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Current Affairs of the Day

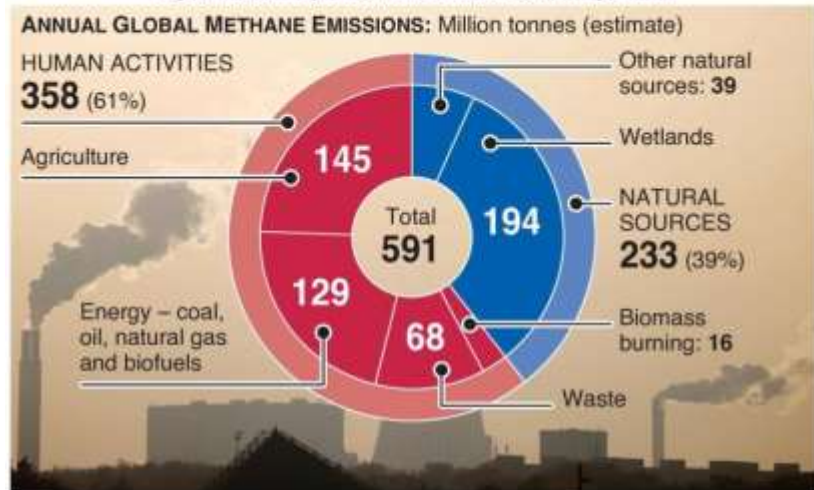
World leaders pledge to save forests, cut methane emissions

The inability of major powers so far to agree more broadly on rapid reductions in the use of fossil fuels, the main cause of man-made global warming, has upset the poorer, smaller countries likely to suffer its worst effects.

- Leaders at the COP26 global climate conference in Glasgow have pledged to stop deforestation by the end of the decade and slash emissions of the greenhouse gas, methane, to help slow climate change.
- Nearly 90 countries have joined the U.S.- and EU-led effort to slash emissions of methane by 30% by 2030 from 2020 levels.
- The Global Methane Pledge now covers emissions from two-thirds of the global economy. Among the signatories is Brazil — one of the five biggest emitters of methane, which is generated in cows' digestive systems, in landfill waste and in oil and gas production. Three others — China, Russia and India — have not signed up. Australia has said it will not back the pledge.

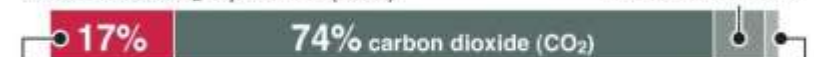
Pledge to slash planet-warming methane

Countries joining the Global Methane Pledge commit to a collective goal of reducing worldwide emissions of the potent greenhouse gas by at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030



GLOBAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY GAS

Measured as CO₂-equivalents (2018)



Methane: More than 25 times as potent as CO₂ at trapping heat but breaks down faster in atmosphere – so cutting methane emissions can have rapid impact on global warming

TOP FIVE METHANE EMITTERS

Million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent (2018)



Global Methane Pledge

More than 100 countries have joined U.S.- and EU-led effort, including Brazil. China, Russia and India have yet to sign pledge

Sources: Climate Watch, IEA, Reuters

Picture: Getty Images

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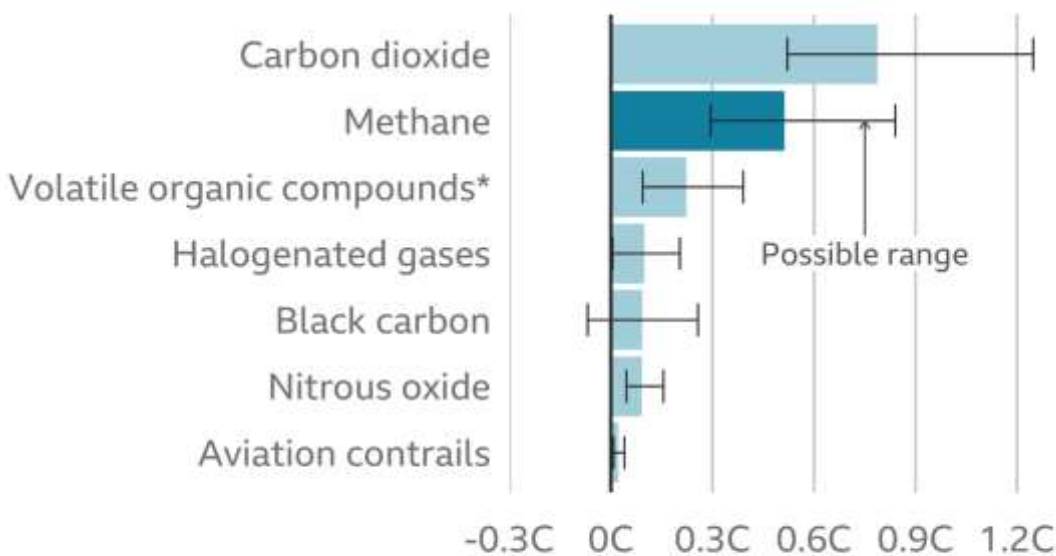
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Methane is a major contributor to global warming

Contribution to warming in degrees Celsius



Figures are for contributions to 2010-2019 warming relative to 1850-1900

*Volatile organic compounds and carbon monoxide

Source: IPCC Sixth Assessment Report 2021

BBC

\$19 billion for forests

1. In 2020, the world lost 2,58,000 sq. km of forests according to the Global Forest Watch. The conservation charity WWF estimates that 27 football fields of forest are lost every minute.
2. Over 100 national leaders pledged to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade, underpinned by \$19 billion in public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests.
3. Under the agreement, 12 countries pledged to provide \$12 billion of public funding between 2021 and 2025 for developing countries to restore degraded land and tackle wildfires.
4. The agreement expands a commitment by 40 countries as part of the 2014 New York Declaration of Forests.



5. COP26 aims to keep alive a receding target of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels to avert still greater damage from heatwaves, droughts, floods and coastal damage that climate change is already causing.



Set up police complaints bodies: NHRC

1. Fifteen years after the Supreme Court issued directions for police reforms, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Union Home Ministry and the State Governments to set up police complaints authorities as per the judgment in the Prakash Singh vs Union of India, 2006, case.
2. The NHRC group also said the MHA and the Law Ministry should consider implementing the recommendations of the 113th report of the Law Commission to add Section 114 B to the Indian Evidence Act.
3. This would ensure that if a person sustains injuries in custody, it is presumed that the injuries were inflicted by the police.

SEVEN DIRECTIVES OF SUPREME COURT

1. **Constitute a State Security Commission**
2. **Fixed two-year tenure for DGP**
3. **Two-year term for SPs & SHOs**
4. **Separate Investigation and L&O functions**
5. **Set up Police Establishment Board**
6. **Set up Police Complaints Authorities at State & Dist levels**
7. **Set up National Security Commission at Centre level**





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As schools reopen, study warns of deepening divides

The report, "A Future At Stake -- Guidelines and Principles to Resume and Renew Education", suggests specific ways to bring children back to school, communicate with parents and teachers and processes to support the most disadvantaged. Till the lower secondary level, the curriculum needs to be redesigned with a focus on socio-emotional development, language and maths skills.

1. As almost 26 crore children return to physical classes after 18 months of school closures, a business as usual approach will lead to a deepening of existing educational inequity, warned the National Coalition on the Education Emergency in a report.
2. The NCEE cited data from the recent SCHOOL survey conducted in 15 States, which showed that 72% of elementary-age children did not do any regular studying by any method during the lockdown, with only 8% of rural children able to access online classes.
3. An NCEE survey of teachers in a sample of Karnataka schools found that 85% of Class 8 teachers thought that most of their students were not at their grade level in mathematics and language.
4. Three-fourths of Class 10 teachers agreed. The worst affected are children of the rural and urban poor, migrants, minorities, Dalit, Adivasi and other backward communities, many of whose families faced a health and livelihood crisis during the lockdown apart from a lack of educational access.
5. When schools reopen, it cannot be about pouncing on children to make them learn the three Rs. We can't just go on from where they left off two years ago, or expect them to match up to the regular syllabus at their new grade level with some sort of short bridge course.

One Sun, One World, One Grid for seamless energy

1. On the second day of COP26, an initiative by India and the United Kingdom to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders was announced.
2. It includes a group of Governments called the Green Grids Initiative — One Sun One World One Grid group — and was announced at COP26.



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- India and UK presented the One Sun Declaration, endorsed by more than 80 countries, setting out the group's aims.



Clean energy

- All the energy humanity uses in a year is equal to the energy that reaches the earth from the sun in a single hour.
- The sun never sets — every hour, half the planet is bathed in sunshine. By trading energy from sun, wind and water across borders, we can deliver more than enough clean energy to meet the needs of everyone on earth.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had developed an application that could compute the potential solar energy at any point on earth and help decide if it would be suitable for solar energy installations.
- A Ministerial Steering Group will work towards accelerating the making of large solar power stations and wind farms in the best locations, linked together by continental-scale grids crossing national borders.
- The Ministerial Steering Group includes France, India, the United Kingdom and the United States, and will also have representatives from Africa, the Gulf, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

India to help countries prone to climate change

Modi launches 'Infrastructure for the Resilient Island States', says climate threats are a matter of life and death for them





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'Infrastructure for Resilient Island States'

1. India launched an ambitious initiative for developing the infrastructure of small island nations. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face the biggest threat from climate change.
2. India has made special arrangements for cooperation with the Pacific islands and Caricom countries in the wake of the threat of climate change.
3. India's space agency ISRO will build a special data window for them to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring through satellite.
4. The new initiative is the result of cooperation between India, the U.K. and Australia and included the participation of leaders of small island nations such as Fiji, Jamaica and Mauritius.





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CARICOM

Caribbean Community

15 countries + caribbean community flag



Antigua and Barbuda



Bahamas



Barbados



Belize



Dominica



Grenada



Guyana



Haiti



Jamaica



Montserrat



Saint Kitts and Nevis



Saint Lucia



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



Suriname



Trinidad and Tobago

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a grouping of twenty countries: fifteen Member States and five Associate Members. It is home to approximately sixteen million citizens, 60% of whom are under the age of 30, and from the main ethnic groups of Indigenous Peoples, Africans, Indians, Europeans, Chinese, Portuguese and Javanese. The Community is multi-lingual; with English as the major language complemented by French and Dutch and variations of these, as well as African and Asian expressions.

Stretching from The Bahamas in the north to Suriname and Guyana in South America, CARICOM comprises states that are considered developing countries, and except for Belize, in Central America and Guyana and Suriname in South America, all Members and Associate Members are island states.

While these states are all relatively small, both in terms of population and size, there is also great diversity with regards to geography and population as well as the levels of economic and social development.



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Small Island Developing States

UN MEMBERS (38)

Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) (9)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bahrain | Cabo Verde | Comoros |
| Guinea-Bissau | Maldives | Mauritius |
| Sao Tomé and Principe | Seychelles | Singapore |

Caribbean (16)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Antigua and Barbuda | Bahamas | Barbados |
| Belize | Cuba | Dominica |
| Dominican Republic | Grenada | Guyana |
| Haiti | Jamaica | Saint Kitts and Nevis |
| Saint Lucia | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | Suriname |
| Trinidad and Tobago | | |

Pacific (13)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Fiji | Kiribati | Marshall Islands |
| Micronesia (Federated States of) | Nauru | Palau |
| Papua New Guinea | Samoa | Solomon Islands |
| Timor-Leste | Tonga | Tuvalu |
| Vanuatu | | |

NON-UN MEMBERS/ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COMMISSIONS (20)

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| American Samoa | Anguilla | Aruba |
| Bermuda | British Virgin Islands | Cayman Islands |
| Commonwealth of Northern Mariana | Cook Islands | Curacao |
| Guam | French Polynesia | Guadeloupe |
| New Caledonia | Martinique | Montserrat |
| Sint Maarten | Niue | Puerto Rico |
| | Turks and Caicos Islands | U.S. Virgin Islands |



Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a distinct group of 38 UN Member States and 20 Non-UN Members/Associate Members of United Nations regional commissions that face unique social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. The three geographical regions in which SIDS are located are the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea (AIS).

SIDS were recognized as a special case both for their environment and development at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The aggregate population of all the SIDS is 65 million, slightly less than 1% of the world's population, yet this group faces unique social, economic, and environmental challenges.

SIDS face a host of challenges including for many, their remote geography. As a result, many SIDS face high import and export costs for goods as well as irregular international traffic volumes. Yet, they must rely on external markets for many goods due to the narrow resource base.

India calls for hike in climate finance to \$1tn

1. India said that climate finance cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009, and emphasised that it should be at least \$1 trillion to meet the goals of addressing climate change.
2. The unity and strength of Like Minded-Group of Developing Countries (LMDC) is fundamental in the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) negotiations to preserve the interest of the Global South in the fight against climate change.
3. India requested the LMDC members to join hands with India to support the global initiatives it has pioneered, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT).



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India's climate commitments are bold, but meeting them will be a challenge, say experts



India's headline announcement at COP26, to become carbon neutral by 2070, suggests that it has committed itself to decisive action to curb runaway greenhouse gas emissions from mid-century. However, experts say that much will become clear only after India submits its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). This document spells out the minutiae on how exactly it plans to go about achieving these targets.

PM MAKES FIVE PLEDGES

- 1 India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030
- 2 India will meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030
- 3 India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now to 2030
- 4 By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by 45% (from a previous target of 35%)
- 5 By 2070, India will achieve the target of net zero

WHAT IS NET ZERO?

Net zero refers to a balance where emissions of greenhouse gases are offset by the absorption of an equivalent amount from the atmosphere. Experts see net zero targets as a critical measure to successfully tackle climate change and its devastating consequences

PLEDGES BY TOP THREE EMITTERS

- CHINA: Beijing announced no new pledges on Monday. It previously pledged net zero by 2060.
- UNITED STATES: The US touted domestic legislation to spend \$555bn to boost renewable power and electric vehicles. It has pledged net zero by 2050.
- INDIA: The country's economy will become carbon neutral by the year 2070



INDIA'S 'PANCHAMRIT' AT COP26

by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

1. Reach non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030
2. Fulfil 50% energy requirements via RE by 2030
3. Reduce 1 bn carbon emissions by 2030
4. Reduce carbon intensity >45% by 2030
5. Achieve the target of Net-Zero by 2070

Fivefold plan: India's five-fold plan includes

1. *India's non-fossil energy capacity will reach 500 GW by 2030;*
2. *it will meet 50% of its energy requirements with renewable energy by 2030;*
3. *it will reduce its total projected carbon emissions by a billion tonnes by 2030; and*
4. *reduce the carbon intensity of its economy to less than 45% and*
5. *achieve net-zero by 2070.*



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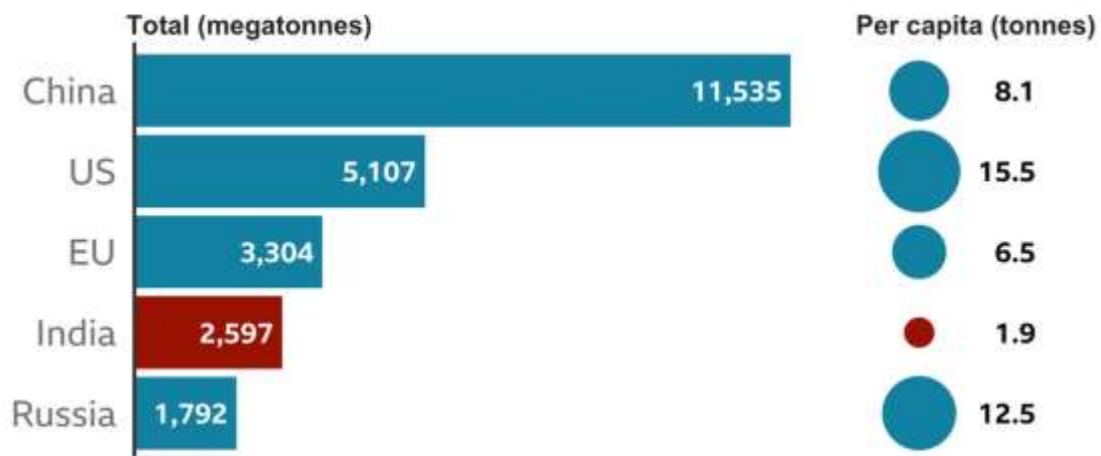
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Peaking year

1. However, achieving net-zero by a specific date means specifying a year, also called a peaking year, following which emissions will start to reduce.
2. A March 2021 study by the Council for Energy, Environment and Water suggested that for a 2070 net-zero year and peaking year of 2040, India would have to reduce the emissions intensity (emissions per unit GDP) by 85% — it has so far reduced it to 24% from the 2005 levels.
3. The share of non-hydro renewable energy has to increase to 65% from the 11% today; the share of electric cars in passenger sales has to go from 0.1% today to 75% by 2040, and the share of fossil energy in primary energy has to decrease from 73% to 40%. For the peaking year of 2030, these targets would be stiffer.

India is the world's fourth biggest emitter of carbon dioxide

Total and per capita emissions of CO2 per year



2019 data, EU includes UK
One megatonne = 1,000,000 tonnes

Source: EC, Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research



Achievements so far:

1. India, as part of its NDC in 2015, had committed itself to install 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022. Till February 28, 2021, the country



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had achieved 94 GW, comprising a 25% share in total installed capacity for power generation.

2. If large hydro installed capacity is included (45 GW by February 2021), then India's non-fossil energy capacity is 139 GW — close to 38% of installed capacity — according to the Centre for Science and Environment.

Net Zero debate:

1. Diplomatic compulsions likely forced India to announce a net-zero date as it was the only one among major economies not to have specified a net-zero year until now.
2. India, however, should have said that it will reach net zero by 2070, only if other developed countries themselves commit to reaching net zero before 2050.
3. There is also no clarity on how many of the announced targets are unconditional and how many are conditional.
4. A billion tonnes of carbon dioxide reduction in the next decade also needed more clarity.

Public Affairs Index (PAI 2021)

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have taken the top three slots, emerging winners among the 18 large states in governance performance, Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a Bengaluru-based nonprofit think tank.
- Public Affairs Index (PAI 2021), as the study is called, has prepared the list based on scores secured by the states in governance performance across the pillars of equity, growth and sustainability.
- The study is an annual assessment of the adequacy and quality of governance in states, and it has also assessed the states on the basis of their implementation of the centrally sponsored-programmes of rural employment guarantee scheme, national health mission, integrated child development service, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan and mid-day meal scheme.



DATA POINT

The best-governed States in 2021

Kerala is the best-governed State in 2021 among the large States, according to the Public Affairs Centre's recently released Public Affairs Index (PAI) 2021. The index analyses governance performance using the three pillars of equity, growth and sustainability. It also assesses the implementation of five centrally sponsored schemes including MGNREGS and the National Health Mission. The 2021 index has also taken into account each State's response to the pandemic. Among the large States, Uttar Pradesh scored the lowest. Among the small States, Sikkim was ranked first, while Manipur was placed last. Among the UTs, Puducherry ranked first, while A&N Islands ranked last.

- 1 U.P. was ranked among the bottom-three States in all pillars
- 2 Delhi was among the worst performers in equity and sustainability
- 3 U.P., Bihar and Odisha ranked last in overall performance

1. OVERALL PERFORMANCE | The table lists the States and their overall score and rank, according to PAI 2021. The higher a State's score, the better its governance performance. Kerala was ranked first among the large States while Uttar Pradesh was ranked last. Among the small States, Sikkim performed best while Manipur's performance was the worst

Rank	Large States	PAI 2021 Index Score
1	Kerala	1.618
2	Tamil Nadu	0.897
3	Telangana	0.891
4	Chhattisgarh	0.872
5	Gujarat	0.782
6	Punjab	0.643
7	Karnataka	0.321
8	Andhra Pradesh	0.077
9	Jharkhand	-0.071
10	Madhya Pradesh	-0.113
11	Rajasthan	-0.243
12	Maharashtra	-0.36
13	Haryana	-0.431
14	Assam	-0.459
15	West Bengal	-0.553
16	Odisha	-0.91
17	Bihar	-1.343
18	Uttar Pradesh	-1.418
Rank	Small States	PAI 2021 Index Score
1	Sikkim	0.907
2	Goa	0.748
3	Mizoram	0.659
4	Himachal Pradesh	0.318
5	Tripura	-0.009
6	Meghalaya	-0.146
7	Arunachal Pradesh	-0.258
8	Nagaland	-0.317
9	Delhi	-0.476
10	Uttarakhand	-0.643
11	Manipur	-0.783
Rank	UTs	PAI 2021 Index Score
1	Puducherry	1.345
5	DNI/DD	-0.445
4	Lakshadweep	-0.302
2	Jammu & Kashmir	0.396
3	Chandigarh	-0.298
6	A&N Island	-0.696

2. EQUITY | The equity pillar analyses inclusiveness in policymaking. It is based on whether people feel that they have a say in governance. The table lists the three best and worst States in this category. Gujarat was ranked first among the large States, followed by Kerala, while Odisha and Karnataka were ranked last

LARGE STATES			SMALL STATES		
RANK	STATE	INDEX	RANK	STATE	INDEX
1	Gujarat	1.409	1	Sikkim	1.617
2	Kerala	1.36	2	Meghalaya	1.144
3	Rajasthan	1.199	3	Mizoram	1.123
RANK	STATE	INDEX	RANK	STATE	INDEX
18	U.P.	-1.5	18	Arunachal	-1.521
17	Odisha	-1.462	17	Delhi	-1.132
16	Karnataka	-1.361	16	Uttarakhand	-0.874

3. GROWTH | The growth pillar ranks a State based on the availability and optimal use of resources such as infrastructure. This, in turn, plays a crucial role in how a State performs in healthcare, education, employment, etc. Telangana scored the highest while Madhya Pradesh scored the lowest among the large States

LARGE STATES			SMALL STATES		
RANK	STATE	INDEX	RANK	STATE	INDEX
1	Telangana	1.38	1	Goa	1.533
2	Kerala	1.348	2	Delhi	1.334
3	Jharkhand	0.93	3	Himachal	0.745
RANK	STATE	INDEX	RANK	STATE	INDEX
18	Bihar	-2.114	11	Meghalaya	-1.222
17	U.P.	-1.521	10	Nagaland	-1.187
16	M.P.	-1.321	9	Manipur	-0.963

4. SUSTAINABILITY | The sustainability pillar ranks States based on access to and use of resources. This has an impact on the environment, economy and humankind. The table lists the three best and worst States in this category

LARGE STATES			SMALL STATES		
RANK	STATE	INDEX	RANK	STATE	INDEX
1	Kerala	2.346	1	Mizoram	1.525
2	Tamil Nadu	1.241	2	Arunachal	1.371
3	Chhattisgarh	0.946	3	Goa	0.836
RANK	STATE	INDEX	RANK	STATE	INDEX
18	U.P.	-1.234	11	Delhi	-1.629
17	Bihar	-1.181	10	Uttarakhand	-1.059
16	WB	-1.137	9	Manipur	-0.965



MAINS DAWP

Q1. Methane is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, after carbon dioxide, and, therefore, pledges related to cutting down its emissions are significant. Discuss the relevance of the Global Methane Pledge in this context.

MCQ

Q1. Which of the following is/are sources of methane emission?

- 1. Wetlands*
- 2. Agriculture*
- 3. Fossil Fuel*
- 4. Volcanoes*

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a. 1 and 4 only*
- b. 1, 2 and 3 only*
- c. 2, 3 and 4 only*
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4*