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Frame rules for disposal of cigarette butts: NGT

- Following a report filed by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the board to lay down guidelines pertaining to disposal of cigarette and beedi butts within three months.
- The report, based on a study conducted by the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR), however, says that concentration of various parameters analysed are lower than the prescribed limits and “will not be toxic to humans and environment”.
- Taking a note of the report, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, “While tobacco is undoubtedly harmful and the concerned authorities are seized of the remedial action, the tribunal is mainly concerned with the manner of disposal of cigarette and beedi butts. We do not find any valid reason to reject the expert report.”
- The report dated August 20 read, “The analysis reflects that concentrations detected will not be toxic to human and environment. Cellulose acetate is a major component (95%) of the cigarette butts along with the wrapping paper and rayon. In general, the toxicity data are not available for cellulose acetate.”

Cellulose acetate:

- Cellulose acetate is a major component of the cigarette and beedi butts and its degradation studies show that it will persist for a longer duration. Recycling of cellulose acetate after recovery from cigarette butts may be suggested as one among the immediate solution to the problem until the degradation and safety data are generated.
- The study 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.

Value Added Information

About Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) of India is a **statutory organisation under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**.



- It was established in 1974 under the **Water (Prevention and Control of pollution) Act, 1974.**
- CPCB is also entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- It serves as a field formation and also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- It Co-ordinates the activities of the State Pollution Control Boards by providing technical assistance and guidance and also resolves disputes among them.

Rafales a game changer, says Rajnath

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday called the induction of the French Rafale fighter jet into the Indian Air Force (IAF) a “game changer”, and said it was a very important step in light of the security conditions that “have been created along India’s borders.”
- The formal ceremony marked the full operational induction of the jets into the IAF, Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria said.
- Five Rafales were inducted into the No. 17 Golden Arrows squadron. This is the first imported fighter to be inducted since the Sukhoi-30s came from Russia in the late 90s.

Significance:

- At the ceremony at the airbase here, Mr. Singh said, “The IAF plays an important role in maintaining military deterrence and their actions will be decisive in any future war. While the prevailing situation on our boundaries has caught our attention, we should not ignore the threat of cross-border terrorism.”
- India’s responsibilities were not limited to land borders alone. In the Indo-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region, it was working with international community as a commitment to world peace, he noted. Vigilance was the first measure of security on the northern borders amid current security challenges, he said.



- French Defence Minister Florence Parly who was present, said that in strategic terms, India would have an edge over the entire region with the induction of the Rafales.

Step forward in the strategic partnership:

- In a joint statement after bilateral talks, Ms. Parly said the induction of the Rafale marked a step forward in the strategic partnership that dated back to 1998.
- “France has always stood beside with India both through good and bad times,” she noted.
- Ms. Parly said they planned to reinforce cooperation in maritime, air, space and cyber domains. There were great prospects for co-operation in the Indo-Pacific.

Jaishankar, Wang hold talks

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held their first face-to-face meeting in Moscow on Thursday to discuss the four-month-long stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, which has seen violent clashes and even gunfire for the first time since 1975.
- The meeting took place on Thursday evening, after the completion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council’s Foreign Minister’s meeting as well as a Russia-India-China trilateral meeting that both Ministers attended. However, the outcome of the India-China bilateral meeting was not immediately known.

Commanders’ meet:

- China has amassed more troops and occupied ridges in the Finger area of Pangong Tso since Tuesday night, although Indian troops are holding on to dominant positions on the South Bank.
- Mr. Jaishankar, who travelled to Russia to attend the 8-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, also held bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the sidelines of the 2-day Council of Foreign Ministers meet.



- The only member of SCO he did not meet was Pakistan, whose Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was also present.

Pakistan statement:

- In what would be considered a provocative statement in New Delhi, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said that they had discussed India when Mr. Qureshi met with Mr. Wang on Thursday evening, a meeting that took place before Mr. Wang's meeting with Mr. Jaishankar.
- "Foreign Minister Qureshi emphasized that India's expansionist and unilateral actions, particularly since August 5, 2019, have been imperilling regional peace and security," said a Pakistani MFA statement issued in Islamabad, referring to the government's moves with Jammu and Kashmir and Article 370 last year.
- The MEA did not respond to the Pakistani statement.
- Earlier Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Wang took part in an extended lunch with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as part of the Russia-India-China trilateral. Russia has consistently encouraged dialogue between Delhi and Beijing, particularly at the most tense moments of the crisis. In the days after the Galwan clash in June in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, Russia hosted a videoconference meeting of the RIC trilateral.

India and Japan sign logistics agreement

- India and Japan signed a logistics agreement that will allow the Armed Forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his outgoing Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, who held a telephone discussion on Thursday, welcomed the pact that was signed by Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar and Ambassador of Japan Suzuki Satoshi.

Significance:

- A statement from the government informed that the agreement on '**Reciprocal Provision Supplies and Services**' will "increase interoperability between the Armed Forces of India and Japan" and assist in maintaining regional security.



- “The agreement establishes the enabling framework for closer cooperation between the Armed Forces of India and Japan 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 Prime Ministers of Japan and India welcomed the signing of the agreement, which will help both sides coordinate on medical requirements, supplies, maintenance, airlifting and communication.

Greater maritime cooperation:

- Significantly, the agreement signed on Wednesday is mainly aimed at greater maritime cooperation and can dramatically upgrade India-Japan naval exercises as the participants are expected to share maritime facilities for mutual benefit.