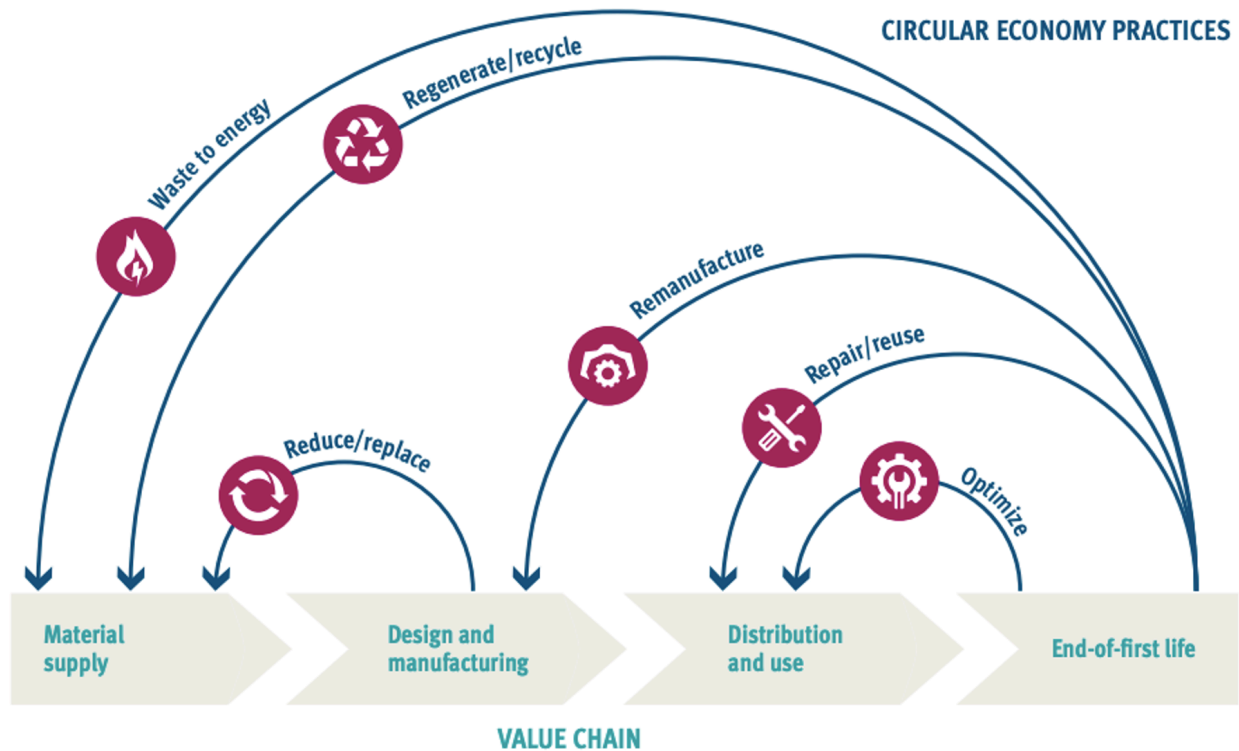


1. Inclusive Circular Economy

Topic: Economy



In News: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a campaign to drive an inclusive circular economy as part of its initiative to promote sustainability in India

More on the Topic

- The initiative focuses on **end-to-end management of plastic waste by promoting the segregation of waste at source, collection of the segregated waste, and setting up Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for recycling all kinds of plastic waste along the value chain.**
- The partnership with Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) **will also help build the capacities of Urban Local Bodies for adopting the MRFs or Swachhata Kendra model for plastic and dry waste management in other cities.**
- Social Inclusion of 20,000 Safai Saathis or waste pickers through access to government welfare schemes and linkages etc.
- Further, to ensure better waste management and recycling of plastic waste, the project will also reach out to 100,000 households for segregation at source.
- The project is a scale-up of existing partnership under UNDP's flagship Plastic Waste Management Programme.

About Circular Economy:

No 18, B.B.M.P Building
 Kanakapura road,
 Tata Silk Farm, Jayanagar,
 Bengaluru, Karnataka-560028

+91 89710 43904

rvta@rvei.edu.in

Go, change the world

- In our current economy, we take materials from the Earth, make products from them, and eventually throw them away as waste – the process is linear.
- In a circular economy, by contrast, we stop waste being produced in the first place.
- It replaces the **end-of-life concept with restoration**, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals which impair reuse and return to the biosphere.
- **It aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, systems and business models.**
- It involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible to: **Extend life cycle of products and Reduce waste to a minimum by creating further value.**
- A circular economy emphasises the 3 R's (**Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**) as well as **material refurbishment, recovery, and repair.**

Source: IE

2. Taxing Farmers' Income

Topic: Economy



In News: Chairman of PM's Economic Advisory Council has recommended the taxing farmers income is a necessity.

More on the Topic:

- Agricultural income is generally exempt from income tax in India.



- **Section 10 (1) of Income Tax Act (1961) exempts agricultural income from tax.**
- Agriculture is a state subject and State Governments can charge agricultural tax (Entry 46 in State List). **State Governments can charge agricultural tax.**
- The issue of taxing farm income seems to arise regularly, particularly before the annual budget is presented, due to concerns that wealthy individuals and corporates evade tax by reporting their income as tax-exempt agricultural income.
- There have been many cases of nurseries, seed companies, and contract farming companies claiming an exemption for income earned from such activities.

Why Farmers Income Should be Taxed?

- The rationale for taxing agricultural income is similar to that for taxing the wealthy, as such tax is progressive and can help reduce rural wealth inequality.
- For instance, **45 percent of the land** is still in the hands of non-small farmers who constitute only 15 percent of the total farming households.
- In Punjab, small and marginal farmers, who constitute a little under one-third of the total farm households operate less than 10 percent of the total agricultural land due to reverse tenancy.
- Such a tax can promote horizontal and vertical equity, meaning that equals are taxed equally, and unequal are treated unequally. Therefore, this is not just about inter-sectoral equity but also intra-sectoral equity.

The Issues associated with taxing Farmers Income:

- Most farmers are **small and marginal, and since incomes up to Rs 2.5 lakh** are currently exempt from income tax, not many farmers would fall under the tax net.
- It is a different matter that basing income tax on land holdings is not desirable, as the **size of land does not necessarily correspond with farm income**; there are different contexts of agricultural activities, such as irrigated and dry land, and different limits to owned land holdings across states under the Land Ceiling Acts. So finalising a criteria for tax inclusion and exclusion will be a challenge.
- Furthermore, it is also pointed out that when average farm income across India is very low. The issues like fluctuation in the price of crops will aggravate the distress farmers are facing.
- Taxing farmers is a politically sensitive issue. It needs cones building among various stake holders.
- It might put extra burden on farmers (mostly small and marginal), lack of clarity on land titles, high crop output fluctuations etc.

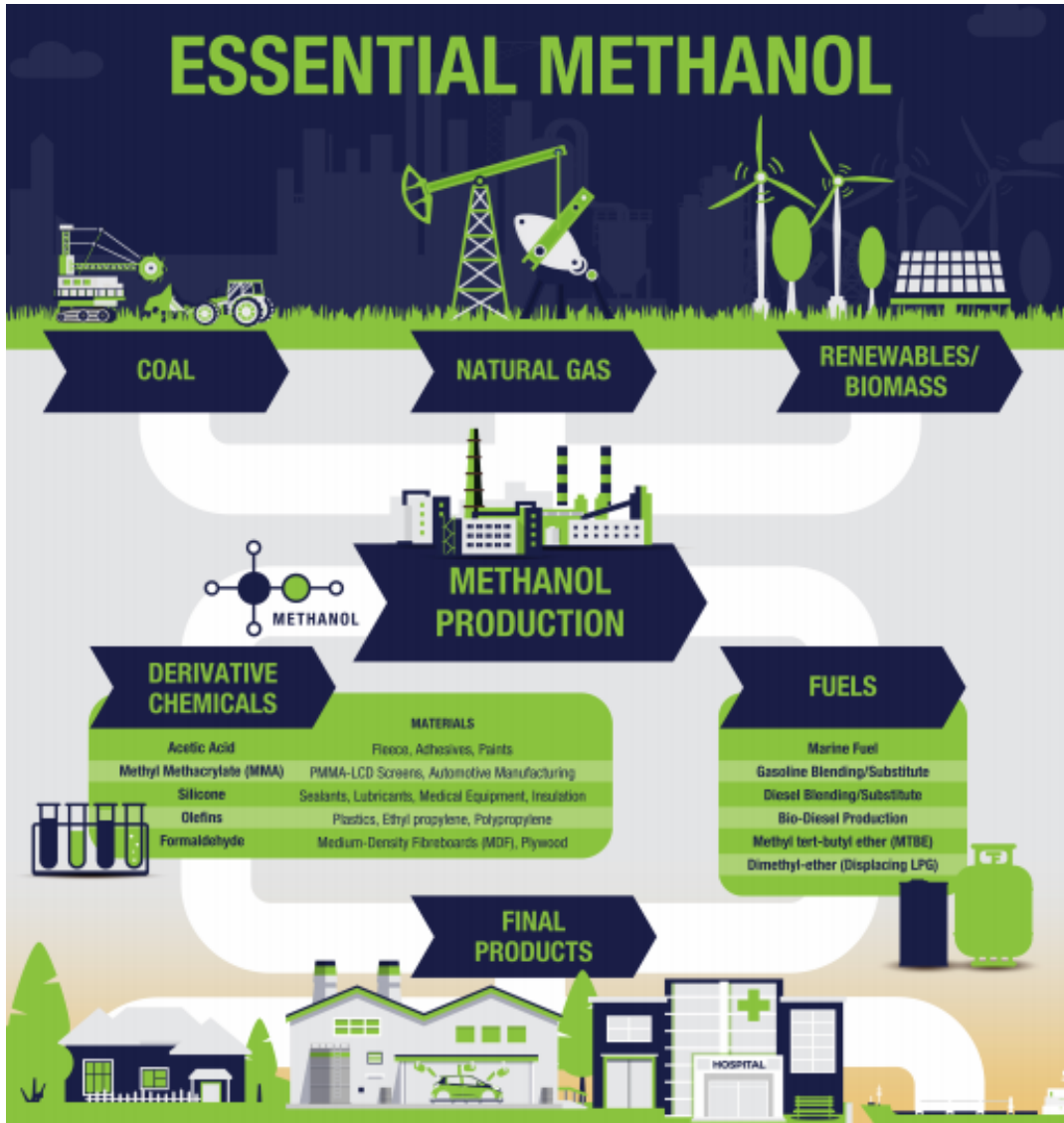
Way Ahead:

- In its three-year action plan, Niti Aayog had also recommended taxing agricultural income.
- A way ahead would be to amend the definition of 'agricultural income' under the tax laws, and a careful deliberation on fixing an appropriate monetary threshold for taxing agricultural income.

Source: IE

3. Methanol blended Diesel

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: In a run-up to India Energy Week 2023 (IEW 2023) to be held in Bengaluru, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs, ceremonially inaugurated the demo-run of Inland Water Vessel powered by Methanol blended Diesel (MD15)

More on the Topic:

- Methanol is a low carbon hydrogen carrier fuel produced from high ash coal, agricultural residue, CO₂ from thermal power plants and natural gas.



- Although slightly lower in energy content than petrol and diesel, methanol can replace both these fuels in the transport sector (road, rail and marine), energy sector (comprising DG sets, boilers, process heating modules, tractors, and commercial vehicles) and retail cooking (replacing LPG [partially], kerosene and wood charcoal).

Significance of Methanol Blending:

- **Blending of 15% methanol in gasoline can result in at least 15% reduction in the import of gasoline/crude oil.**
- In addition, this would bring down GHG emissions by 20% in terms of particulate matter, NOx, and SOx, thereby improving the urban air quality.
- It is the best pathway for meeting India's commitment to COP 21.
- NITI Aayog's 'Methanol Economy' programme is aimed at reducing India's oil import bill, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and converting coal reserves and municipal solid waste into methanol.

Methanol as a Alternative Marine Fuel:

- Methanol is a cost-effective alternative marine fuel.
- It is **less costly than other marine fuel and is economical** in terms of developing the shoreside storage and bunkering infrastructure.
- The cost to convert vessels to run on methanol is significantly less than other alternative fuel conversions with no need for expensive exhaust gas after treatment and as a liquid fuel, only minor modifications are needed for existing storage and bunkering infrastructure to handle methanol.

Indian Initiatives on Methanol Blending:

- **Bureau of Indian Standards has notified 20% DME** (Di-methyl Ether, a derivative of methanol) in LPG.
- Assam Petrochemicals launched **Asia's first canister-based methanol cooking fuel programme** in the year of 2018
- **NITI Aayog's has published road map for Methanol Economy.**
- **Coal-to-methanol plants** in the country being set up by BHEL, Thermax, and IIT Delhi

About India Energy Week:

- IEW 2023 is the first major event under India's G20 Presidency, which follows the Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pledge at COP26 to cut **India's emissions to net-zero by 2070.**
- Held under the patronage of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, India Energy Week is the only and all-encompassing international energy event supported at the highest level of Indian government, with participation from all the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and officially supported by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI).

Source: Hindu

4. SC judgments to be now available in 4 languages

Topic: Governance



In News: Chief Justice of India has announced that SC judgments to be now available in 4 languages.

More on the Topic:

- The judgments delivered by the Supreme Court will now be translated into **four languages —Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati and Odia.**
- The regional languages will help in the access to justice for the citizens. The judgments delivered by the Supreme Court will now be translated into four languages —Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati and Odia.
- SC is also **developing a software and setting up a team where machine learning for translation of the SC judgments will be used.**
- The CJI said that he also intends to appoint retired judicial officers, apart from translators, for verifying machine translation of the Supreme Court judgments, while emphasizing on the need for vetting the machine translations.
- CJI also inaugurated 'Online e-Inspection Software' at Delhi high court.
- The 'Online e-Inspection Software' **will facilitate online e-inspection of digitised judicial files through the internet**, at the click of a mouse, from the comfort of the homes or offices of advocates/litigants.

Source: Hindu

5. Olive Ridley Turtle

Topic: Environment and Ecology

RETURN TO NATURAL HABITAT



▶ Olive Ridley turtles lay eggs from December onwards	▶ The eggs hatch in 40-45 days
▶ The forest department sets up artificial hatching points with protective cover	
▶ Baby turtles are released into sea between March and May	▶ Breeding success rate is around 80-90%

In News: Several ORT breeding grounds in Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh (A.P) have been witnessing mass mortality of turtles.

More on the Topic:

- Hundreds of vulnerable Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) have washed ashore along the coastline between Kakinada and Antarvedi in the Godavari region during the ongoing annual breeding season on the east coast.
- The breeding grounds - **Sakhinetipalli, Malikipuram, Mamidikuduru and Allavaram** - have been witnessing the mass mortality of the turtles over the past few weeks.
- The effluents being released from the aqua ponds along the coastline and the discharges from the pipelines of the onshore oil exploration facilities are also blamed for the mass mortality of the turtles.

Olive Ridley Turtle:

- The Olive Ridley sea turtle, also known commonly as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, is a **species of turtle in the family Cheloniidae**.
- The species is the second-smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- This turtle and the related Kemp's ridley turtle are best known for their **unique synchronised mass nesting called arribadas**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

Protection Status:



- IUCN Status: Vulnerable
- Included in the Schedule 1 of wild life protection act, 1972.

Source: Business Standard

6. Yellow-band Disease

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Ecologists are concerned about Asia's coral health as yellow-band disease wipes out Thailand's reefs.

More on the Topic:

- Yellow-band disease based on the named for the color it turns corals before destroying them was first spotted decades ago and has caused widespread damage to reefs in the Caribbean. There is no known cure.
- YBD is a bacterial disease which disturbs **sympiotic relations of corals causing them to die.**
- Scientists believe overfishing, pollution and rising water temperatures because of climate change may be making the reefs more vulnerable to yellow-band disease.
- The disease's impact cannot be reversed, unlike the effects of coral bleaching.
- The loss of corals could have a devastating impact on the ecosystem.

Source: Business Standard

7. Buddhist Monastery

Topic: Personalities in News



In News: Recent excavations at Bharatpur in West Bengal's Paschim Bardhaman district have revealed the presence of a Buddhist monastery.

More on the Topic:

- According to experts, the Buddhist sites in the State are the presence of a large stupa along with a monastery complex and black and red ware pottery from the Chalcolithic or Copper Age.
- In the 1970s, five beautiful seated sculptures of the Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra were excavated from here.
- **It symbolises Buddha's enlightenment under bodhi tree**, when he summoned the earth goddess, Sthavara, to bear witness to his attainment of enlightenment

Source: Business Standard
