

To receive Daily news juice pdf on your WhatsApp, send name and city through WhatsApp on 75979-00000.

1. Resurgence in India-Italy ties

Why in news?

Last week, the hashtag #Melodi trended widely on social media, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded to a post on X by his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni. Meloni had posted a selfie with Modi, taken on the sidelines of the COP28 meet in Dubai, saying "Good friends at COP28". Meloni also added #Melodi, a combination of the two leaders' names.

Modi reposted the picture, writing: "Meeting friends is always a delight." The bonhomie and the hashtag represent the new harmony in India-Italy ties, coming after some rough years.

History

India and Italy are ancient civilisations with links going back 2,000 years. Italian port cities were important trading posts on the spice route. The Venetian merchant Marco Polo travelled to India in the 13th century and wrote about his experiences.

After Independence, political relations between India and Italy were established in 1947. Since then, there has been a regular exchange of visits at political and official levels between both countries, including several visits by Heads of States.

Decade of setbacks

The Italian marines case: The bilateral ties faced a setback in 2012, when two Italian marines were accused of killing two Indian fishermen in February that year.

The marines, Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre, were guarding an Italian oil tanker off the coast of Kerala when they fired on the boat carrying the fishermen. The marines said they mistook the fishermen for pirates, and Italy argued the fishermen failed to heed warnings to stay away from the MV Enrica Lexie tanker. The two were arrested and charged with murder.

They were moved from Kerala to New Delhi, and stayed at the Italian embassy complex while their trial was on. With the trial pending, the two men were allowed to return to Italy. In 2015, the two countries took the case to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Hague.

The PCA ordered Italy to pay compensation to India “for loss of life” and the cases were closed after Italy paid the agreed amount of Rs 100 million. Finally, the case was closed in 2021.

AgustaWestland allegations: Another controversy was the corruption allegations over the AgustaWestland deal.

In 2011-12, an investigation by the Italian attorney general’s office into alleged unethical dealings by the state-backed defence major Finmeccanica widened to include corruption in an over Rs 3,500-crore deal signed with India by the group’s subsidiary AgustaWestland.

The 2010 deal was a contract to supply 12 AW-101 helicopters to the IAF.

After the corruption allegations came to light, the issue quickly snowballed in India. Sonia Gandhi’s Italian origins gave the BJP further ammunition to attack the Congress, already reeling under graft scandals.

After the cancellation of the contract and after winning a legal case in Italy in June 2014, the Indian government encashed guarantees to the tune of Rs 2,000 crore. The Italian courts in 2018 dismissed all charges, on grounds of insufficient evidence. This verdict was upheld by the Supreme Court in Italy in 2019.

The repair in bilateral ties

Work to repair the ties started 2018 onwards.

When then External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj led an official delegation for the canonisation ceremony of Mother Teresa at the Vatican from September 2-5, 2016, she met her Italian counterpart Paolo Gentiloni, and the two sides decided to celebrate the 70th year of diplomatic ties. In 2018, this celebration was observed through a series of cultural events.

PM Modi and PM Conte co-chaired a Virtual Summit between India and Italy on November 6, 2020. At this, the 2020-2025 Action Plan was adopted, setting the ambitious agenda for an enhanced partnership between the countries.

Modi paid his first official visit to Italy in October 2021 to attend the G20 leaders’ summit. On the sidelines of the Summit, he held a bilateral meeting with then PM Mario Draghi.

On March 2-3, 2023, PM Meloni paid a state visit to India following her election win in September 2022. This was the first high-level visit from Italy to India after a gap of 5 years.

During the visit, Meloni and Modi held discussions on promoting green economy, energy security and transition, defence co-production and co-innovation, and the blue economy.

The major outcome of the visit was the elevation of the bilateral relationship to the level of Strategic Partnership. A startup bridge between Indian and Italian startup companies was also established. She was also the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the Raisina Dialogue 2023.

When Meloni visited again in September this year for the G20 leaders' summit, the two sides were on the same page for the India-Middle East-Europe economic corridor.

The stakes in ties

With Italy, India had a bilateral trade of USD 13.229 billion in 2021-22, a more than 50% increase over the previous financial year. Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner in the EU.

Over 600 large Italian companies are active in India, covering varied sectors. Italian brands such as Fiat and Piaggio to the recent Ferrero Roche, Kinder Joy, Tic Tac, etc. are household names in India.

Strategically, Italy wants to partner with India in the defence sector. The Italian Defence Minister conveyed Italy's desire to "reboot defence relations with India".

Rethink by Italy on China

India has opposed the BRI since its inception, since it violated India's territorial integrity by crossing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

In 2019, during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Rome, Italy became the first G7 country to join the BRI, in the hopes of China serving as a market for Italian products and Chinese investment boosting Italian infrastructure.

But the BRI would not meet Italian hopes and expectations. "Since Italy joined the BRI, its exports to China have increased from 14.5 billion euros to 18.5 billion euros, while Chinese exports to Italy have grown far more dramatically, from 33.5 billion euros to 50.9 billion euros. Similarly, Chinese FDI in Italy also dropped from \$650 million in 2019 to just \$33 million in 2021.

For the past year, Meloni has indicated that joining the BRI was a "big mistake" that she intended to correct. With its five-year memorandum of understanding up for renewal in March 2024, Italy has officially conveyed its position to Beijing. Infact, Italy's

move to pull out of China's Belt and Road Initiative has added a strategic dimension to the ties.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: The Indian Express

2. Global Cooling Pledge at COP28: How refrigerators and ACs contribute to global warming

Why in news?

Sixty-three countries, including the US, Canada, and Kenya, signed up to the world's first-ever pledge to drastically cut cooling emissions at the ongoing COP28 climate. The Global Cooling Pledge commits the countries to reduce their cooling emissions by at least 68% by 2050 and outlines several strategies to tackle them.

These kinds of emissions now account for 7% of global greenhouse gas emissions and are expected to triple by 2050. The situation is set to get worse as rising global temperatures will lead to a large-scale cooling demand — the use of more ACs and refrigerators would cause more cooling emissions.

Here is a look at what are cooling emissions, how they are heating up the planet, and what needs to be done to tackle them.

Cooling emissions and global warming

Cooling emissions are essentially emissions generated from refrigerants, used in appliances like ACs and refrigerators, and the energy used for cooling.

Let's first focus on refrigerants, also known as coolants. They allow the refrigeration process to work due to their ability to quickly change their state. As they readily absorb heat from the environment, refrigerants turn from being a cool liquid into a gas. When they release that heat into the outside — it could be outside a building (in case of ACs) or outside a fridge — they transform back into liquid form and then are cycled back to start the cooling process again.

For the longest time, most of the cooling appliances used chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) as refrigerants. However, in 1985, scientists published a research paper, suggesting that increased levels of CFCs in the atmosphere were responsible for abnormally low ozone concentrations in Antarctica. This led to the 1987 Montreal Protocol — an agreement signed by nearly 200 countries to freeze the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances, including CFCs, at then current rates.

In the following years, CFCs were largely replaced by two groups of chemicals, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), but they

presented a new problem. Although HFCs and HCFCs don't damage the ozone layer, they are powerful greenhouse gases — both of them can absorb infrared radiation, trapping heat inside the atmosphere rather than letting it escape back into space, generating a greenhouse effect that warms Earth. Notably, CFCs are also potent global warming gases.

But how are HFCs and HCFCs leaked into the atmosphere? They are released from damaged appliances or from car air conditioning systems. Ninety per cent of the refrigerant emissions occur at the equipment's end of life.

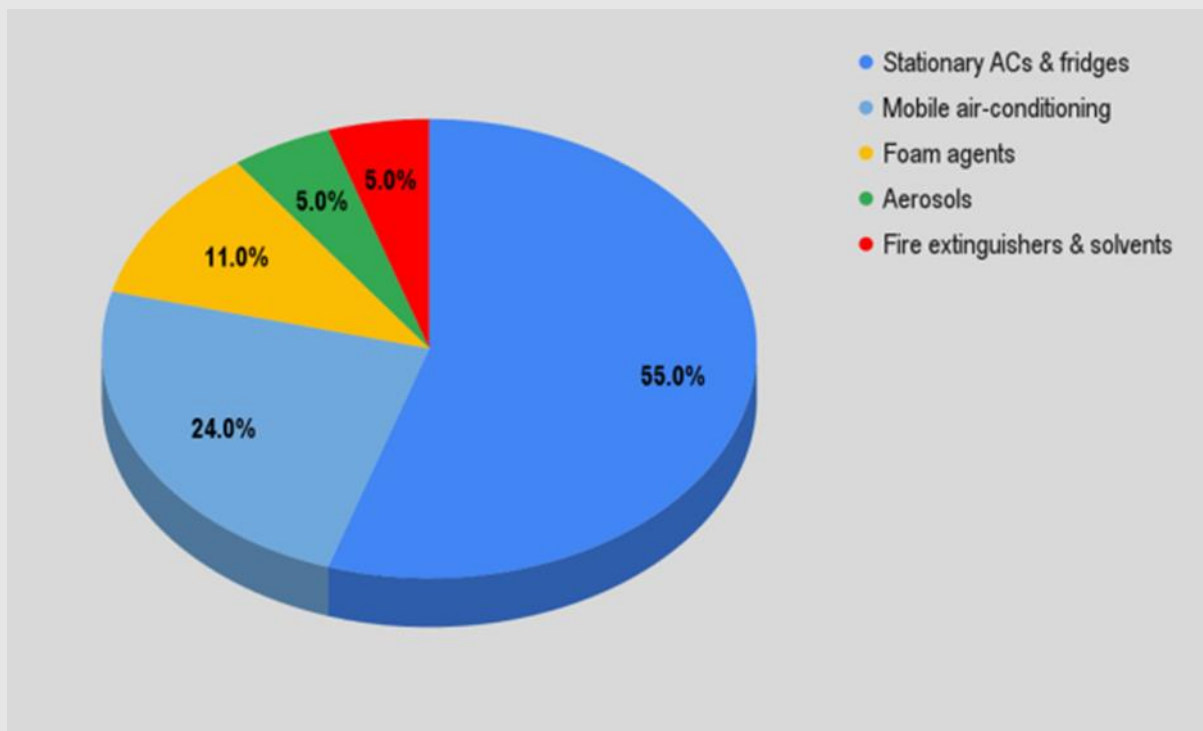


Figure 1 Sources of HFCs. Credit: Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)

The other source of cooling emissions is the electricity used to run the cooling appliances. A large section of this electricity is produced by fossil fuels across the world, especially in developing countries like India. Fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas are by far the largest contributor to climate change, accounting for over 75% of greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90% of all CO₂ emissions.

A vicious cycle

Currently, cooling emissions aren't a huge proportion of global greenhouse gases. This would change soon due to soaring temperatures across the world. In October, scientists said they expect Earth is on track for global average temperatures to rise by up to nearly 3 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

As global warming worsens, the demand for cooling will increase dramatically, which will create more warming in a destructive feedback loop. The greatest cooling demand

will arise in Africa and Asia, where more than 1 billion people are at high risk from extreme heat due to a lack of cooling access.

The number of global cooling devices is expected to jump from 3.6 billion to 9.5 billion by 2050, according to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the IEA. And if cooling is provided to everyone who needs it, and not just who can afford it, there is a need for 14 billion devices by 2050, the report added.

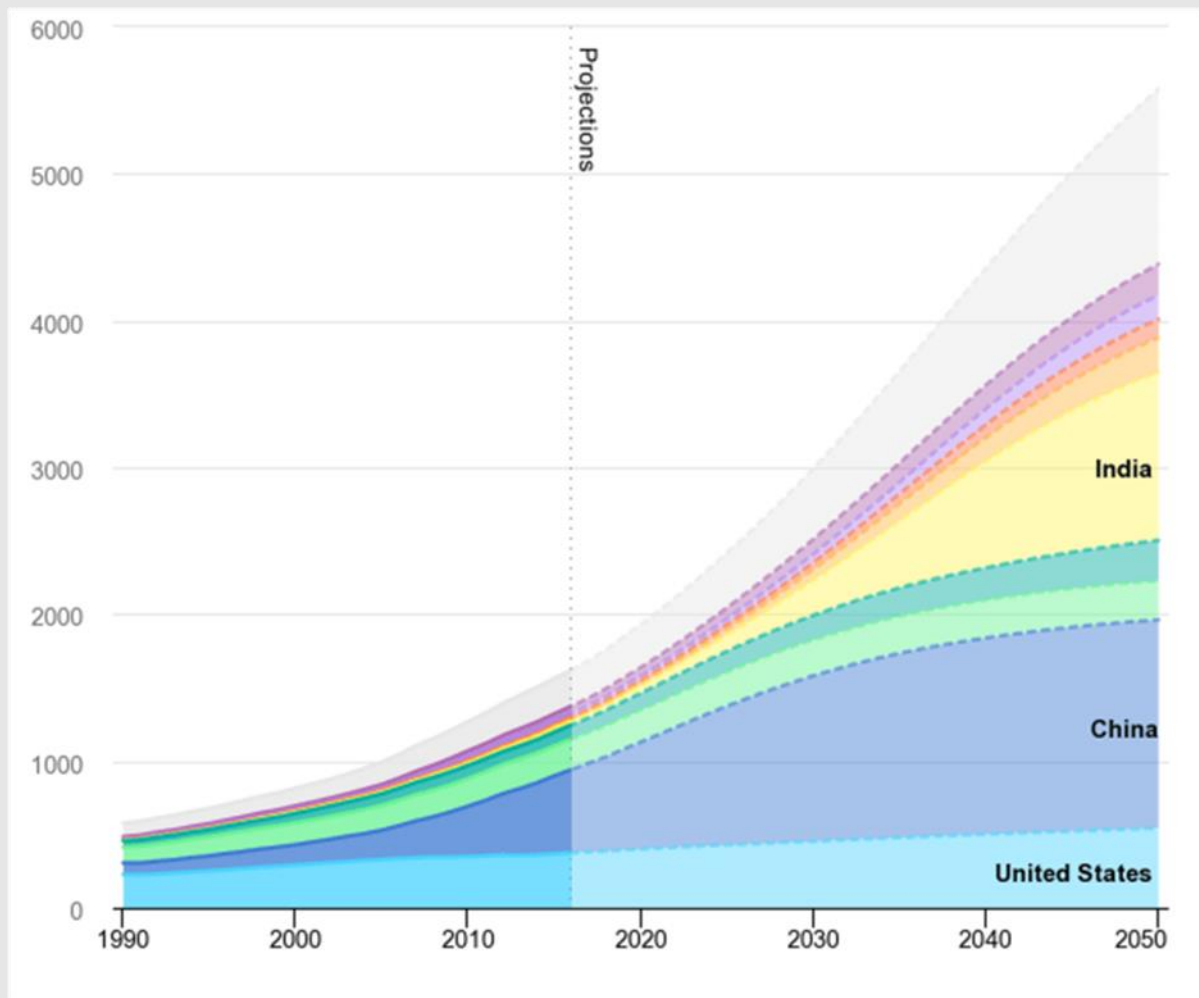


Figure 2 Global air conditioner stock, 1990-2050. Credit: IEA's 2018 The Future of Cooling report

The solutions

Countries are already cognizant of the harmful impact of HCFs. In 2016, over 150 countries signed the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, agreeing to reduce HFC consumption by 80% by 2047. If achieved, this could avoid more than 0.4 degree Celsius of global warming by 2100.

The phasing-out of HFCs involves promoting the use of climate-friendly chemicals, also called natural refrigerants, such as ammonia, certain hydrocarbons, and CO2 in cooling devices. These chemicals have lower or zero global warming potential.

Moreover, as most of the HFCs and HCFCs take place at the appliance's end of life, consumers and authorities need to dispose of them properly.

There is also a need to focus on ways to cool buildings without air conditioners. Improving insulation materials and constructing buildings with large openings for better ventilation can help reduce heat inside.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Indian Express

3. Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023: Simplifying Legal Reforms

Introduction

The Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023, recently passed in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, focuses on eliminating 'touts' from the legal system. This legislative move involves the repeal of the outdated Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, and amendments to the Advocates Act, 1961.

What does the now-repealed 1879 Act state?

The Legal Practitioners Act came into force in 1880, "to consolidate and amend the law relating to Legal Practitioners in certain provinces." The Act initially extended to areas in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, and Delhi. Any state government could, by notification in the Official Gazette, extend it to their states.

Section 2 of the 1879 Act defined the term "legal practitioner" to include advocates, vakils, or attorneys of any High Court. It also introduced a new definition of the term "tout". A tout is someone who procures clients for a legal practitioner in exchange for payment.

Transition to the Advocates Act, 1961

The Advocates Act of 1961 was passed in independent India to create a single Act to regulate the legal profession. This Act repealed a majority of the 1879 Act but left behind provisions relating to its extent, definitions, and powers to frame and publish lists of touts.

What does the Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023, say?

The new provision, Section 45A, states that the Bill enables every HC and district judge to frame and publish lists of touts. However, no person's name will be included in any such list until they have had an opportunity to show cause against such inclusion.

If proven to be a tout, the person's name will be included in the list of touts that will be published by the authority and hung in every court. If proven to be a tout,

individuals may face imprisonment of up to three months, a fine that may extend to five hundred rupees, or both.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Governance

Source: Indian Express & The Hindu

PrepMate