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1. Review Planning & Monitoring (RPM) meeting held with States and State Power Utilities

Syllabus: GS 3, Infrastructure: Energy.

Prelims: Bharat eSmart Mobile Application (BeSMA).

Context: The Review Planning & Monitoring (RPM) meeting with States and State Power Utilities took place at New Delhi.

Details:

- Following issues with underpinnings of Sectoral viability and Sustainability (as discussed by Prime Minister on Ujjwal Bharat Ujjwal Bhavishya celebrations) were brought to fore:
 - Liquidation of electricity and subsidy dues of various government departments.
 - Prepaid Smart meters usage in Government offices.
 - Energy and subsidy accounting and timely and advance payments thereof.
 - Speedy fixation of regular and true-up tariffs.
 - Finalization of Utility accounts.
 - Progress related to Feeder & DT metering.
 - Growth on Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS).
 - Success achieved by Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge and Related Matters) Rules, 2022.
- New launches in the meeting:
 - Bharat eSmart Mobile Application (BeSMA)
 - It is a free-to-use Mobile app for prepaid smart meters.
 - It will provide information regarding usage and balance electricity remaining, both in Units and Monetary terms.
 - The mobile app is based on strong security measures and is appropriately equipped to ensure data protection.
 - First Consumer Service Rating of DISCOMs
 - The report highlights the status of consumer services across various DISCOMs.
 - Key parameters to assess consumer services are- metering, reliability, connection services, billing, collection services, fault rectification and grievance redressal.

- The ratings are on a seven-point scale.
 - The aim is to enable sharing of best practices of top performing DISCOMs and help other DISCOMs in identifying critical areas for improving performance.
 - Tenth Integrated Rating of Power Distribution Utilities
 - The exercise has been carried out every year since 2012.
 - Aim is to evaluate performance of utilities on parameters like financial sustainability, performance excellence etc.
 - Recent updates in evaluation method:
 - Higher emphasis is given to financial performance.
 - Operational efficiencies and external ecosystem of DISCOMs will also be assessed from now.
 - Dynamic ratings will be followed based on triggers having impact on DISCOM financials.
 - Inclusion of Private DISCOMs and State Power Departments for comprehensive sectoral coverage.
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2. Village Engineers programme to be rolled out in Gujarat soon

Syllabus: GS 2 - Polity and Governance; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.

Prelims: Village Engineers Program.

Mains: Village Engineers Program for welfare of village and tribal youth.

Context: Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) held a meeting for rolling out the Village Engineers Program in Gujarat.

Details:

- The programme was first launched from Madhya Pradesh.
- The aim is to ensure inclusive development for all communities.
- It trains the tribal youth by providing them a basket of skills and confers recognition in the form of certification.
- Ensuring targeted skilling opportunities for the tribal youth in their local areas can reduce the pull for migration.
- This will result in the participation of local residents in the economic activities of their region.
- The close collaboration of the central and state government is needed to efficiently implement the programme.
- The programme is in line with the vision of Self-Reliance or AtmaNirbharta.