Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper - II

- PM, Uzbek President discuss Afghan projects

GS paper - III

- The industrial output stays in positive territory for the second month at 3.6 %
- Not all Indian droughts are caused by El Nino
- 'India is on track to reduce emissions'
- Centre set to unveil 'ambitious' PSE divestment policy: Bajaj

PM, Uzbek President discuss Afghan projects

India and Uzbekistan plan to cooperate on connectivity projects in Afghanistan and will participate in a trilateral dialogue with Iran.

Highlights:

1. Both addressed the need to fight terrorism and shared the "same vision" on the future of the Afghanistan peace process, officials said.
2. The Countries shared the same vision of a united, [sovereign] the democratic Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, that it should be an Afghan-led, owned and controlled peace process.

The industrial output stays in positive territory for the second month at 3.6 %

India's industrial output grew at the fastest pace in eight months in October 2020 at 3.6% as per quick estimates from the National Statistical Office (NSO).

Highlights:

1. This was the second month in a row that industrial output recorded positive growth, but economists were cautious about calling it a 'turnaround' as October's numbers were bolstered by pent-up and festive demand and helped by a low base as the index of industrial production had shrunk 6.6% in October 2019.
2. While two consecutive months of positive IIP growth is a good sign, one must wait for a few more months to believe that the economy is firmly in recovery mode.

Not all Indian droughts are caused by El Nino

Droughts in India have historically been associated with El Nino, anomalous warming of the equatorial Pacific, but scientists from IISc Bengaluru suggest other culprits too.

Highlights:

1. The study that appears in journal Science says that nearly six out of 10 droughts, in non-El Nino years, that occurred during the Indian summer-monsoon season in the past century may have been driven by atmospheric disturbances from the North Atlantic region.
2. In an El Niño year, abnormally warm equatorial Pacific waters pull moisture-laden clouds away from the subcontinent, but the IISc study shows that in non-El Nino years, these droughts are a consequence of a sudden and steep drop in rainfall in late August.
3. Thus beyond looking at the Pacific Ocean it is important to consider other influences on the Indian monsoon from outside the tropics.
4. The sheer size of the Pacific means that it influences global climate much more than the Atlantic or other oceans. Therefore, the latter links aren't easily discoverable. But this study shows that we do need to look at such links closely.

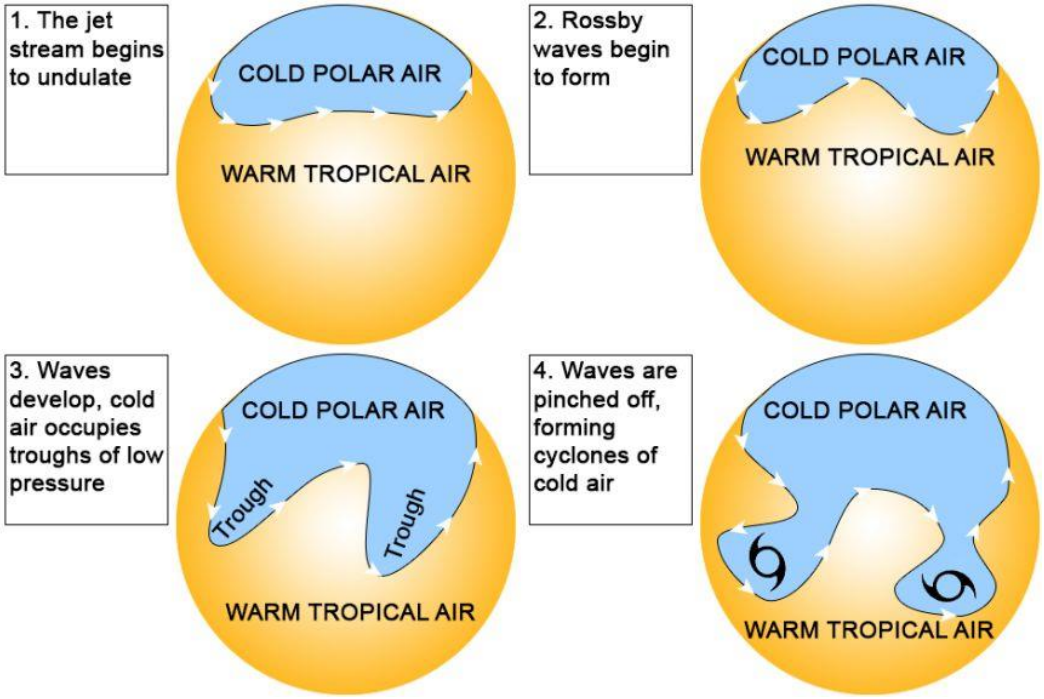
Rossby wave and Indian Monsoon

It seems, the researchers note, that winds in the upper atmosphere are interacting with a deep cyclonic circulation above the abnormally cold North Atlantic waters. The resulting wave of air currents, called a Rossby wave, curved down from the North Atlantic squeezed in by the Tibetan plateau and hit the subcontinent around mid-August, suppressing rainfall and throwing off the monsoon.

Background:

Rossby waves are formed when polar air moves toward the Equator while tropical air is moving poleward. Because of the temperature difference between the Equator and the poles due to differences in the amounts of solar radiation received, heat tends to flow from low to high latitudes; this is accomplished, in part, by these air movements. Rossby waves are a dominant component of the Ferrel circulation. The tropical air carries heat poleward, and the polar air absorbs heat as it moves toward the Equator. The existence of these waves explains the

low-pressure cells (cyclones) and high-pressure cells (anticyclones) that are important in producing the weather of the middle and higher latitudes.



'India is on track to reduce emissions'

The Environment Minister said that India was the only major G20 country that was on track towards keeping to its nationally determined commitments to halt runaway global warming.

Highlights:

1. India has already achieved 21% of our emissions intensity target, the share of renewables in our energy mix is 37.9% and our tree cover has increased by 15,000 sq. km. in six years.
2. Several assessments by independent agencies have said that we are the only major G20 country compatible with a less than 2°C world.

Background:

In 2015, ahead of the United Nations' significant climate conference in Paris, India announced three major voluntary commitments called the Nationally

Determined Contributions (NDC): improving the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33–35% by 2030 over 2005 levels; increasing the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40% by 2030, and enhancing its forest cover, thereby absorbing 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide.

The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP 21 in Paris, on December 12, 2015, constitutes a landmark agreement on climate change that seeks to limit global average temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and endeavour to limit the increase to 1.5°C.

Centre set to unveil 'ambitious' PSE divestment policy: Bajaj

The new public sector enterprises policy for strategic disinvestment is far more ambitious.

Highlights:

1. Even strategic sectors would have only one to four public sector players. The rest will be privatised.
2. The government expects to launch a new single-window clearance for foreign investors by mid-April and will have identified companies eligible for the production-linked incentives scheme announced for ten new sectors by the end of April 2021.

Mains:

1. What is disinvestment? Examine why disinvestment is necessary?
2. Is it a good idea to privatise even the profit-making public sector enterprises? Give reasons in support of your answer.