Prelim Bits 09-10-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Ethanol 20 Programme

The government has launched the Ethanol 20 (E20) programme under which it aims to achieve 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025.

- Earlier, the central government had released an expert committee report on the '*Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India by 2025*' that proposes,
    1. A gradual rollout of ethanol-blended fuel to achieve E10 fuel supply by April 2022 and
    2. A phased rollout of E20 from April 2023 to April 2025.

Currently, 8.5% of ethanol is blended with petrol in India. The ethanol economy of India is Rs. 20,000 crore.

- The committee also recommends roll out of E20 material-compliant and E10 engine-tuned vehicles from April 2023 and production of E20-tuned engine vehicles from April 2025.
- **Significance** - E20 programme is aimed at reducing the country's oil import bill, and it will also decrease the emissions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides by 40%.
- This new initiative is also part of measures to improve energy security and self-sufficiency measures.
- With 100% use of 20% blend of bio ethanol, India will be able to save Rs. 30,000 crore on import of fossil fuel.

Other Initiatives

- The government is planning to introduce Flex Fuel Vehicles soon, which would be able to operate on 100% bio ethanol or 100% petrol.
- The government has allowed the production of ethanol from surplus and damaged food grains in addition to sugar cane.

EV Sales Target

The central government aims to have electric vehicles (EV) sales accounting for 30% of private cars, 70% for commercial vehicles and 80% for 2- and 3-wheelers by 2030.

- This move is made as there is an immediate need to decarbonise the transport sector, and make it sustainable from the economy, ecology, and environmental point of view.
- If EVs expand to 40% in the 2-wheeler and car segments and close to 100% for buses by 2030, India would be able to cut crude oil consumption by 156 million tonnes.
- The government said that there was no shortage of lithium ion, which is used in making batteries for EVs, in India.

In the EV mission, NITI Aayog has inspired 25 States to come up with EV policies, out of

which 15 have already announced State EV policy.

SACRED Portal

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is developing the Senior Able Citizens for Re Employment in Dignity (SACRED) Portal through NIC.

- It is an **online employment exchange platform** that aims to bring the employment seeker senior citizens and employment providers on one platform.

  As per the LASI report 2020, more than 50% senior citizens are found active.

- The portal is being developed on the recommendations of the Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) report on startups for the elderly.
- Any job provider - individual / firm/ company/ partnership/ Voluntary Organisation/ SHGs etc. - can also register on the portal.
- The portal will not be a guarantee for getting a job or selling of the products of the SHGs, or for any other activity.
- Related Links - SAGE Portal

Green Term Loan

NTPC Renewable Energy ltd (REL) has signed its first Green Term Loan agreement of Rs. 500 crores with a tenor of 15 years with Bank of India for its 470 MW Solar Projects in Rajasthan & 200 MW Solar Project in Gujarat.

- Green loans are any type of loan instrument made available exclusively to finance or re-finance new and/or existing eligible Green Projects.
- Other similar instruments include ESG ratings and Green bonds.

Green Financing

- Green finance is any structured financial activity that's been created to ensure a sustainable environmental outcome.
- Green finance includes climate finance but is not limited to it.
- It includes the **financing of public and private green investments** (including preparatory and capital costs) in the following areas
  1. Environmental goods and services* (such as water management or protection of biodiversity and landscapes)
  2. Prevention, minimization and compensation of damages to the environment and to the climate (such as energy efficiency or dams)
- It includes the **financing of public policies** (including operational costs) that encourage the implementation of environmental and environmental-damage mitigation or adaptation projects and initiatives.

DigiSaksham

Ministry of Labour & Employment has launched DigiSaksham programme.

- DigiSaksham is digital skills programme, which is a joint initiative of Ministry of Labour & Employment with Microsoft India.
- It aims to enhance the employability of youth by providing **free of cost training in digital skills** - basic skills and advance computing - through the National Career Service (NCS) Portal.
- It will provide digital skills to more than 3 lakh youths in the first year.
- The initiative gives **priority to the job-seekers of semi urban areas from disadvantaged communities**, including those who have lost their jobs due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- Under DigiSaksham initiative, there will be basically 3 types of training
    1. Self paced learning,
    2. VILT mode training (Virtual Instructor led) and
    3. ILT mode training (Instructor led) at the Model Career Centres (MCCs) and National Career Service Centres (NCSC) for SCs/STs
- **Implementation** - DigiSaksham will be implemented in the field by Aga Khan Rural Support Programme India (AKRSP-I).

Source: PIB, The Hindu, Down to Earth

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