

NEWS TODAY

GLOBAL E-WASTE MONITOR 2020 RELEASED

- Electronic waste (e-waste) refers to **all items of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE)** and its parts that have been discarded **as waste without intent of re-use**.
- Global E-waste Monitor 2020 is a collaborative product of Global E-waste Statistics Partnership, International Telecommunication Union and International Solid Waste Association in close collaboration with UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Key highlights

E-waste in world

➔ There was **53.6 million tonnes e-waste in 2019**, with **21% increase** in just five years. It will **increase by 38%** in between 2020 and 2030.

➔ **Less than 18%** of e-waste in 2019 was **collected and recycled**.

➔ India is **3rd largest e-waste generator** in world after China and USA.

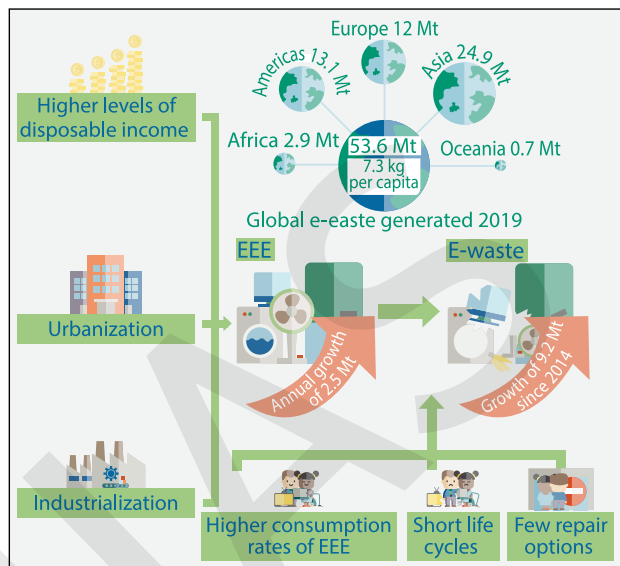
Key causes: higher consumption rates of EEE, short life cycles, and few repair options.

Risks to environment and human health: e-waste contains several toxic additives, such as mercury, brominated flame retardants etc.

➔ A total of 98 Mt of CO₂-equivalents were released into atmosphere from discarded fridges and air-conditioners.

National e-waste policy: Number of countries adopting this policy increased to 78.

➔ India has regulations like E-Waste (Management) Rules 2016.



INDIA NOT TO IMPORT POWER EQUIPMENT FROM CHINA

- This comes in the backdrop of India **contemplating an economic response against China** since 15 June border clashes with China.

Various strategies for this include

➔ More tariff barriers, subsidised financing for encouraging domestic equipment usage, rigorous testing of foreign equipment and prior permission requirements for imports from selected countries etc.

➔ Earlier, Centre has also decided to **levy basic customs duty in range of 20-40% on solar equipment** imports.

India's dependence on China in power sector

➔ China has been a **major source of power equipment for India**, with a share roughly a third of the total imported machines in terms of value.

➔ In the last 10 years, 12,540MW out of 22,420MW of **super-critical power plants were built on Chinese equipment**.

➔ Also, **privately-owned thermal power units**, roughly about 40,000MW, were built using Chinese equipment.

➔ In **renewable energy sector**, close to 75% of India's solar power capacity is built on Chinese solar modules.

- This move will block China's cheap import, **lower risk of cyber-attacks** on critical power infrastructure and also provide jobs in India.

INSURANCE REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF INDIA COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE SURETY BONDS FOR ROAD CONTRACTS

- Committee was set up on the request of **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** to **examine the possibility of offering Surety Bond for contractors**.

➔ This is due to **COVID-19 impact on liquidity and cash-flows in banking sector**.

About Surety Bonds

- A bond is a loan to a company that pays back a fixed rate of return.
- Surety bond is a **three-party agreement** that legally binds together.
 - ➔ a **principal** who purchases the bond to guarantee the quality of work to be done in the future.
 - ➔ an **obligee** who requires the principal to purchase a bond to avoid potential financial loss.
 - ➔ a **surety company** that issues the bond and financially guarantees the principal's capacity to perform a specific task.
- Surety bonds **provide financial guarantee** that contracts will be completed according to pre-defined and mutual terms.
 - ➔ When a principal breaks a bond's terms, **surety bond will cover resulting damages or losses**.
- Benefits:**
 - ➔ It will **guarantee satisfactory completion of a project by a contractor** and provide performance security to various government agencies.
 - ➔ It will protect **interests of other parties involved in a contract**, from supplier materials to laborers to subcontractors.

ICMR LOOKS AT COVAXIN LAUNCH BY AUGUST 15, RAISES CONCERN BY BIOETHICS EXPERTS OVER TIME FRAME

- Covaxin is an inactivated vaccine**, made by using particles of COVID-19 virus that were killed, making them unable to infect or replicate.

➔ It will serve to **build immunity by helping the body create antibodies** against the dead virus.

➔ Developed by **Bharat Biotech India (BBIL) in collaboration with ICMR's National Institute of Virology**.

➔ BBIL got approvals for phase 1 and 2 of clinical trials so far.

Stages involved in developing a vaccine

➔ **R&D:** Typically takes 2-4 years but has been fast tracked for COVID-19 due to availability of its genetic sequence.

➔ **Pre-clinical:** Vaccine is tested on cell cultures and animals.

➔ **Clinical trials:** Allows testing in humans.

➔ **Phase 1:** given to a small group of people and antibodies in their blood is measured.

➔ **Phase 2:** If found safe, vaccine is given to several hundred people who have characteristics (such as age and physical health) similar to those for whom the new vaccine is intended.

➔ **Phase 3:** Thousands of people are enrolled to assess how vaccine works in larger populations.

➔ **Regulatory review** where manufacturer submits data to receive a licence.

➔ **Manufacturing & quality control** of vaccine.

Other types of vaccines:

● **Non-replicating viral vector vaccine** uses a weakened version of a different virus to carry COVID-19 spike protein into the body, but it is modified not to replicate.

● **RNA vaccine** in which RNA (mRNA) molecules are coded to tell cells to build the molecular structure on the surface of SARS-Cov-2, to build antibodies against.

● **DNA vaccine** use genetically engineered DNA molecules that are coded with the antigen against which the immune response is to be built.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK RELEASES 2020 EDITION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Annual report **tracks the performance of all UN Member States on the 17 SDGs**, measuring the distance remaining to achieve each target.
 - > **2020 report** is focusing on SDG & Covid-19 and includes **SDG Index** that presents progress towards each SDG since 2015.
- **Key highlights:**
 - > World had seen **most rapid progress towards:** SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)
 - > **COVID-19 had negatively affected several goals:** SDG 1; SDG 2 (zero hunger); SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing); SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth); SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).
 - > **Immediate relief to goals due to COVID 19:** SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production); SDG 13 (climate action); SDG 14 (life below water); SDG 15 (life on land).
 - ➔ However, these gains will be **short-term**.
 - > **SDG index**
 - ➔ **India ranked at 117 (of 166)** ranking below Pakistan and Afghanistan. Sweden topped the ranking.
 - ➔ India faces **major challenges in 10 of the 17 SDGs** which include — SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 5 (gender inequality) etc.
 - > **Suggestion:** Increased international collaboration on dissemination of the best practices rapidly, addressing hunger hotspots, ensuring social protection etc.

ALSO IN NEWS

Strategic sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is on track for strategic sale of central public sector enterprise (CPSE), as per Department of Investment and Public Asset Management. • Strategic sale is defined as the sale of substantial portion of government shareholding of a CPSEs of upto 50% or higher, along with transfer of management control. • Disinvestment target for FY 2020-21 is ₹2.10 lakh-crore, which includes ₹1.20 lakh-crore from strategic sale of CPSEs.
Germany to become first major economy to phase out coal, nuclear power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Parliament approved a bill that envisions shutting down the last coal-fired power plant by 2038 and spending some \$45 billion to help affected regions cope with the transition. • The plan is part of Germany's 'energy transition' - an effort to wean Europe's biggest economy off planet-warming fossil fuels and generate all of the country's considerable energy needs from renewable sources. • Presently, Germany burns the greatest amount of lignite coal worldwide.
Nagarahole National Park (NNP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest department will place a traffic monitoring mechanism for roads adjacent to NNP (also known as Rajiv Gandhi National Park) to ensure better compliance of forest laws by motorists and minimise road kills. • NNP is located in Kodagu and Mysore District of Karnataka. • Nagarahole River flows through the park and gradually joins the Kabini River which also is a boundary between Nagarahole and Bandipur. • Bandipur, Mudumalai & Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary are adjacent to NNP.
SheshNaag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'SheshNaag' is the longest train ever to run on Indian Railways. • It is a 2.8 Km long freight train amalgamating 4 empty BOXN (High-sided bogie open wagon with pneumatic brakes) rakes, powered by 4 sets of electric locomotives.
Shivalik forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uttar Pradesh is considering the proposal to turn Shivalik forest into tiger reserve. • Shivalik forest constitutes the northern tip of UP and located at the foothills of the Shivalik range. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It connects four States, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. • Currently, UP has 3 tiger reserves: Amangarh, Pilibhit and Dudhwa tiger reserves.
Dharma Chakra Day / Asadh Poornima	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Buddhist Confederation, under Ministry of Culture is celebrating Asadh Poornima on July 4, 2020, as Dharma Chakra Day. • Day commemorates Buddha's First Sermon to his first five ascetic disciples at the Deer Park, Rsiapatana in present day Sarnath near Varanasi, UP. • It is celebrated by Buddhists as day of Dharma Chakra Parvattana or Turning of the Wheel of Dharma. • This day is also observed as Guru Poornima by both Buddhists and Hindus as a day to mark reverence to their Gurus.
Kushok Bakula Rinpoche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Prime minister's visit to Nimu in Ladakh, PM recalled greatness of Ladakh's culture as well as the noble teachings of Kushok Bakula Rinpoche. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > He was a prominent Buddhist monk, statesman and international diplomat often called "the architect of Modern Ladakh". > He made a detailed case for Ladakh to remain a part of India following an attack by tribal raiders from Pakistan and talk of UN-backed plebiscite. • Nimu is surrounded by Zaskar range and is on banks of river Indus.

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