



News Analysis (02 Mar, 2021)

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Right to Repair: European Union

Why in News

Companies that sell refrigerators, washers, hair dryers or tele-visions in the **European Union** (EU) will need to ensure that those appliances can be **repaired for up to 10 years**.

The “**Right to Repair**,” as it is sometimes called, came into force across the 27-nation from March 2021.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The Right to Repair electronics refers to government **legislation that is intended to allow consumers the ability to repair and modify their own consumer electronic devices**, where otherwise the manufacturer of such devices require the consumer to use only their offered services.
 - Idea of Right to Repair originally **originated from the USA** where the **Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act 2012**, required the manufacturers to provide the necessary documents and information to allow anyone to repair their vehicles.
- **New Rules:**
 - Under the new EU rules, **manufacturers will have to ensure parts are available for up to a decade**, though some will only be provided to professional repair companies to ensure they are installed correctly.
 - New devices will also have to come with **repair manuals** and be made in such a way that they can be dismantled using conventional tools when they really can't be fixed anymore, to **improve recycling**.

- **E-Waste Generation in Europe:**
 - As per the **Global E-Waste Monitor 2020**, Europeans produce more than **16 kilograms** (kg) of electrical waste per person every year.
 - Asia and Africa were much lower: **5.6 and 2.5 kg** respectively.
 - **Global E-Waste Monitor:** It is a collaboration of the **Global E-waste Statistics Partnership** (GESP), formed by **United Nation** University (UNU), the **International Telecommunication Union** (ITU), and the **International Solid Waste Association** (ISWA), in close collaboration with the **United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
 - About half of that junk is due to broken household appliances, and the **EU recycles only about 40% of it**, leaving behind huge amounts of potentially hazardous material.
- **Significance:**
 - It will help **reduce** the vast mountain of **electrical waste (e-waste)** that piles up each year on the continent.
 - It will **save consumers money**.
 - It will **contribute to circular economy objectives** by improving the life span, maintenance, re-use, upgrade, recyclability and waste handling of appliances.
 - It would tackle **two manufacturing trends:**
 - Cavalier attitude towards planned obsolescence.
 - Tendency on the part of manufacturers to control the repair and maintenance network.
- **Problem with Repair of Modern Appliances:**
 - **Need Special Tools:**
Modern appliances are often glued or riveted together, if you need specialist tools or have to break open the device, then you can't repair it.
 - **Lack of Spare Parts:**
Lack of spare parts is another problem, campaigners say. Sometimes a single broken tooth on a tiny plastic sprocket can be challenging work.
- **Concerns For Manufacturers:**
 - Manufacturers have pushed back against a broader "right to repair" as that would **hurt their ability to sell new products** more frequently, and **would push them to become a service provider** rather than a product maker.
 - They also say allowing the consumer to **repair high-technology products is a risk**, think of **lithium-ion** batteries in cars.

E-waste in India

- **Official Data:**
According to the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**, India generated more than **10 lakh tonnes of e-waste in 2019-20**, an increase from 7 lakh tonnes in 2017-18.

- **Indian Initiatives:**

- **E-Waste Management Rules, 2016:**

- The rules aim to enable the **recovery and/or reuse of useful material from e-waste**, thereby reducing the hazardous wastes destined for disposal and to ensure the environmentally sound management of all types of waste of electrical and electronic equipment.

- **E-Waste Clinic:**

- Aimed at segregating, processing and disposal of waste.

E-Waste

About:

- E-Waste is short for **Electronic-Waste** and the term is used to describe old, end-of-life or discarded electronic appliances. It includes **their components, consumables, parts and spares**.
- It is categorised into 21 types under **two broad categories:**
 - Information technology and communication equipment.
 - Consumer electrical and electronics.
- E-waste includes their components, consumables, parts and spares.

Way Forward

Such regulations could be **especially valuable in a country like India**, where service networks are often spotty and authorised workshops are few and far between in the hinterland. India's informal repair sector does a good job with jugaad. But the **quality of repair and maintenance services could improve** substantially if such legislation was adopted

India-USA Bilateral Trade

Why in News

According to annual reports of **US Trade Representative (USTR)**, India's recent emphasis on **import substitution** through the '**Make in India**' campaign is one the several challenges facing the bilateral trade relationship.

Key Points

- **Bilateral Trade between India and USA:**
 - In 2019-20, the bilateral trade between the USA and India stood at **USD 88.75 billion**.
 - The USA is one of the few countries with which **India has a trade surplus**.
 - India's trade surplus with the USA increased to USD 17.42 billion in 2019-20 from USD 16.86 billion in 2018-19.
 - For the USA, **India was the sixth largest** supplier of services imports.
 - India's large market, economic growth, and progress towards development make it an essential market for USA exporters.
- **Issues in the Trade Relationship:**
 - **Tariffs:** Both the countries cite market barriers including both tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as multiple practices and regulations that disadvantage foreign companies.
 - **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Programme:** Effective from June 2019, the USA decided to withdraw duty-free benefits to Indian exporters under the **GSP programme**.
 - **Services:** A key issue for India is the **USA's temporary visa policies**, which affect Indian nationals working in the United States.
 - India also continues to seek a **“totalization agreement”** to coordinate social security protection for workers who split their careers between the two countries.
 - **Agriculture: Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) barriers** in India limit USA agricultural exports.
 - Each side also sees the other's agricultural support programs as market-distorting.
 - **Intellectual Property (IP):** The two sides differ on how to balance **IP protection** to incentivize innovation and support other policy goals, such as access to medicines.
 - India remains on the **“Special 301” Priority Watch List for 2020**, based on concerns owing to its treatment of patents, infringement rates, and protection of trade secrets.
 - **"Forced" Localization:** The United States continues to press India on its “forced” localization practices.
 - Initiatives to grow India's manufacturing base and support jobs include requirements for in-country data storage, domestic content (such as laws protecting India's solar sector), and domestic testing in some sectors.
 - India's new data localization requirements for electronic payment service suppliers such as MasterCard, Visa, etc.
 - **Investment:** US concerns about investment barriers remain nevertheless, heightened by new Indian restrictions on how e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Walmart owned Flipkart conduct business.
 - **Defense Trade:** The United States urges more reforms in India's defense offsets policy and higher **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** caps in its defense sector.

Generalized System of Preferences

- The **Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)** is a USA trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.
- GSP was instituted on 1st January, 1976, by the Trade Act of 1974.

Way Forward

- There is a huge potential to boost bilateral trade between the countries especially on account of increasing anti-China sentiment in both the nations.
- Thus, the negotiation should focus on the resolution of various non-tariff barriers and other market access improvements as early as possible.

Source: TH

Revising National Food Security Act, 2013: NITI Aayog

Why in News

NITI Aayog, through a discussion paper, has recommended reducing the rural and urban coverage under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**, to 60% and 40%, respectively.

It has **also proposed a revision of beneficiaries as per the latest population** which is currently being done through Census- 2011.

National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

- **Notified on:** 10th September, 2013.
- **Objective:** To provide **for food and nutritional security** in the human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.
- **Coverage:** 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains under **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.

Overall, NFSA caters to **67% of the total population**.

- **Eligibility:**
 - **Priority Households** to be covered under TPDS, according to guidelines by the State government.
 - Households covered under existing **Antyodaya Anna Yojana**.

- **Provisions:**

- 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
- The existing AAY household will continue to receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.
- Meal and maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after the child birth.
- Meals for children upto 14 years of age.
- Food security allowance to beneficiaries in case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals.
- Setting up of grievance redressal mechanisms at the district and state level.

Key Points

- **Number of Beneficiaries at Present:**

- Approximately 2.37 crore households or **9.01 crore persons**, as in February 2021 under **Antyodaya Anna Yojana**.
- While approximately **70.35 crore persons** are under the priority households.

- **Significance of the NITI Aayog's Recommendations:**

- If the **rural-urban coverage ratio remains the same** (67% of all population), then the total number of people covered will increase from the existing 81.35 crore to 89.52 crore - an increase of 8.17 crore (based on the projected 2020 population).
This will **result in an additional subsidy requirement of Rs. 14,800 crore**.
- If the **national coverage ratio is revised downward**, the Centre can save up to Rs. 47,229 crore.
- This amount of **savings can be utilised by the Government in other important areas of concern** such as health and education.

- **Challenges of the Move:**

- In the times of Covid-19 pandemic, it will be a **double burden (Unemployment and Food insecurity issues)** on the poor section of the society.
- The move **may be opposed by some of the states**.

- **Other Recommendations:**

- HLC (High Level Committee) under **Shanta Kumar** had recommended reducing the coverage ratio from 67% of the population to 40%.
According to it, 67% coverage of the population is on the much higher side, and should be brought down to around 40%, which will comfortably cover BPL families and some even above that.
- The **Economic Survey- 2020-21** had recommended a revision of the **Central Issue Prices (CIP)** of foodgrains released from the central pool, which have remained unchanged for the past several years.

Central Issue Prices

- Foodgrains under NFSA are made available to beneficiaries at subsidized prices.
- The centre procures food grains from farmers at a **Minimum support price (MSP)** and **sells it to states at central issue prices.**
- The prices are fixed by the Central Government from time to time, but not exceeding MSP.

Source: IE

53rd PSLV Flight

Why in News

Recently, the **53rd flight of PSLV-C51** marked the first dedicated mission for **New Space India Ltd (NSIL)**, the commercial arm of **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.

- In this flight, ISRO successfully launched **Brazil's optical earth observation satellite, Amazonia-1**, and **18 co-passenger satellites from India (5) and the USA (13)** from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SHAR)** at Sriharikota.
- **SHAR, Sriharikota** is the **Spaceport of India**. It is responsible for providing Launch Base Infrastructure for the Indian Space Programme.

Blazing a trail

ISRO's first launch of 2021 in numbers

19 satellites, including Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1, were carried by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C51

13 satellites were from the U.S.

5 satellites, including the Satish Dhawan Satellite from the Chennai-based Space Kidz India, were built by students

78th mission from Sriharikota

53rd flight of India's workhorse launch vehicle PSLV

■ It was the first dedicated launch by the NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a PSU set up under the Department of Space in 2019

■ ISRO has till date launched 342 foreign satellites from 34 countries

■ Amazonia-1, with a mission life of four years, will monitor deforestation in the Amazon region

■ The SDSAT has an engraving of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the top panel to show solidarity and gratitude for the *aatmanirbhar* initiative and space privatisation

Key Points

- **Brazilian Satellite Amazonia 1:**

- **About:**

Weighing 637 kg, belonging to the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), was injected into its precise orbit of 758 km in a **sun-synchronous polar orbit** successfully.

- **Objective:**

To strengthen the existing structure by providing **remote sensing data to users for monitoring deforestation in the Amazon region** and for analysis of **diversified agriculture across the Brazilian territory.**

- **5 Indian Satellites:**

- **UNITYsat (three satellites):**

- They have been deployed to provide **Radio relay services**.
 - UNITYsat was designed and built as a joint development by Jeppiaar Institute of Technology, Sriperumpudur (JITsat), G. H. Rasoni College of Engineering, Nagpur (GHRCEsat) and Sri Shakthi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore (Sri Shakthi Sat).

- **SDSAT:**

- Satish Dhawan Satellite (SDSAT) is a **nano satellite** intended to study the radiation levels/space weather and demonstrate long range communication technologies.
 - It was built by Chennai-based **Space Kidz** (an organization dedicated to designing innovative concepts for students in the field of education).
 - SDSAT also has an engraving of the Indian Prime Minister on the top panel of the satellite to show solidarity and gratitude for the **Atmanirbhar initiative** and space privatisation.
 - A Bhagavad Gita was also sent on-board in an SD card to give the scripture, which teaches oneness as the highest form of humanity, the highest honour.

- **SindhuNetra:**

- It was developed by students of Bengaluru-based PES University, which was awarded the Rs. 2.2 crore contract by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
 - This project will help in identifying suspicious ships through satellite imaging.

- **USA Satellites:**

13 satellites were from the USA, one was a technology demonstration satellite (**SAI-1 Nano Connect 2**) and the remaining for 2-way communications and data relay (**SpaceBEEs**).

- **Significance:**

- **Provided Impetus to Indo-Brazil Relationship:**

- Since the early 2000s, India and Brazil have signed cooperative instruments for exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, both at the government level (2004) and space agency level (between ISRO and Brazilian Space Agency AEB in 2002).
- The new satellite (Amazonia-1) would open the door for multiple business, trade and governmental opportunities. Brazil has also requested India's support in procurement of material and systems for its launch vehicle programme.

- **Implemented New Space Reforms:**

- Five Indian satellites were built under the **new space reforms** announced by the Government of India.

The approved reforms will **boost the private sector participation** in the entire range of space activities.

- Four of the co-passenger satellites were signed for launch by **IN-SPACE**, ISRO's small satellites facilitation agency, and 14 were signed up through NSIL for commercial launch.
 - **IN-SPACE:** It is an independent nodal agency under the Department of Space (DOS) for allowing space activities and usage of DOS owned facilities by Non-Government private Entities (NGPEs) as well as to prioritise the launch manifest.
 - **NSIL:** It is the **commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** with the primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high technology space related activities. It is also responsible for promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space.

- **Demonstrated Applications of Space Technology:**

Projects such as this demonstrate the extension of applications of Space Technology to different sectors and areas which brought 'ease of living', 'ease of environment' and 'ease of humanity' for common man.

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle

- **About:**

- Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the **third generation launch vehicle of India.**
- It is a **four-staged launch vehicle** with first and third stages using solid rocket motors and second and fourth stages using liquid rocket engines.
- It is the **first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages.**

- **Capacity:**

Initially, PSLV had a carrying capacity of 850 kg but has been enhanced to 1.9 tonnes.

- **Accomplishments:**

- The PSLV has helped take payloads into almost all the orbits in space including **Geo-Stationary Transfer Orbit (GTO)**, the Moon, Mars and would soon be launching a mission to the Sun.
- Between 1994 and 2019, the PSLV launched 50 Indian satellites and 222 foreign satellites for over 70 international customers from 20 countries.
- It has a history of successful launches of payloads that include **Chandrayaan-1, Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)** and the space recovery mission, etc.
- The PSLV has failed only twice in its history – the maiden flight of the PSLV D1 in 1993 and the PSLV C-39 in 2017.

Source:TH

NHRC Issues Notice in Hirakud Displacement Case

Why in News

The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** issued **notices to the Chief Secretaries of Odisha and Chhattisgarh** over the action taken to alleviate the sufferings of people displaced by the construction of the **Hirakud dam over the Mahanadi river** about six decades ago.

About 111 villages were submerged due to the construction of Hirakud Dam and around 22,000 families were affected, while about 19,000 families were displaced.

Key Points

- **Hirakud Dam Project:**

- **Establishment:**

- It is a multipurpose scheme conceived by **Er. M. Visveswaraya** in 1937, after recurrence of devastating floods in Mahanadi river. Its first hydro power was commissioned in 1956.

- **Location:**

- The dam is built across river Mahanadi at about 15 km upstream of Sambalpur town in the state of Odisha.

- **Objectives:**

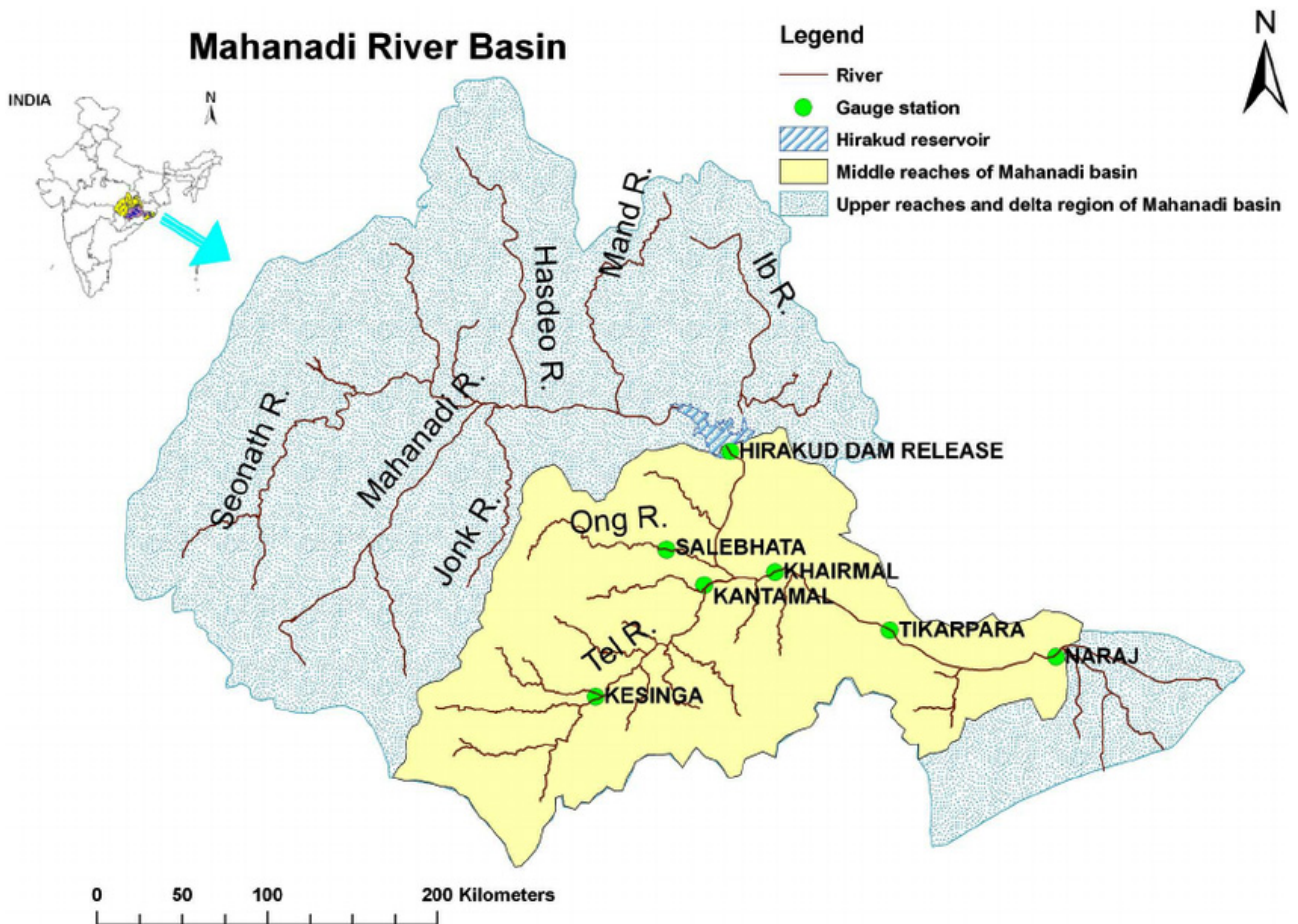
- **Irrigation:** The project provides 1,55,635 hectares of Kharif and 1,08,385 ha of Rabi irrigation in the districts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir and Subarnapur.

- The water released through the power house irrigates further 4,36,000 ha of regions in Mahanadi Delta.

- **Power Generation:** The installed capacity for power generation is 347.5 MW through its two **power houses at Burla**, at the right bank and **Chiplima**, at 22 km downstream of the dam.

- **Flood Control:** The project provides flood protection to Mahanadi basin including 9500 sq. km of delta area in districts of Cuttack and Puri.

- **Mahanadi River:**



- **About:**

- The Mahanadi River system is the third largest of peninsular India after Godavari and Krishna, and the largest river of Odisha state.
- The **catchment area** of the river extends to **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Maharashtra**.
- Its basin is bounded by the **Central India hills** on the north, by the Eastern Ghats on the south and east and by the **Maikala range on the west**.

- **Source:**

It rises from a place near **Sihawa in Bastar hills in the state of Chhattisgarh** to the south of Amarkantak.

- **Major Tributaries of the Mahanadi river**

- Seonath River
- Hasdeo River
- Mand River
- Ib River
- Jonking River
- Tel River

- **Mahanadi River Dispute:** The Central Government constituted **Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal** in 2018.

- **About:** It is a statutory body established on 12th October, 1993 by the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993. It was amended by the **Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006 and Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019.**
The PHRA Act also provides for the creation of a **State Human Rights Commission** at the state level.
- **International Obligation:** The **United Nations Paris Principles** provided the international benchmarks against which national human rights institutions (NHRIs) can be accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). Paris Principles (1993) were implemented in India by passing PHRA Act, 1993.
- **Watchdog of Human Rights:** The NHRC is an embodiment of India's concern for the promotion and protection of human rights.
Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA **defines Human Rights** as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.
- **Composition:** The commission is a multi-member body consisting of a chairman and four members. A person who has been the Chief Justice of India or a judge of the Supreme Court is a chairman.
- **Appointment:** The chairman and members are **appointed by the President on the recommendations of a six-member committee** consisting of the Prime Minister as its head, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, leaders of the Opposition in both the Houses of Parliament and the Union Home Minister.
- **Tenure:** The chairman and members **hold office for a term of three years or until they attain the age of 70 years**, whichever is earlier.
The President can remove the chairman or any member from the office under some circumstances.

- **Functions:**

- **Powers of a Civil Court:**

- It has all the powers of a civil court and its proceedings have a judicial character.
- It is empowered to utilise the services of any officer or investigation agency of the Central government or any state government for the purpose of investigating complaints of human rights violation.
- It **can look into a matter within one year of its occurrence**, i.e the Commission is not empowered to inquire into any matter after the expiry of one year from the date on which the act constituting violation of human rights is alleged to have been committed.

- **Power to Recommend:**

- The functions of the commission are mainly recommendatory in nature. It has no power to punish the violators of human rights, nor to award any relief including monetary relief to the victim.
- Its recommendations are not binding on the concerned government or authority. But, it should be informed about the action taken on its recommendations within one month.
- It has limited role, powers and jurisdiction with respect to the violation of human rights by the members of the armed forces.
- It is not empowered to act when human rights violations through private parties take place.

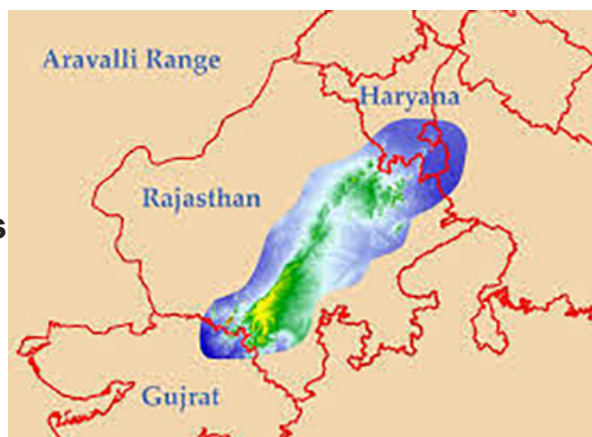
Source:TH

Appeal to Resume Mining in Aravalli Hills

Why in News

Recently, the Haryana government has appealed to the **Supreme Court** to permit it to resume mining in the Aravalli Hills on the grounds that the pandemic had grounded the State's economy to a halt.

Key Points



- **About the Aravalli Range:**

- **Location:**

They stretch for a distance of about 720 km from Himmatnagar in Gujarat to Delhi, spanning Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi.

- **Formation:**

The Aravallis date back to millions of years when a pre-Indian subcontinent collided with the mainland Eurasian Plate.

- **Age:**

Carbon dating has shown that copper and other metals mined in the ranges date back to at least the 5th century BC.

- **Characteristics:**

- The Aravallis of Northwestern India, one of the **oldest fold mountains of the world**, now form **residual mountains** with an elevation of 300m to 900m.

Guru Shikhar Peak on Mount Abu is the highest peak in the Aravalli Range (1,722 m).

- It has been formed primarily of folded crust, when two convergent plates move towards each other by the process called **orogenic movement**.

- **Extension:**

- The mountains are **divided into two main ranges** – the Sambhar Sirohi Range and the Sambhar Khetri Range in Rajasthan, where their extension is about 560 km.
- The hidden limb of the Aravallis that extends from Delhi to Haridwar creates a divide between the drainage of rivers of the Ganga and the Indus.

- **Their Significance:**
 - **Checks Desertification:**
 - The Aravallis act as a barrier between the fertile plains in the east and the sandy desert in the west.
 - Historically, it is said that the Aravalli range checked the spread of the **Thar desert** towards the Indo-Gangetic plains, serving as a catchment of rivers and plains.
 - **Rich in Biodiversity:**

Provides habitat to 300 native plant species, 120 bird species and many exclusive animals like the jackal and mongoose.
 - **Impacts Climate:**
 - Aravallis have an impact upon the climate of northwest India and beyond.
 - During monsoons, it provides a barrier and monsoon clouds move eastwards towards Shimla and Nainital, thus helping nurture the sub-Himalayan rivers and feeding the north Indian plains.
 - In the winter months, it protects the fertile alluvial river valleys from the cold westerly winds from Central Asia.
 - **Recharges Groundwater:**

Aravallis also functions as a groundwater recharge zone for the regions around that absorb rainwater and revive the groundwater level.
 - **Checks Pollution:**
 - This range is considered the “**lungs**” for the polluted air of Delhi–**National Capital Region (NCR)**.
 - For Haryana, having the lowest forest cover at around 3.59% of the total forest cover in India, the Aravalli range is the only saving grace, providing the major portion of its forest cover (2017 Report).
- **Threats:**
 - The Aravalli hills are **an ecologically sensitive zone** but have for years borne the brunt of quarrying and environmental degradation.
 - A 2018 report by a Supreme Court-appointed **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** found out that **25% of the Aravalli range has been lost due to illegal mining** in Rajasthan since 1967-68.
 - The **consequences** of the mining has been a **destruction of aquifers and deforestation**. Many **rivers originating in the Aravalli like Banas, Luni, Sahibi and Sakhi**, are now dead.

- **Steps Taken:**

- **Mining in the Aravalli region has been banned since 2002** under the Supreme Court orders, unless expressly permitted by the Union Environment Ministry. However, mining continues illegally.
- The **green wall** is being planned from Porbandar to Panipat which will help in restoring degraded land through afforestation along the Aravali hill range.
- Residents along with volunteers from iamgurgaon, a citizen action group involved in the conservation of the Aravallis, were assisted by ecologists to create a self-sustaining Aravalli. This society driven model could be more effective to combat the degradation.

Source:TH

Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPOs

Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare celebrated the first anniversary of the **Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation & Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)'**.

Key Points

- **Launch:**

In **February 2020**, at Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh) with a **budgetary provision of Rs. 6865 crore**.

- **About:**

- More than **2200 FPOs** produce clusters have been allocated for the formation of FPOs in 2020-21.
- Implementing Agencies (IAs) are engaging **Cluster-Based Business Organizations (CBBOs)** to aggregate, register & provide professional handholding support to each FPO for a period of **5 years**.

CBBOs will be the platform for an end to end knowledge for all issues related to FPO promotion.

- **Financial Assistance:**

- Up to **Rs. 18.00 lakh per FPO for a period of 3 years**.
- Provision has also been made for matching **equity grant up to Rs. 2,000 per farmer** member of FPO with a limit of **Rs. 15.00 lakh per FPO**.
- Provision of a credit guarantee facility up to **Rs. 2 crores of project loan per FPO** from the eligible lending institution to ensure institutional credit accessibility to FPOs.

- **Significance:**
 - **Increase Farmers Income:**
 - It will promote the selling of farmers' produce from the farm gate of farmers thereby **enhancing farmers' income**.
 - This will shorten the supply chain and accordingly marketing costs will get reduced resulting in better income for farmers.
 - **Create Employment:**

It will accelerate more investment in marketing and value addition infrastructure near to farm gates creating more employment opportunities for rural youth.
 - **Make Farming Viable:**

It will make farming more viable by aggregating land.

Farmer Producer Organization

- A **Producer Organisation (PO)** is a legal entity formed by **primary producers**, viz. farmers, milk producers, fishermen, weavers, rural artisans, craftsmen.

PO is a **generic name** for an organization of producers of any produce, e.g., agricultural, non-farm products, artisan products, etc.
- A PO can be a **production company, a cooperative society or any other legal form** which **provides for sharing of profits/benefits among the members**.

In some forms like producer companies, institutions of primary producers can also become a member of PO.
- The concept of '**Farmer Producer Organizations, (FPO)**' consists of **collectivization of producers especially small and marginal farmers** so as to form an effective alliance to collectively **address many challenges of agriculture** such as improved access to investment, technology, inputs, and markets. FPO is one type of PO where the members are farmers.
- FPOs are generally **mobilized by promoting institutions/resource agencies (RAs)**.

Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is providing support for the promotion of FPOs.
- The resource agencies leverage the support available from governments and agencies like **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** to promote and nurture FPOs.

Source:PIB

Review of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan

Why in News

The Union Education Minister chaired a **review meeting on Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**.

Key Points

- **About the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan:**

- **Aim:** It aims at providing **strategic funding to higher education** institutions throughout the country.

The scheme is being operated in mission mode for **funding state universities and colleges** to achieve the aims of **equity, access and excellence**.

- **Funding:** It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** launched in October 2013. Since 2016-17, the government has spent an average of Rs. 1,500 crore every year on RUSA.

- **Objectives:**

- Improve the **overall quality of state institutions** by conforming to the prescribed norms and standards.
- **Adoption of accreditation** (certification of competency) as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
- **Promoting autonomy** in state universities and improving governance in institutions.
- Ensure **reforms in the affiliation, academic and examination system**.
- Ensure **adequate availability of quality faculty** in all higher educational institutions and ensure capacity building at all levels of employment.
- Create an **enabling atmosphere for research** in the higher education system.
- **Correct regional imbalances** in access to higher education by setting up institutions in unserved and underserved areas.
- Improve **equity in higher education** by providing adequate opportunities to the disadvantaged.

- **Highlights of the Meeting:**

- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** Need to draw plans on educating additional 3.5 crore students to increase GER to 50% by 2035.

- GER:**

- **India's higher education enrollment** is calculated in terms of GER, which is the ratio of population in the 18-23 age group to the number of people enrolled in higher education.
 - According to **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)**, the GER in higher education has increased from 25.8% in 2017-18 to 26.3% in 2018-19, while in absolute terms the enrolment increased from 3.66 crores to 3.74 crore students.
 - **Focus on Local Skills:** A total of 7 crore students with employable skills that suit local conditions should pass out from colleges and Universities. Education should lead to local employment. Education in Degree College should be aligned with the **“One district one product (ODOP)”** plan.
 - **Monitoring:** The **University Grants Commission** will monitor the progress of work done by Institutions which received funding under the RUSA Scheme.

Source: PIB
