adequate?

- Last year was advantageous for Indian solar businesses due to reduced orders from the U.S. and Europe to China, a major supplier of solar components globally.
- **China faced restrictions due to allegations of using "forced labor" by Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang**, prompting reduced imports from Europe and the U.S.
- **India benefited, exporting nearly \$1 billion worth of solar modules in the first six months of 2023-24.**
- However, there are concerns that the U.S. might lift duties on China, potentially affecting Indian exports negatively in the future.
- **About half of India's solar modules are imported from China, leading to a demand-supply gap.**

- The government aims to increase domestic manufacturing capacity, but challenges persist.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) lists 82 certified solar module manufacturers, but **there's no equivalent list for solar cell manufacturers.**
- India still has a long way to go to achieve self-reliance in solar manufacturing.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION: GS PAPER III: S&T, Manufacturing Sector

Question: Critically evaluate the implications of the Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules Order, 2019, on India's solar energy programs and policies. (150 Words/10 Marks)

ANSWER APPROACH

- Introduce with an outline of India's solar energy goals and the importance of domestic manufacturing in achieving them.
- Then bring the Positive Implications and Negative Implications
- Further add Additional Considerations
- Then bring the Balanced Evaluation in last paragraph
- Finally Conclude by summarizing the key positive and negative impacts of the ALMM Order on India's solar energy goals.

ANSWER

The Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (ALMM) Order, 2019, introduced by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in India, aims to regulate the production and sale of solar photovoltaic modules. It mandates compulsory registration for manufacturers producing these modules to ensure quality control and adherence to standards, with the goal of promoting domestic manufacturing and reducing reliance on imports in the solar energy sector.

India's solar energy goals and the importance of domestic manufacturing:

- India aims to significantly increase solar installations by 2030, with a target of sourcing 500 GW of electricity from non-fossil fuel sources, including 280 GW from solar power.
- Domestic manufacturing is crucial for achieving these goals as it reduces dependency on imports, strengthens self-reliance, creates job opportunities, and enhances supply chain security.

Positive Implications:

- **Quality Assurance:** The ALMM Order ensures the quality and reliability of solar modules used in India, reducing the risk of underperformance and project failures, thereby bolstering investor confidence.
- **Boost to Domestic Manufacturing:** By incentivizing domestic solar manufacturers, the ALMM Order promotes self-reliance, stimulates economic growth, and enhances India's competitiveness in the global solar market.
- **Protection against Dumping:** The Order potentially safeguards Indian manufacturers from unfair trade practices like dumping of cheaper, lower-quality modules, thereby protecting the domestic industry.

Negative Implications:

- **Cost Increases:** The ALMM Order may have led to higher costs for solar power projects due to increased compliance requirements and limited availability of approved manufacturers, potentially slowing adoption, especially in the short term.

- **Bureaucratic Burden:** The Order may create administrative and compliance complexities, posing challenges for developers and suppliers, and hindering the ease of doing business in the solar sector.
- **Limited Competition:** There is a concern that the ALMM Order could restrict healthy market competition by favoring approved manufacturers, potentially stifling innovation and limiting consumer choice.

Additional Considerations:

- **International Trade Relations:** The ALMM Order may impact India's trade relationships, especially with major solar component exporters like China. Ensuring compliance with WTO regulations is crucial to avoid trade disputes.
- **Technological Evolution:** The Order needs to adapt to the rapid pace of technological advancements in the solar sector to remain relevant and effective in promoting domestic manufacturing while fostering innovation.

While the ALMM Order offers significant benefits in terms of quality assurance, domestic manufacturing promotion, and protection against dumping, it also poses challenges such as cost increases, bureaucratic burden, and limited competition. However, the long-term benefits of achieving self-reliance and enhancing supply chain security outweigh these short-term challenges.

Thus, the ALMM Order plays a crucial role in advancing India's solar energy goals by promoting domestic manufacturing. However, there is a need for continual evaluation and refinement to address the challenges and ensure a competitive and innovative solar market. Recommendations include streamlining compliance processes, fostering innovation through research and development incentives, and fostering partnerships with international stakeholders to enhance technological capabilities.

World Central Kitchen | The charity that Israel bombed in Gaza

Israeli forces say 'misidentification at night' led to the bombing of an aid convoy belonging to the charity in which seven of its members were killed, but its founder Jose Andres says the IDF systematically targeted the aid workers, 'car by car'

- Chef Jose Andres, known for his humanitarian work, emphasizes storytelling over running restaurants.
- Seven workers from his non-profit aid group, World Central Kitchen (WCK), were killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza on April 2.
- Israeli invasion of Gaza, sparked by Hamas's attacks, resulted in significant Palestinian casualties and widespread destruction.
- Israeli government's measures, like restricting humanitarian aid, worsened the crisis in Gaza.
- Despite challenges, WCK provided millions of meals through community kitchens in Gaza.
- WCK engaged in various activities in Gaza, including building infrastructure like a makeshift jetty for aid delivery.

- In a recent pilot project, 200 tonnes of aid arrived at a makeshift jetty in Gaza.
- A second convoy of 332 tonnes set sail from Cyprus on March 30 to deliver aid to Gaza.
- WCK workers oversaw the offloading of aid and unloaded 100 tonnes at a warehouse in Deir-al-Balah in central Gaza.
- While returning to Rafah in the south, their convoy was struck by the Israeli Army on April 2.
- The convoy followed a pre-approved route and included armored vehicles with WCK logos, but the IDF still targeted them.
- Chef Jose Andres expressed pride in his team's courage to enter disaster zones, but this time they suffered consequences for it.

‘Grave mistake’

- After the strike, the remaining 220 tonnes of food on the ship were returned to Cyprus.
- An inquiry headed by a former Israeli Army General announced findings on April 5, leading to the dismissal of two officers.
- Prime Minister Netanyahu called the attack 'tragic' but remarked that such incidents happen during wartime.
- The Israeli Army admitted to a 'grave mistake' and attributed it to 'misidentification at night.'
- Previous attacks on aid delivery in Gaza include an incident on February 29, where Israeli forces fired at an aid distribution point, causing a stampede and killing 115 Palestinians.
- Targeting of police officials guarding aid distribution works by the IDF is also reported, with allegations that they harbor militants.
- The victims of the latest strike included six foreigners and a Palestinian driver, drawing sharp criticism from world leaders who had previously ignored the plight of aid workers in Gaza.
- Leaders such as U.S. President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk have criticized Israel for the attack.
- Chef Jose Andres criticized the IDF for targeting his aid team during the Gaza conflict.
- He initially supported Israel's right to self-defense but later condemned Netanyahu's government for indiscriminate killings.
- Andres urged Israel to stop using food as a weapon, echoing concerns from the International Court of Justice.
- The World Central Kitchen (WCK) lost seven volunteers in Ukraine before Gaza, where they provided aid.
- WCK specializes in disaster relief, with Andres inspired to create it after the Haiti earthquake in 2010.
- The organization operates with a "private sector mentality," sourcing food locally and using local infrastructure.

Don't compare yourself with others (GS Paper IV)

Focus on your talents and potential to find true happiness

- The narrator struggled academically, especially in math, but managed to reach the fifth grade.
- After a math test where many classmates also failed, the narrator showed the results to their father.
- The father questioned the narrator's habit of comparing scores with classmates.
- He explained that comparing oneself to others doesn't lead to personal improvement.
- Instead, he encouraged the narrator to **focus on their own growth and potential**.
- The mother supported this idea, emphasizing the importance of **self-comparison for personal happiness**.
- Both parents advised against comparing oneself with others and suggested self-assessment and improvement as a better approach.
- They stressed that the only person to compare oneself with is one's own past performance.
- The narrator stopped comparing their life with others and focused on their own potential.
- **They chose a career in research while their friends pursued different paths.**
- **Despite challenges in their research work, they found fulfillment and contentment.**
- The narrator realized the importance of **accepting differences in desires and aspirations**.
- **Social media exacerbates the tendency to compare oneself with others.**
- Excessive comparison on social media leads to **low self-esteem and insecurities**.
- Instead of comparing, people should accept themselves and focus on developing their talents.
- **Acceptance and self-improvement lead to genuine happiness and fulfillment.**

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Question 1: Which of the following indicators includes both employed and actively seeking work individuals in the calculation?

- (A) Workforce Participation Rate (WPR)
- (B) Unemployment Rate (UR)
- (C) Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)
- (D) Employment Rate

Question 2: A decline in the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) could indicate which of the following?

- (A) An increase in job creation
- (B) A decrease in discouraged workers
- (C) A rise in the proportion of the working-age population in the labor force
- (D) An increase in the proportion of individuals not actively seeking work

Question 3: The Unemployment Rate (UR) is calculated as:

- (A) Unemployed persons / Total population
- (B) Unemployed persons / Working-age population
- (C) Unemployed persons / Labour Force
- (D) Employed persons / Labour Force

Question 4: Consider a scenario where the unemployment rate remains constant, but the workforce participation rate declines. This suggests:

- (A) More jobs have been created in the economy.
- (B) Discouraged workers have left the labor force.
- (C) The number of employed individuals has decreased.
- (D) Economic conditions have significantly improved.

Question 5: Which of the following best describes the primary function of a solar cell?

- (A) Converting sunlight into heat energy
- (B) Converting sunlight into electrical energy
- (C) Storing solar energy for later use
- (D) Regulating the flow of electricity in a solar panel

Question 6: The photovoltaic effect, crucial for the operation of solar cells, primarily involves:

- (A) The emission of electrons when light strikes a material
- (B) The absorption of heat energy by a material
- (C) The chemical alteration of a material under sunlight
- (D) The reflection of light from a material's surface

Question 7: Identify the primary semiconducting material used in most commercial solar cells:

- (A) Copper
- (B) Silicon
- (C) Aluminum
- (D) Carbon

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- (D) Employment Rate

Answer: (C) Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

Explanation: LFPR measures the proportion of the working-age population who are either employed or unemployed but actively looking for work.

Question 2: A decline in the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) could indicate which of the following?

- (A) An increase in job creation
- (B) A decrease in discouraged workers
- (C) A rise in the proportion of the working-age population in the labor force
- (D) An increase in the proportion of individuals not actively seeking work

Answer: (D) An increase in the proportion of individuals not actively seeking work

Explanation: A decline in LFPR suggests a smaller percentage of the working-age population is in the labor force, either due to retirement, discouragement, or other reasons for not actively seeking work.

Question 3: The Unemployment Rate (UR) is calculated as:

- (A) Unemployed persons / Total population
- (B) Unemployed persons / Working-age population
- (C) Unemployed persons / Labour Force
- (D) Employed persons / Labour Force

Answer: (C) Unemployed persons / Labour Force

Explanation: UR specifically measures the percentage of people within the labor force (those who are working or actively looking for work) who are unemployed.

<p>Question 4: Consider a scenario where the unemployment rate remains constant, but the workforce participation rate declines. This suggests:</p> <p>(A) More jobs have been created in the economy.</p> <p>(B) Discouraged workers have left the labor force.</p> <p>(C) The number of employed individuals has decreased.</p> <p>(D) Economic conditions have significantly improved.</p>	<p>Answer: (B) Discouraged workers have left the labor force.</p> <p>Explanation: A decline in WPR with a stable UR indicates people are no longer actively seeking work, potentially due to discouragement, leading to them not being counted as unemployed.</p>
<p>Question 5: Which of the following best describes the primary function of a solar cell?</p> <p>(A) Converting sunlight into heat energy</p> <p>(B) Converting sunlight into electrical energy</p> <p>(C) Storing solar energy for later use</p> <p>(D) Regulating the flow of electricity in a solar panel</p>	<p>Answer: (B) Converting sunlight into electrical energy</p> <p>Explanation: The core function of a solar cell (photovoltaic cell) is the direct transformation of light energy (photons) into electrical energy (voltage).</p>
<p>Question 6: The photovoltaic effect, crucial for the operation of solar cells, primarily involves:</p> <p>(A) The emission of electrons when light strikes a material</p> <p>(B) The absorption of heat energy by a material</p> <p>(C) The chemical alteration of a material under sunlight</p> <p>(D) The reflection of light from a material's surface</p>	<p>Answer: (A) The emission of electrons when light strikes a material</p> <p>Explanation: The photovoltaic effect describes how certain materials release electrons when exposed to light, creating a flow of electricity.</p>
<p>Question 7: Identify the primary semiconducting material used in most commercial solar cells:</p> <p>(A) Copper</p> <p>(B) Silicon</p> <p>(C) Aluminum</p> <p>(D) Carbon</p>	<p>Answer: (B) Silicon</p> <p>Explanation: Silicon, in various forms, is the most widely used semiconductor due to its suitable properties for solar cell manufacturing.</p>
<p>Question : 8 Which of the following factors does NOT directly affect the efficiency of a solar cell?</p> <p>(A) Intensity of sunlight</p> <p>(B) Manufacturing technology</p> <p>(C) Temperature</p> <p>(D) Size of the solar panel</p>	<p>Answer: (D) Size of the solar panel</p> <p>Explanation: While the panel size determines the total power output, it doesn't directly influence the efficiency of individual solar cells within it.</p>