



News Analysis (11 Sep, 2020)

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Paddy Stubble Use by PEDA

Why in News

The **Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA)** in association with the Govt. of Punjab, is creating alternatives for paddy stubble utilisation.

This includes setting up **biomass power plants** and **producing Bio CNG** from the paddy stubble biomass.

Punjab Energy Development Agency

It was formed in Sept. 1991 as a **state nodal agency for promotion and development of renewable energy programmes/projects** and energy conservation programme in the state of Punjab. PEDA is registered as a Society under the Societies Act of 1860.

Key Points

- **Biomass Power Plants:** PEDA has set up **11 biomass power plants** where 97.50 mega watts (MW) of power is generated.
 - In these plants, 8.80 lakh metric tonnes of paddy stubble is used annually to generate power.
- **Bio CNG: Eight projects of Bio CNG are under execution in the state.** These will need around 3-lakh metric tonnes of paddy stubble annually.
 - India's largest Bio CNG project**, which will produce 8,000 m cube biogas per day (equivalent to 33.23 tonnes of Bio CNG per day) is under execution at **Lehragaga tehsil in Sangrur district**. The project is expected to be commissioned by March 2021.
- **Bioethanol Project:** A Bioethanol project of 100 kilolitre is being set up at Talwandi Sabo in **Bathinda**. This will require 2 lakh metric tonnes of paddy stubble annually.
 - Bioethanol** can be used to run vehicles after blending with diesel and petrol.

- **Advantages of these Projects:** After commissioning of all these projects, Punjab will be able to utilise 1.5 million tonnes (7% of the total) paddy stubble.
 - **Farmers' income:** Farmers can benefit hugely if they can **sell paddy stubble to the industry** instead of burning it.
 - **Environment benefits:** It will reduce the **pollution** caused by stubble burning and also preserve the **fertility** of the soil which is lost due to burning paddy stubble.
 - **Entrepreneurship:** The youth, particularly engineers, graduates in science and technology can start such projects under the '**start-up**' concept, which will create entrepreneurship among them.
 - **Employment:** Educated unemployed youth in rural Punjab where such projects will be set up can get big **job opportunities**.
- **Limitations:** Current usage of stubble in these plants is very small compared to the generation of stubble. Punjab needs **varieties of stubble-based industry** where more and more stubble is consumed.
- **Issues involved with Paddy Stubble:**
 - About 20 million tonnes of paddy stubble or paddy crop residue is generated in Punjab annually. **Less than 5% is being utilized** in Bio-gas, Biomass power generation or other environment-friendly uses. The main mode of getting rid of this stubble is **stubble burning**.
 - Stubble Burning is a major cause of concern because of environmental and health reasons. Stubble burning is considered to be one of the **factors responsible for smog in Delhi**.
 - The burning of stubble **reduces the soil fertility**, besides polluting the environment.
 - Additionally, the **heat generated** by stubble burning penetrates into the soil, leading to the loss of moisture and useful microbes.
- **Other alternatives to utilize paddy stubble:**
 - **Torrefaction:** **Torrefaction** is a thermal process to convert biomass into a coal-like material, which has better fuel characteristics than the original biomass.
 - **Fertilizer:** The stubble can be used for preparation of the **high-grade organic fertilizers** by mixing with cow dung and few natural enzymes.
 - **Mechanized Management:** Stubble can be managed in three ways – by **pressing the left over stubble under the earth; sowing wheat directly in the standing stubble in the fields and thirdly, by collecting it in bundles**. This can be aided by use of machines like:
 - **Super SMS (Straw Management System):** It cuts and spreads the straw in uniform manner in the field at the time of harvesting of paddy.
 - **Happy Seeder:** It can sow wheat directly in such fields in standing paddy stubble (the height of which remains around 18 inches after cutting with Super SMS).
 - **Super Seeder:** It is more advanced and it ploughs standing paddy stubble in soil and sows wheat seed simultaneously in a single operation after harvesting.

Government Initiatives

- **Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for In-Situ Management of Crop Residue-** It is a Central Sector Scheme that was launched by the Government of India to tackle air pollution and to subsidize machinery required for in-situ management of crop residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi.

- **SATAT Scheme: Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme** was launched by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Its objectives include reducing pollution from burning of agricultural / organic waste and utilising more than 62 million metric tonnes of waste generated every year in India.
- The **Punjab government** has provided **74,000 subsidised machines** called Super SMS, Happy Seeder and Super Seeders to the farmers for stubble management after harvesting.

Way Forward

- The government must help the youth in setting start-ups for stubble utilization by **getting sanctioned loans and providing a market.**
- Joint efforts are required on the part of the state, Centre and industries, including public and private participation, to convert all of Punjab's stubble into farmers' income. **Stubble-based projects** can be set up at the block-level to manage stubble of that bloc.
- An expansion of schemes like the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** (MGNREGA) for harvesting and composting of stubble will help to resolve the dual problem of unemployment and stubble burning.

Source: IE

India-Japan Logistics Agreement

Why in News

Recently, India and Japan signed a **logistics agreement** that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)**.

India has similar agreements with the **USA, Australia, France, Oman and Singapore.**



Key Points

- **The Agreement:**
 - It is **aimed** at greater maritime cooperation and can **upgrade India-Japan naval exercises** as both countries are expected to share maritime facilities for mutual benefit.
 - It **establishes the enabling framework** for closer cooperation between the armed forces of both countries in **reciprocal provision of supplies and services** while engaged in bilateral training activities, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Humanitarian International Relief and other mutually agreed activities.
 - The supplies and services include food, water, transportation, airlift, petroleum, clothing, communications and medical services etc.
 - It will also **enhance the interoperability, assist in maintaining regional security** and further **increase the bilateral defence engagements** between the two countries.
 - It will **remain in force for 10 years** and will be automatically extended for periods of 10 years unless one of the parties decides to end it.
 - The agreement is being interpreted as a coming together of Japan and India when India is having a **border standoff with China at Line of Actual Control (LAC)** in eastern Ladakh.
- **India-Japan Defence Cooperation:**
 - In 2019, India and Japan held the first-ever ministerial-level **2+2 dialogue**. This dialogue involves the Defence and Foreign Ministers on both sides and is seen as an endorsement of the special strategic partnership between **India and Japan**.
 - Both nations share a common vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based **Indo-Pacific region** in which the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity are ensured.
 - India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, **JIMEX (naval exercise)**, **SHINYUU Maitri (air force exercise)**, and **Dharma Guardian (military exercise)**. Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise** with the USA.
 - Both the countries are also part of **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)**.

Way Forward

- India needs sophisticated weapons and technology from Japan, so more collaboration and cooperation can prove beneficial to both nations.
 - US-2 Amphibious Aircraft** can land on either land or water. It is operated as a short takeoff and landing aircraft (STOL) Search and Rescue Amphibian by Japan's Ministry of Defense.
- There is huge potential as far as **Make in India** and defence deals are concerned. Joint ventures could be created by merging Japanese technology with Indian raw materials and labour.
- Closer cooperation is the best measure to combat China's growing role in Asia and Indo-Pacific.

Source: TH

Global Innovation Index 2020

Why in News

Recently, the **Global Innovation Index 2020** was released by the **World Intellectual Property Organisation** (WIPO).

India is at the **48th position** in the list of top 50 innovative countries.

India occupied the 52nd position in **2019 rankings**.

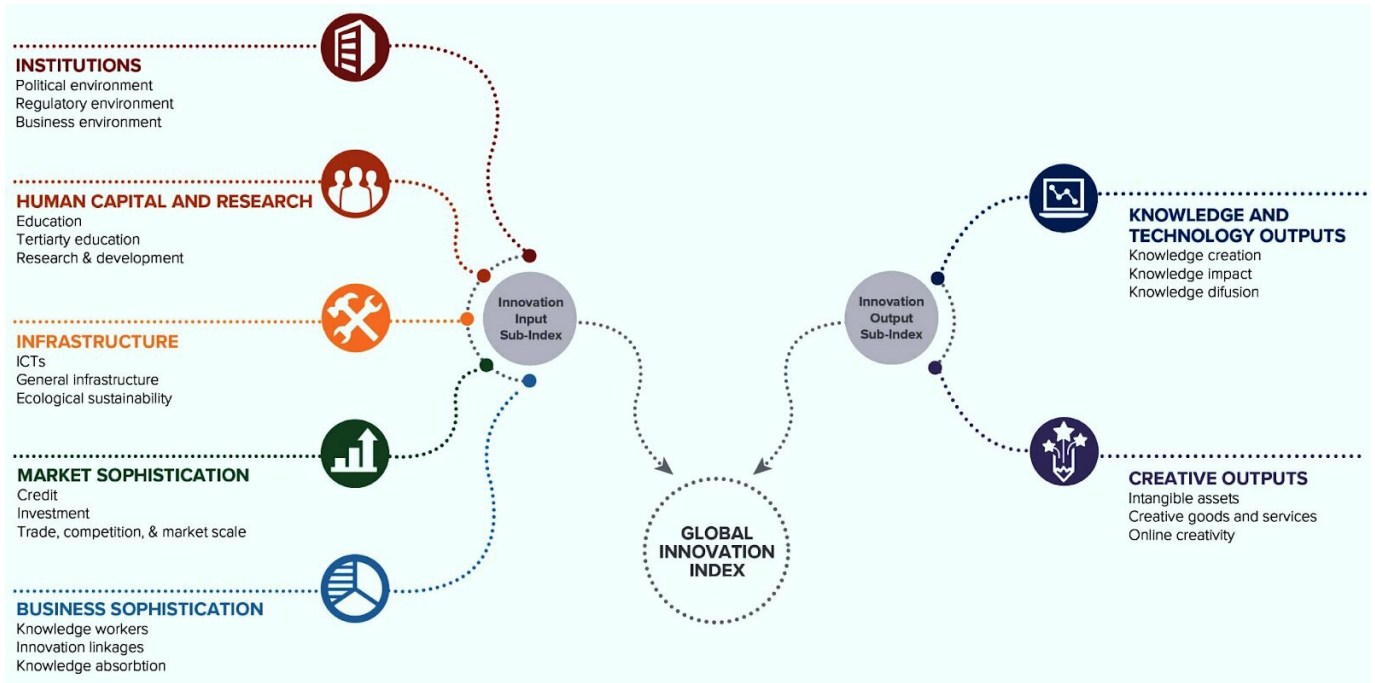
Key Points

- **Switzerland, Sweden, the USA, the UK and Netherlands** are the top five countries.
- With a group of **Asian economies advancing up** the rankings, the index indicates that "**a gradual eastward shift in the locus of innovation**" is underway.
- In Asian economies, **China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam** have made the most progress on the index in recent years, with all four now among the top 50.
 - **India is one of the leading innovation achievers** in the central and southern Asian region, as it has **shown a consistent improvement** in its innovation ranking for the last 5 years.
 - **China**, which is the **only middle-income economy among the top 30**, now holds the **14th position**.
- **India Specific Highlights:**
 - India has become the **third most innovative lower-middle-income economy** in the world.
 - India ranks in the **top 15** in indicators such as the **Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services exports, government online services, graduates in science and engineering**, and **Research and Development-intensive global companies**.
 - India **improved the most in three pillars:** Institutions (61st), business sophistication (55th), and creative outputs (64th).
 - The **consistent improvement** in the index rankings is owing to the immense knowledge capital, the vibrant startup ecosystem, and the amazing work done by the public and private research organisations.
 - The **India Innovation Index 2019** which was released by the **NITI Aayog**, has been widely **accepted as the major step in the direction of decentralisation of innovation** across all the states of India.

Global Innovation Index

- It provides **detailed metrics about the innovation performance of 131 countries and economies** around the world.
- Its **80 indicators** explore a broad vision of innovation, including political environment, education, infrastructure and business sophistication.
- It is published annually by **Cornell University, INSEAD** and the **WIPO**.
- **2020 Theme: Who will Finance Innovation?**

The GII 2020 sheds light on the state of innovation financing by investigating the evolution of existing mechanisms and by pointing to progress and remaining challenges.



Source: TOI

Ease of Doing Business Rankings of the States: DPIIT

Why in News

Recently, **the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry released the 4th edition of **Ease of Doing Business Rankings** based on the State **Business Reform Action Plan (State BRAP)**.

Andhra Pradesh has topped the rankings followed by **Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand**. **Tripura, Sikkim, Odisha** were among the worst performers.

S. No.	State/UT	Rank 2019
1	Andhra Pradesh	1
2	Uttar Pradesh	2
3	Telangana	3
4	Madhya Pradesh	4
5	Jharkhand	5
6	Chhattisgarh	6
7	Himachal Pradesh	7
8	Rajasthan	8
9	West Bengal	9
10	Gujarat	10
11	Uttarakhand	11
12	Delhi	12
13	Maharashtra	13
14	Tamil Nadu	14
15	Lakshadweep	15
16	Haryana	16
17	Karnataka	17
18	Daman and Diu	18
19	Punjab	19

S. No.	State/UT	Rank 2019
18	Daman and Diu	18
19	Punjab	19
20	Assam	20
21	Jammu and Kashmir	21
22	Andaman & Nicobar	22
23	Dadra & N. Haveli	23
24	Goa	24
25	Mizoram	25
26	Bihar	26
27	Puducherry	27
28	Kerala	28
29	Arunachal Pradesh	29
30	Chandigarh	29
31	Manipur	29
32	Meghalaya	29
33	Nagaland	29
34	Odisha	29
35	Sikkim	29
36	Tripura	29

Key Points

- Andhra Pradesh has achieved **100% compliance with BRAP**.
 - It is the first State to take measures to revive the economy hit by the global pandemic and revive the small and medium scale industries with a **ReSTART package**.
 - The ReSTART package includes the payment of sanctioned incentives, working capital loans, preferential market access etc. to MSME units.
- **Ease of Doing Business (EODB)** : It is a joint initiative by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the **World Bank** to improve the overall business environment in the States.

Ranking of all the States and Union Territories is done, based on the implementation of BRAP by them.
- **Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP)**:
 - It was launched in 2015.
 - BRAP 2019 contains a list of **80 reforms** (187 reform action points) to be implemented by **19 State departments**.
 - These reforms cover **12 business regulatory areas** such as Access to Information, Single Window System, Labour, Environment, etc.
 - **Objective** : It was introduced to **encourage a healthy competition between states**.

This would help in **attracting investments and increasing Ease of Doing Business** in each State.
- **Background**: India ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in **Doing Business 2020: World Bank Report**.
 - This was a jump of 79 places since 2014 due to a number of reforms by the central government since then including BRAP.
 - The Doing Business report, introduced in **2003**, provides an assessment of objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies on **ten parameters** affecting a business through its life cycle.

Source: PIB

SAROD-Ports: Dispute Resolution Mechanism

Why in News

The Union **Ministry of Shipping** launched '**SAROD-Ports**' (**Society for Affordable Redressal of Disputes - Ports**) through virtual ceremony in New Delhi.

Key Points

- **About SAROD-Ports:**
 - It is established under **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
 - ‘SAROD-Ports’ is similar to provision available in Highway Sector in the form of **SAROD-Roads** constituted by **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**.
 - It consists of members from **Indian Ports Association (IPA)** and **Indian Private Ports and Terminals Association (IPTTA)**.
 - **Functions:**
 - SAROD-Ports will **advise and assist** in settlement of disputes **through arbitrations** in the maritime sector, including ports and shipping sector in Major Port Trusts, Non-major Ports, including private ports, jetties, terminals and harbours.
 - It will also cover disputes between:
 - Granting authority and Licensee/Concessionaire /Contractor.
 - Also, disputes between Licensee/Concessionaire and their contractors arising out of and during the course of execution of various contracts.
- **Benefits:**
 - SAROD-Ports will become the pivotal mechanism of **ummeed (hope), vishwas (trust) and nyaya (justice)** in the Port sector of India. It will lead to **saving huge amounts of legal expenditure and time**.
 - Enforcement of **concession agreements** in the letter and spirit.

A **concession agreement** is a **contract** that gives a company the right to operate a specific business within a government's jurisdiction or on another firm's property, subject to particular terms.
 - It will promote **ease of doing business** in the maritime sector because of the **fast, timely, cost effective and robust dispute resolution mechanism**.

It will inspire confidence in the private players.
 - All major Ports will shift towards the **‘Landlord Model’**.
- **Model Concession Agreement**
 - Model Concession Agreement is the **core of public private partnership projects** in India. It sets regulatory framework to implement PPP (Public Private Projects) in India. There are MCAs for national highways, urban rail transit systems, state highways and ports.
 - **Amendments to the Model Concession Agreement (MCA):** In January 2018, the government approved amendments in the Model Concession Agreement (MCA) to make the Port Projects more investor-friendly.
 - **Key features:**
 - Constitution of the **Society for Affordable Redressal of Disputes – Ports** (SAROD-Ports) as dispute resolution mechanism.
 - Providing **an exit route to developers** by way of divesting their equity upto 100% after completion of 2 years from the Commercial Operation Date (COD).
 - Under provision of additional land to the Concessionaire, **land rent has been reduced** from 200% to 120% of the applicable scale of rates for the proposed additional land.
 - Introduction of **Complaint Portal** for the use of port users.

Landlord Port Model

- In the landlord port model, the **publicly governed port authority acts as a regulatory body** and as landlord **while private companies carry out port operations**—mainly cargo-handling activities.
- The port authority maintains ownership of the port while the infrastructure is leased to private firms that provide and maintain their own superstructure and install their own equipment to handle cargo.
- In return, the landlord port gets a share of the revenue from the private entity.
- **Significance:**
 - Currently, most major port trusts in India carry out terminal operations as well, resulting in a hybrid model of port governance. The involvement of the port authorities in terminal operations leads to a **conflict of interest**.
 - The **neutrality** of the landlord port authority is a **basic requirement** for fair competition between port service providers, particularly the terminal operators.
 - The role of the landlord port authority would be to carry out all public sector services and operations such as the award of bids for cargo terminals and dredging.

Source PIB

Low Ozone Over Brahmaputra River Valley

Why in News

Recently, scientists at the **Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital** (Uttarakhand) have evaluated the **near surface ozone** in the **Brahmaputra River Valley (BRV)**.

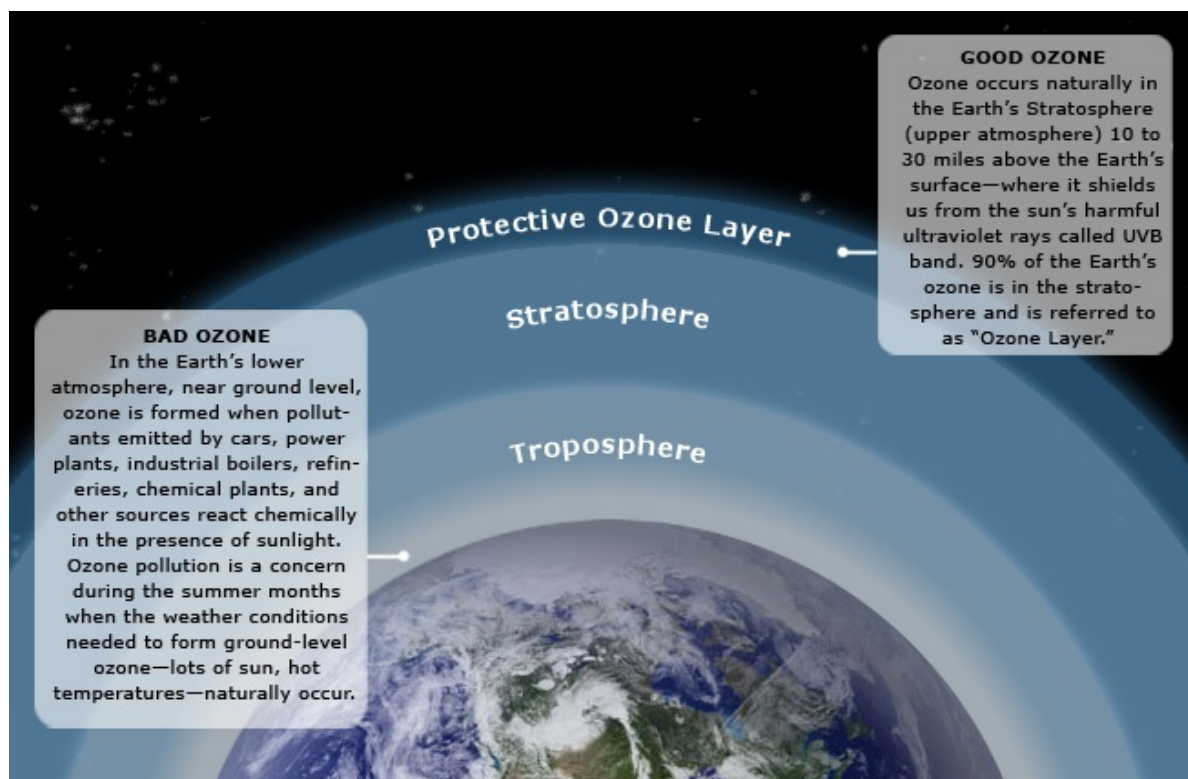
ARIES is an **autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, Government of India.

Key Points

- Scientists analysed the **variability of ozone (O₃) and other air pollutants over the BRV region**.
- They assessed **seasonal characteristics of ozone** to identify the emission source of ozone and its precursors, especially **methane (CH₄) and non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHCs)**.
NMHCs such as **ethane, ethene, propane, propene**, etc. play an important role in **controlling ozone concentrations**.
- They also studied the **relationships between the meteorological parameters** like air temperature, wind speed, solar radiation, soil temperature, rainfall, etc. and **ozone** in a tropical setting.

- **Findings:**

- Scientists have found **relatively low concentration of ozone over BRV (Guwahati - Assam)** compared to the other urban locations in India.
- The pattern of O₃ concentrations in the BRV indicated that it was **strongly influenced by local oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) sources** with an **adjacent national highway** being the likely major source.
- The **mean ventilation coefficient was greater than 6000 m²s** during the day in the pre-monsoon season indicating pollutant dispersion.
 - The **ventilation coefficient**, which is the product of mixing depth and the average wind speed, is an atmospheric condition which gives an indication of the air quality and pollution potential i.e. the ability of the atmosphere to dilute and disperse the pollutants over a region.
 - The **higher the coefficient**, the more efficiently the atmosphere is able to dispose of the pollutants and **better is the air quality**.
 - **Low ventilation coefficients lead to** poor dispersal of pollutants causing stagnation and **poor air quality leading to possible pollution related hazards**.
- **High O₃ winter concentrations** were observed, likely driven by local biomass burning providing reactive **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** that contributed to ozone formation.
 - VOCs are compounds that have a **high vapor pressure and low water solubility**.
 - Many VOCs are **human-made chemicals** that are used and produced in the manufacturing of paints, pharmaceuticals, and refrigerants.
 - VOCs are common **ground-water contaminants**.
- In the **pre-monsoon season**, an **impact of solar radiation (SR)** on the **photochemical formation of O₃** was observed.
 - **Tropospheric, or ground-level ozone**, is **created by chemical reactions between NO_x and VOC**.
 - It usually increases when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources **chemically react in the presence of sunlight**, impacting human health.



Source: PIB

Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme

Why in News

Women **Self Help Groups** (SHGs) under the **Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme** (SVEP) stepped up as effective frontline responders and reached the last mile ensuring an immediate relief to the rural communities and the most vulnerable population during the ongoing **Covid-19 pandemic**.

Key Points

- SVEP is a **sub-scheme of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission** (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development and has been implemented since 2016.
- **Progress:** It has extended **business support services and capital infusion to 153 blocks of 23 states as of August 2020**.
- **Partner: Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad** is the technical support partner of SVEP.
 - EDII is an **autonomous and not-for-profit institute, set up in 1983**.
 - It is sponsored by apex financial institutions like the IDBI Bank Ltd., IFCI Ltd., ICICI Bank Ltd. and the State Bank of India (SBI).
 - It has been **assigned the task of setting up Entrepreneurship Development Centers** in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, etc. by the Ministry of External Affairs.

- **It aims to:**
 - Support the rural poor to come out of poverty.
 - Support the people to set up enterprises and provide support until the enterprises stabilise.
 - Providing self-employment opportunities with financial assistance and training in business management and soft skills.
 - Create local community cadres for promotion of enterprises.
- **Features:**
 - It addresses **three major pillars of rural start-ups** namely **finances, incubation and skill ecosystems**.
 - It **promotes both individual and group enterprises**, majorly in manufacturing, trading and service sectors.
 - It **invests on building the capacities of the entrepreneurs** to run the businesses profitably based on the local demand and ecosystem.
 - Investments are also made on the **use of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** to create standard **E-learning modules** for minimizing the transmission loss in technical aspects like a business plan and profit and loss account preparations.
- **Activities:** Activities under SVEP are strategically **designed to promote rural enterprises** with a few key areas.
 - One of the key areas is to **develop a pool of Community Resource Persons-Enterprise Promotion (CRP-EP)** who are local and support entrepreneurs setting-up rural enterprises.
 - Another key area is to **promote the Block Resource Center (BRC)** in SVEP blocks, to monitor and manage the community resource persons, appraise SVEP loan applications and act as the repository of enterprise-related information in the concerned block.
 - BRCs play the role to support a sustainable revenue model to operate effectively and independently.
 - SVEP **established local markets/rural haat** which motivated entrepreneurs to take up demand-based production, advertise their enterprise and increase earning opportunities.
 - A **typical rural haat is mostly indigenous, flexible and multi-layered structure** which accommodates the economic activities of various nature.
 - Local market/haat/bazaar **serves as an important economic platform** where a range of products is traded.
- **Steps Taken to Fight Covid-19:**
 - Women SHGs helped in **producing several quality products** like masks, protective gear kits, sanitizers and cleaning products across the country.
 - Some of the women SHGs were **involved in running community kitchens and served cooked meals** to over 5.72 crore vulnerable community members.

Source: PIB

Five Star Villages Scheme: India Post

Why in News

The **Department of Posts** (Ministry of Communications) has launched a scheme called **Five Star Villages**. The scheme seeks to **bridge the gaps in public awareness and reach of postal products and services**, especially in interior villages.

Key Points

- **Objective:** To ensure **universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in rural areas** of the country.
- **Features:**
 - **Three components:** Product and Service Availability, Product and Service Publicity and Product and Service Marketing.
 - **One-Stop Centre:** Branch offices will function as one-stop shops to cater all post office related needs of the villagers.
 - **Schemes covered:**
 - Savings Bank accounts, Recurring Deposit Accounts, NSC/KVP certificates,
 - **Sukanya Samridhi Accounts**/ PPF Accounts,
 - Funded Post Office Savings Account linked India Post Payments Bank Accounts,
 - Postal Life Insurance Policy/Rural Postal Life Insurance Policy and
 - Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana Account/Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana Account.
 - **Rating System:** One Scheme is equal to one star of rating. Therefore, if a village attains universal coverage for four schemes from the above list, then that village gets four-star status and so on.
 - **A Pilot Implementation:** The scheme is being launched on **pilot basis** in **Maharashtra**; based on the experience here, it will be implemented nation-wide.
 - **Implementation Strategy:**
 - It will be implemented by a **team of five Gramin Dak Sevaks** who will be assigned a village for **marketing** of all products, savings and insurance schemes of the Department of Posts.
 - This team will be **headed** by the **Branch Post Master** of the concerned Branch Office. **Mail overseers** will keep a personal watch on the progress of the team on a daily basis.
- **Significance**
 - India Post has been serving the people in an extraordinary way in the difficult situation which has emerged due to **Covid-19**, by bringing them **medicines and financial assistance**.
 - The Postal Department has been playing a major role in the implementation of Government schemes, leveraging the **immense strength of its vast network**.
 - Postal schemes are known for providing **highly secured deposits**, they provide **higher return of interest with low risk**.
 - The way to realize the goal of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** is through collaborative efforts such as this, wherein various schemes have been brought together under one umbrella, with the goal of providing financial inclusion.

Source PIB

Disposal of Cigarette Butts

Why in News

Recently, the **National Green Tribunal** (NGT) has directed the **Central Pollution Control Board** (CPCB) to lay down guidelines pertaining to **disposal of cigarette and beedi butts** within three months.

NGT held that tobacco is undoubtedly harmful and it is mainly concerned with the manner of disposal of cigarette and beedi butts.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - An NGO '**Doctors for You**' sought instructions to **regulate the disposal** of cigarette and beedi butts apart from **prohibiting the consumption of tobacco in public places**.
 - The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare highlighted that cigarette and beedi butts are not biodegradable but the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change noted that these are **not listed as hazardous**.
- **CPCB Report:**
 - A report by CPCB highlighted that the analysis of the cigarette and beedi butts reflects that their **concentrations detected will not be toxic to humans and the environment**.
 - **Cellulose acetate** is a major component (95%) of the cigarette butts **along with the wrapping paper and rayon** and its degradation studies show that it will persist for a longer duration.
 - However, the **toxicity data for cellulose acetate is not available** yet.
- **Findings of a Study:**
 - A study conducted by the **Indian Institute of Toxicology Research** (IITR) **approves the CPCB report** and holds that the concentration of various parameters analysed is lower than the prescribed limits and will not be toxic.
 - It added that **natural environmental conditions and laboratory stimulating conditions would be required** to conclude the safety or toxicity of cigarette butts to further correlate with human and environmental health risk assessment.
- **Suggestions:**
 - An **inter-ministerial or departmental committee should be constituted** to consult at the national level for conducting an impact study of discarded cigarette and beedi butts and spitting of tobacco products in public places.
 - **Recycling of cellulose acetate** after recovery from cigarette butts may be an immediate solution to the problem.
 - There is a **need for more studies and research** so that degradation and safety data can be generated which would be helpful in forming guidelines.

Steps Taken by the Indian Government to Control Tobacco Consumption

- **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC):**
 - It is the **first international treaty** negotiated under the auspices of the **World Health Organisation**.
 - It was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic and is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health.
 - **India ratified it in 2004.**
- **mCessation Programme:**
 - It is an initiative **using mobile technology for tobacco cessation.**
 - India launched **mCessation** using text messages in 2016 as part of the government's **Digital India initiative**.
 - It uses two-way messaging between the individual seeking to quit tobacco use and programme specialists providing them with dynamic support.
- **Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2020:**

These **rules** have been notified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to amend the 2008 rules which were notified under the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.
- **National Tobacco Control Programme:**
 - The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare **launched the programme in 2007-08.**
 - It aims to **facilitate the effective implementation of the Tobacco Control Law**, to bring about greater awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco as well as to fulfil the obligations under the WHO-FCTC.
- **Other Efforts:**
 - **World No Tobacco Day:** Every year, 31st May is observed as the **World No Tobacco Day** by WHO and global partners.
 - The annual campaign is an opportunity to raise awareness on the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure, and to discourage the use of tobacco in any form.
 - Since 2007, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been pushing to introduce **stronger graphic health warnings on tobacco packets**, with mixed success.

Source: TH

Cooperative Labour in Odisha Tribes

Why in News

The concept of labour cooperatives is popular in almost all tribal communities in Odisha including the **Dongria Kondh, Juanga, Lanjia Saura, Saura, Didayi, Paudi Bhuyan and Kandh.**

Key Points

- **Need:** Farming on the steep hill slopes **requires more labour which a single family cannot provide.** Therefore, they have evolved an indigenous system to engage the labour available in the community to accomplish the **farming tasks of all the families of the village.**

- **Benefit:** These cooperatives ensure all families of the community are ensured food and **no fields remain barren**. They also strengthen the **feeling of collective belongingness** among the members.
- **Cooperatives in Different Tribes:**
 - **Lanjia Saura:** All members are bound to participate in constructing terraces for farming on the slopes and designing and creating traditional irrigation systems, harnessing hill streams.
 - **Juanga community:** All villagers trek hills, clear trees and create crop fields. The village council ensures that all members contribute their labour.
 - The Juanga and Saura are **Munda ethnic groups** from Southern Odisha.
 - They are **Austroasiatic tribes** i.e. they are believed to be **part of the first wave of migration out of Africa** about 60,000 years ago.
 - **Dongria Kondh:** This tribe practices **at least 10 types of cooperative labour sharing within the community**.
 - Types of Cooperatives in Dongria Kondh Tribe:
 - **Sahabati:** All Dongria households of the village work in turns for a day on the land of one villager.
 - **Daasibati:** Cooperative of younger, unmarried girls from the village for less strenuous but tedious work such as weeding, fencing of fields, cleaning or harvesting of crops.
 - **Dhangdabati:** Young bachelors are required to take up work such as felling trees, hoeing, carrying logs and digging pits.

Dongria Kondh

- **About:** They derive their name from dongar, meaning 'hill' and are the member of **Khond Tribe**
- **Status:** They are a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group**.
- **Habitation:** They reside in the Niyamgiri hill range of Odisha, around 4,500 ft above sea level.
- **Language:** **Kui language** (Oral only, not written)
- **Beliefs:** They worship **Niyam Raja**, the god of the Niyamgiri Forests.
- **Occupation:** They sustain themselves from the resources of the Niyamgiri forests, practising horticulture and shifting cultivation
- **Issues:** They are currently facing displacement due to the **Bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri hills**.
They are also facing **severe health problems** because of **dust coming from** the red mud pond (waste generated by the refinery) **site**.

Tribes in Odisha

- Odisha is home to 62 tribal communities — the **largest diverse groups of tribal population in India**.
13 of them are PVTGs— **Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dungaria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saora**.
- Tribal populations are found in the **entire seven districts of Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada**, and in parts of 6 other districts.

Source: TH

Panel to Assess Impact of Waiving Loan Interest

Why in News

Recently, the Union government has constituted an expert committee to measure the economic impact of waiving of interest and interest on interest on the **Covid-19** related **loan moratorium**.

Key Points

- **Chairmanship:** The expert panel will be **chaired by Rajiv Mehrishi**, former **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** of India, and will **submit its report within one week**.
- **Task:** It will measure the impact on the national economy and financial stability of waiving of interest and Covid-19 related moratorium.
It will also give suggestions to mitigate financial constraints of various sections of society in this respect and measures to be adopted in this regard.
- **Background:** The move came as **various concerns** have been raised during the ongoing hearing in the **Supreme Court** in the matter regarding relief sought in terms of waiver of interest and waiver of interest on interest and other related issues.
 - The Court has extended its interim order that no account is to be declared **Non Performing Assets (NPA)** till further orders.
 - The Court granted two weeks to the Centre and the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to file the affidavit and place before it the decisions taken in this regard.

Moratorium on Repayments of Loans

- A **moratorium** provides stressed customers extra time to repay without their accounts being labelled NPA or their credit score being affected.
It is **not a loan waiver** and does not offer any discount on interest payout.
- RBI had allowed banks to **defer payment of Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs)** on home, car, personal loans as well as **credit card dues till 31st August 2020**.
- The RBI had also allowed lending institutions, banks to **defer interest on working capital repayments**— a move aimed at addressing the distress among firms as production is down.
A working capital loan is a loan that is taken to finance a company's everyday operations.
- As the six-month moratorium on loan repayments ended on **31st August**, the RBI has released the **final loan restructuring guidelines** suggested by **K.V. Kamath Committee**.
Restructuring for corporate loans will be based on financial parameters set out in RBI rules, while for retail borrowers, lenders will put in place board-approved policies for recasting loans.

Source: IE
