

07 MAY 2019

GRIHA COUNCIL

Why in news?

- Recently the GRIHA Council launched a rating system called GRIHA for Existing Day Schools.

More on news:

- GRIHA for Existing Day Schools is a simple rating tool designed to evaluate the environmental performance of existing schools across India.
- The rating familiarizes the students with the concepts of sustainability by involving them under the guidance of their teachers to evaluate the environmental impact of schools on the environment.



About GRIHA COUNCIL:

- GRIHA stands for Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment.
- GRIHA Council is a registered society for the interaction on scientific and administrative issues related to sustainable habitats in the Indian context. It was founded by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) with support from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- GRIHA Council promotes GRIHA- the National Rating System as a design and evaluation tool for green buildings and habitats.

About TERI:

- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is a research institute in New Delhi that specializes in the fields of energy, environment and sustainable development.
- Established in 1974, it was formerly known as the Tata Energy Research Institute.
- As the scope of its activities widened, it was renamed The Energy and Resources Institute in 2003.
- It conducts an annual summit called World Sustainable Development summit, which facilitates the exchange of knowledge on diverse aspects of global sustainable development.
- LaBL (Lighting a Billion Lives) – It is an initiative organized by TERI, to provide clean lighting access to bottom of the pyramid communities.
- In association with Ministry of Environment, it annually organizes Green Olympiad which is an international environment examination for middle and high-school students.

NOTE

UDAY SCHEME

In News:

- Aggregate external debt of State-owned electricity distribution companies (discoms) is set to increase to pre-Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) levels of Rs.2.6 lakh crore by the end of this fiscal.



In Brief:

- With most States having limited fiscal headroom, continuous financial support to their discoms may be difficult. So discoms have to become commercially viable through prudent tariff hikes and a material reduction in aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses.
- As per the MoUs States had signed under UDAY in fiscal 2016, their discoms were to initiate structural reforms by reducing AT&C losses by 900 basis points (bps) to about 15% in fiscal 2019, and also implement regular tariff hikes of 5-6% per annum. State governments took over three-fourths of discom debt, thus reducing the interest cost burden. While discoms enjoyed the benefit of debt reduction, structural reforms have been slow to come by.
- For instance, AT&C losses reduced by only 400 bps by December 2018 from pre-UDAY levels and the average tariff increase were a paltry 3% per annum.

A BIG BOOST TO DISCOMS EIGHT STATES UNDER UDAY ARE HARYANA, ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA, TAMIL NADU, RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH, BIHAR AND JHARKHAND

CRISIL	ICRA:
Uday to result in capital savings of ₹ 12,000 crore for PSBs	₹ 88,000 crore relief per year by FY19
On the downside, it could erode 8% of PSBs' profits in FY17	Translate into savings in interest costs by about ₹ 46,000 crore for discoms
Debt to be converted into state bonds with a coupon rate of 8-9 per cent	Improvement in domestic coal supply expected to save ₹ 16,000 crore by FY19
Gross fiscal deficit of 8 states to decline by up to 60 bps in next two years	For every 1% reduction in AT&C loss level, ICRA estimates decrease in cost of supply about ₹ 6,500 crore at an all-India level
Plant load factor of coal-based plants, which fell to 60% for 6 months ended September, 2016 likely to improve	AT&C loss levels for discoms vary widely across states with significantly higher loss levels ranging between 20 and 43 per cent

UDAY:

- **Objective:** Financial turnaround and revival of Power Distribution companies (DISCOMs) and ensure a sustainable permanent solution to the problem

Scheme:

- It has ambitious target of making all discoms profitable by 2018-19.
- The scheme will ease the financial crunch faced by power distribution companies, that has impaired their ability to buy electricity.
- It is based on the premise that it is states' responsibility to ensure that discoms become financially viable.
- States shall take over 75% of DISCOM debt as on 30 September 2015 over two years i.e 50% of DISCOM debt shall be taken over in 2015-16 and 25% in 2016-17.
- Government of India will not include the debt taken over by the States as per the above scheme in the calculation of fiscal deficit of respective States in the financial years 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- States will issue non-SLR including SDL bonds in the market or directly to the respective banks / Financial Institutions (FIs) holding the DISCOM debt to the appropriate extent.
- DISCOM debt not taken over by the State shall be converted by the Banks / FIs into loans or bonds.

IPBES REPORT

Why in news?

- In the recently released UN backed IPBES report, the global environmental scientists warn that around 1 million species are at risk of extinction.

More on news:

- The scientists in the report dubbed that the world is heading towards sixth mass extinction primarily due to inflicting damage on the world's biodiversity by humans.

NOTE



- The report estimates suggest that 30 to 50 percent of all the land on the planet will need to be kept in a natural state to combat climate change and prevent environmental collapse.

About IPBES:

- The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an independent inter-governmental body established to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- It was established in Panama City, on 21 April 2012 by 94 governments. IPBES is placed under the auspices of four United Nations entities: UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP.
- It is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme.
- The IPBES secretariat is based in Bonn, Germany.
- The IPBES also aim to address the needs of Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands etc.

TURKEY'S S-400 DEAL MAY INVITE US SANCTIONS

In news:

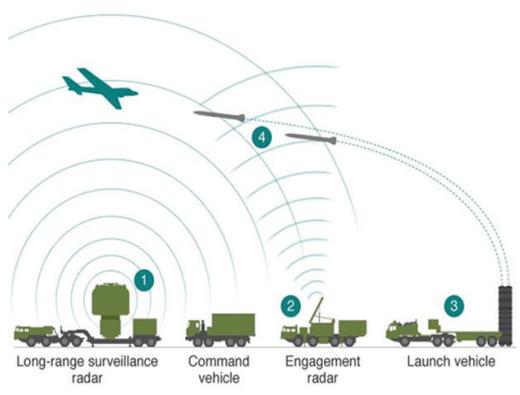
In 2017, Turkey and Russia reached an agreement on Turkey's installation of the S-400 defence system, the anti-aircraft weapon that launches surface-to-air missiles.

In brief:

- The sophisticated radars it relies on are believed to compromise the secrecy of the U.S.'s F-35 stealth fighter jet.
- Instead, the US State Department approved the supply of the Patriot air defence system to discourage Turkey from the S-400 acquisition.
- In a turnaround, Russia is ready to cooperate with Turkey to sell its new-generation Su-57 fifth-generation Russian fighter jets in case the Turkey is expelled from the U.S.-led F-35 program

Reasons for Parting Ways:

- U.S. and Turkey, and NATO by implication, are divided over the Syrian Kurdish militia — the People's Protection Units (YPG). A key U.S. ally in the fight against the Islamic state, the YPG is seen by Turkey as an extension of the country's decades-old insurgent Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).
- Moreover, Turkish invasion of the Kurdish enclave of Afrin in 2018 and its overall intervention in Syria enjoys broad Russian backing.
- The USA's persistent attacks on the Turkish regime's human rights record has hardened Mr.Erdogan's authoritarian stand.



NOTE



- U.S. President Donald Trump’s erratic foreign policy approach has fuelled Turkey expand his regional influence.

S-400 system:

- S-400 “Triumf” is one of the most sophisticated surface-to-air missile systems in the world.
- the S-400 uses four different types of missiles and can track and shoot down incoming objects as far away as 400 kilometres
- One S-400 integrated system can shoot down upto 80 targets simultaneously.
- Radars can pick up an incoming object up to a 1,000 kilometres away, track several dozen incoming objects simultaneously.
- It can hit aerial targets ranging from low-flying drones to aircraft flying at various altitudes and long-range missiles.
- A single unit, consisting of eight launchers, 112 missiles and command and support vehicles, costs at least \$400 million (2,500 crore).

PRELIMS BITS

TRADE WINDS

- Trade Winds is the largest annual U.S. Government-led trade mission.
- The mission use to gather more than 100 US companies.
- In its 2019 Indo-Pacific mission, it will engage with India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
- On May 8-9, it will engage with New Delhi.



NOTE

