



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS Paper - II

- U.S. & climate action

### GS Paper - III

- Draft policy to help grow nano, micro-enterprises
- Telcos seek clarity on the onus of security breach post NSD roll-out
- 'Cybersecurity trends turned unpredictable after COVID'
- More flash droughts in India by end of the century



## U.S. & climate action

### *Issues: Climate justice*

**The story so far:** Joe Biden assumed office as President of the United States on January 20, 2021, and among the first orders he signed was one to restore America's participation in the United Nations Paris Agreement on climate change.

### **Impact of American Withdrawal**

1. The withdrawal from the Paris Agreement meant that the U.S. was no longer bound by its national pledge made under the pact: to achieve an economy-wide reduction of its GHG emissions by 26%-28% below the 2005 level in 2025 and to make best efforts to reduce emissions.
2. America also stopped its contribution to the UN's Green Climate Fund, to which it had pledged \$3 billion, after transferring an estimated \$1 billion.
3. On the contrary, the Trump regime focused on, among other things, relaxing controls on emissions from fossil fuel-based industries, diluting standards on air quality and vehicular emissions etc.

### **Mr Biden's focus on to cut emissions**

1. The U.S. accounts for 15% of global GHG emissions, but it is the biggest legacy contributor of atmosphere-warming gases.
2. Mr Biden has placed climate change front and centre among his priorities. He has promised an "enforcement mechanism to achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

### **Mr Biden's policy and Global fight against Climate change**

1. In his Plan for Climate Change and Environmental Justice released before the election, Mr Biden says America will strongly support multilateralism again, but also call for accountability from other countries, including the top emitter, China, on GHG emissions.
2. Nations that default could face carbon adjustment fees or quotas. This year's UN climate conference in Glasgow will see the new administration engaging UNFCCC member-nations to raise global ambition.



## Draft policy to help grow nano, micro-enterprises

*Issues: MSMEs, economic growth and jobs*

A new policy on the anvil, the Udyog Sahayak Enterprises Network (USENET), may give a major fillip to the growth-stunted nano and micro-enterprises in India's informal sector.

### Highlights:

1. The proposed framework, whose draft was jointly put together by the Azim Premji University, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), is aimed at providing a slew of growth-driven services to over 62 million nano and micro-enterprises that currently employ over 100 million people.
2. Each of these small enterprises currently has one to three employees, and if given a boost, they have the potential to grow and create a large number of jobs, says the draft.
3. If the value-added per worker can be computed, according to the draft, it could bring in a 12% nominal growth in GVA (gross asset value), amounting to an economic value of ₹2.16 lakh crore in five years and over ₹19 lakh crore at the end of 10 years.

### The much-needed support system

1. Rather than creating more nano-entrepreneurs, the country has to help existing MSEs grow in size. We can do this by creating a support system which enables them to go digital, avail of government schemes, adopt new technologies, and increase productivity. This will create millions of new jobs.
2. Through USENET, we are trying to create a countrywide entrepreneurial network. The platform will give millions of nano and micro-enterprises, which are facing harassment and growth challenges, information on policies, schemes and credit options, and visibility to lenders and customers, thereby help them grow and go digital.
3. The Union government is likely to sanction upto ₹5,000 crores to part-fund CAPEX to set up at least 19 lakh USENET centres. Each of these centres will be headed by a Udyog Sahayak, who will have a mandate to help and monitor the growth of 15 to 50 enterprises.



## Telcos seek clarity on the onus of security breach post NSD roll-out

*Issues: Geopolitics and cybersecurity*

In a bid to tighten the security of the communications network, the Centre had recently announced the **National Security Directive** for the telecom sector, which will mandate service providers to purchase equipment from trusted sources.

### Highlights:

1. Telcos wanted the government to come out with clear guidelines [as to] who [would] be responsible for any breach in the network if the government is making a list of trusted products that have to be deployed in the network.
2. Under the current rules, telecom operators are held responsible for any security breach in their network.
3. Notably, Chinese gearmaker Huawei has had run-ins with governments in Canada and the U.S. The U.S. has alleged Huawei did not comply with its cybersecurity and privacy laws leaving the country and the citizens vulnerable to espionage.

## 'Cybersecurity trends turned unpredictable after COVID'

*Issues: COVID and Cybersecurity*

The pandemic and the worldwide adoption of remote working resulted in cybersecurity undergoing years' worth of transformation in a matter of months and therefore it is tough to understand the current cybersecurity landscape and predict security trends.

### Highlights:

1. Rising geopolitical tensions worldwide have resulted in governments and enterprises increasingly focusing on cybersecurity to protect their assets from cyberattackers.
2. Instances of cyberattacks by national/state actors targeting critical infrastructure and nationally important establishments are becoming more common.



3. In 2021, there will be an increased focus among countries on developing stricter cybersecurity regulations and efforts to build both defensive and offensive capabilities.
4. The importance of data had risen meteorically, with online transactions/interactions becoming a larger part of daily lives in the pandemic.

## More flash droughts in India by end of the century

*Issues: Climate change, droughts, agriculture, Food-water security*

**Context:** In 1979, India faced a severe flash drought, affecting about 40% of the country and taking a toll on agriculture. A new study has now pointed out that India could experience more such flash droughts by the end of this century.

### Flash droughts

Flash droughts are those that occur very quickly, with soil moisture depleting rapidly. Normally, developing drought conditions take months, but these happen within a week or in two weeks' time. Several factors including atmospheric anomalies, anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions play an important role.

### Looming danger

1. The ongoing climate change has caused a significant increase in global temperature and this can lead to more and more flash droughts in the coming years.
2. The analysis showed a considerable rise in the frequency of extremely dry and hot years in the coming three decades.
3. The frequency of concurrent hot and dry extremes is projected to rise by about five-fold, causing an approximately seven-fold increase in flash droughts like 1979 by the end of the 21st century.
4. They conclude that this increased frequency of flash droughts can have deleterious implications for crop production, irrigation demands and groundwater abstraction in India.

### Way forward:

If we can meet the 'Paris Agreement' goals and limit global warming to well below 2 degrees C, the numbers and frequency of the projected flash droughts may go down.