



Yojna IAS

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JULY 2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Delhi Office

706 Ground Floor Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Near Batra Cinema Delhi – 110009

Contact No. : +91 8595390705

Noida Office

Basement C-32 Noida Sector-2
Uttar Pradesh 201301

website : www.yojniaias.com



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2023

PAU'S NEW WHEAT VARIETY PBW RS1

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "PAU's New Wheat Variety PBW RS1". The topic "PAU's New Wheat Variety PBW RS1" has relevance in the "Science and Technology" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is PAU's New Wheat Variety PBW RS1? What are its features, challenges? What is the Glycemic Index?

For Mains:

GS: Role of Biotechnology in improving food security

Why in the news?

According to a report in The Indian Express, The Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) has developed a new wheat variety to keep blood sugar, obesity in check.

PAU's New Wheat Variety PBW RS1

- The Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) has developed a new wheat variety called PBW RS1, which is aimed at addressing health concerns related to blood sugar levels and obesity.
- This variety contains **high levels of amylose starch and resistant starch**, known for their ability to slow down the release of glucose into the bloodstream. By releasing glucose slowly, **PBW RS1 helps in maintaining stable blood sugar levels and increasing satiety.**

Benefits of PBW RS1

PBW RS1 offers several benefits in terms of health and nutrition. Here are some of its advantages:

Reduced Glycemic Index

- Chapatis and biscuits made from PBW RS1 have a lower glycemic index compared to

those made from regular wheat varieties.

- The decreased digestibility of the starch in PBW RS1 contributes to this lower glycemic index.
- A lower glycemic index is associated with a decreased risk of diet-related diseases, including obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Feeling of fullness and Weight Management

- Consuming PBW RS1-based chapatis provides a greater feeling of fullness compared to regular wheat chapatis.
- This increased satiety can contribute to weight management and portion control.

Nutritional Content

- PBW RS1 has a comparable total starch content to other wheat varieties, ranging from 66-70 percent.
- However, its significant advantage lies in its **higher resistant starch content of 30.3 percent**, compared to 7.5-10 percent in other varieties.
- The **non-resistant starch content in PBW RS1 is also lower**, at 37.1 percent compared to 56-62 percent in other varieties.
- Additionally, **PBW RS1 contains 56.63 percent amylose, which is significantly higher** than the 21-22 percent found in other varieties.
- These nutritional properties make PBW RS1 a **healthier choice for individuals concerned about their carbohydrate intake**.

Disease Resistance

- Apart from its nutritional attributes, PBW RS1 exhibits resistance to fungal diseases. It is completely resistant to yellow rust and moderately resistant to brown rust.
- This disease resistance can contribute to improved crop yield and reduce the need for chemical treatments.

Challenge of Lower Productivity in Cultivating PBW RS1

- The average grain yield of PBW RS1, recorded at PAU's field trials, is 43.18 quintals per hectare.
- This is slightly below the average yield of 48 quintals per hectare in Punjab, which can reach up to 52 quintals or more in certain years..

What is the Glycemic Index?

- **The glycemic index (GI) is a metric that indicates the speed at which a particular food increases blood sugar levels.**
- Foods with a high GI are swiftly digested and absorbed, leading to a rapid surge in blood sugar.

- On the other hand, foods with a low GI are processed and absorbed more gradually, resulting in a gradual elevation of blood sugar levels.
- The GI of a food is measured on a scale of 0 to 100, with pure glucose having a GI of 100.
 - Foods with a GI of 55 or less are considered to have a low GI.
 - Foods with a GI of 70 or more are considered to have a high GI.
- The GI of a food can be affected by a number of factors, including the type of carbohydrate, the amount of fibre, and the way the food is cooked.
- People with diabetes or other conditions that affect blood sugar levels may benefit from eating foods with a low GI.

Some examples of foods with a low GI:

- Beans
- Lentils
- Whole grains
- Fruits
- Vegetables

Some examples of foods with a high GI:

- White bread
- White rice
- Potatoes
- Pasta
- Soda

Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of PBW RS1 by the Punjab Agricultural University represents a significant breakthrough in wheat breeding. Its high amylose starch and resistant starch content offer various health benefits, including stable blood sugar levels and increased satiety. Although PBW RS1 presents challenges in terms of productivity, efforts are being made to promote its cultivation and position it as a special quality wheat variety. The availability of PBW RS1 seeds to farmers and its potential impact on improving nutritional security are eagerly awaited.

Sources:

Punjab Agricultural University develops new wheat variety to keep blood sugar, obesity in check – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference the New Wheat Variety PBW RS1 recently seen in news, consider the following statements:

1. The Wheat Variety PBW RS1 is developed by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research along with Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth.
2. It boasts low glycemic index along with reduced starch content.
3. This is particularly helpful for individuals concerned about their protein intake.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to the Glycemic Index?

1. The Glycemic Index is a measure of how much insulin is released in response to eating a food.
2. Diabetic persons or people with other conditions that affect blood sugar levels may benefit from eating low GI foods.
3. Potatoes, Pasta, Bread are examples of high GI foods.

How many of the abovementioned statement/s is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the role of biotechnology in ensuring food security in India, highlighting its potential benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations along with examples.

GRAMODYOG VIKAS YOJANA (GVY)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY)". The topic "Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY)" has relevance in the Rural Development section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY)?

For Mains:

GS 3: Rural Development

Components of GVY?

Significance of Village Industries in the Indian Economy?

Challenges for Village Industries in the Indian Economy?

Why in the news?

The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, distributed Honey Bee-Boxes and Toolkits to beneficiaries. The program was organized under the 'Gramodyog Vikas Yojna' of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, State Office Delhi, Government of India.

About Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY):

Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY) is a component of the Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana, which is a Central Sector Scheme launched in March 2020. GVY aims to promote and develop village industries through various means, including common facilities, technological modernization, and training. It is implemented by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) under the Ministry of MSMEs.

Objectives of GVY:

- Promote and develop village industries through common facilities and technological modernization.
- Provide training and capacity building to artisans and staff.
- Support research and development for product innovation.
- Enhance marketing and publicity of village industry products.

Included Activities:

- GVY covers various industries under its ambit, including:
- Agro-Based & Food Processing Industry (ABFPI)
- Mineral-Based Industry (MBI)
- Wellness & Cosmetics Industry (WCI)
- Handmade Paper, Leather & Plastic Industry (HPLPI)
- Rural Engineering & New Technology Industry (RENTI)
- Service Industry

Components of GVY:

- R&D and Product Innovation: Support for research and development activities, product diversification, and design development.
- Capacity Building: Training and skill development of staff and artisans through Master Development Training Centers (MDTCs) and institutions of excellence.
- Marketing & Publicity: Assistance in marketing village industry products through the preparation of catalogs, industry directories, market research, and organizing exhibitions and buyer-seller meetings.

Significance of Village Industries in the Indian Economy:

- **Employment Generation:** Village industries are labor-intensive and provide employment opportunities, reducing unemployment and underemployment in rural areas.
- **Rural Development:** Village industries contribute to the overall development of rural areas by creating local economic activities, reducing migration, and preventing population concentration in urban areas.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** These industries generate income for rural communities, providing livelihood options and empowering individuals to improve their socio-economic conditions.
- **Utilization of Local Resources:** Village industries utilize local resources and raw materials, promoting sustainable development and preserving local heritage and culture.
- **Export Potential:** Many village industries produce traditional crafts and products with high demand in domestic and international markets, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and global trade competitiveness.

Challenges:

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Many rural areas lack adequate infrastructure, including transportation, power supply, and access to markets. Insufficient infrastructure hinders the growth and competitiveness of village industries.
- **Limited Access to Finance:** Limited access to credit and financial resources restricts their ability to invest in modern technology, machinery, and raw materials.
- **Skill Gap:** Limited access to training and skill development opportunities hampers the growth of these industries.
- **Marketing and Market Linkages:** They face difficulties in reaching domestic and international markets, understanding market trends, and competing with larger-scale industries.
- **Technological Upgradation:** The lack of awareness, limited resources, and technical expertise hinder the adoption of modern technologies.

Other Initiatives for Village Industries Development:

- Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- National Rural Livelihood Mission

SOURCE:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1937485>

Q.1 Which of the following is a component of the Khadi Gramodyog Vikas Yojana?

(a) Rural Engineering & New Technology Industry (RENTI)

- (b) National Rural Livelihood Mission
- (c) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- (d) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which ministry is responsible for the implementation of the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana (GVY) to promote and develop village industries?

- (a) Ministry of Rural Development
- (b) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- (c) Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
- (d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Answer: (c)

Q.3 Discuss the significance of village industries in the socio-economic development of rural areas in India. Examine their role in employment generation, poverty alleviation, and sustainable utilization of local resources.

WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT SYSTEM

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "WTO Dispute Settlement System". The topic "WTO Dispute Settlement System" has relevance in the "International Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is WTO? What is the WTO Dispute Settlement Body?

For Mains:

GS2: International Organizations- their structure and mandate

Why in the news?

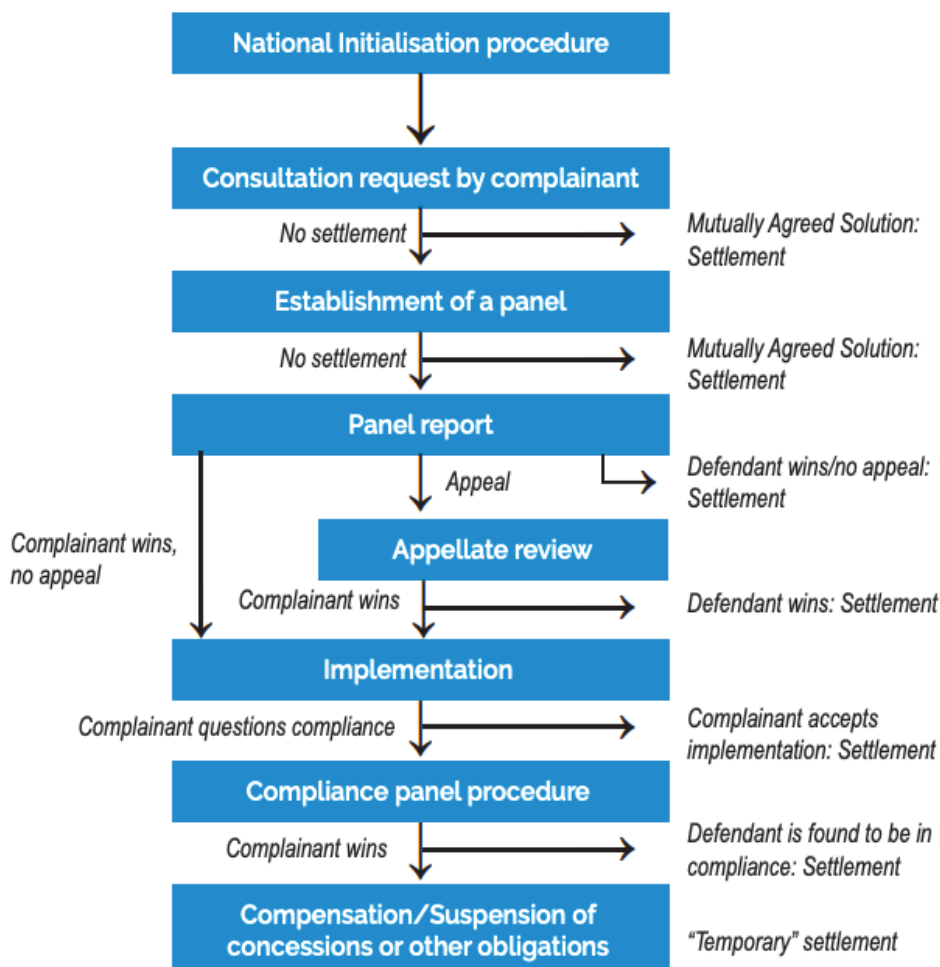
In June 2022, the member-states of the World Trade Organization (WTO) were able to reach a face-saving agreement at the Geneva ministerial conference, which included reviving the WTO's dispute settlement system (DSS) by 2024.

World Trade Organization (WTO):

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the singular global organisation dedicated to managing international trade regulations among nations.

- It establishes guidelines for the worldwide trading system and resolves disputes between its member countries.

- The foundation of the WTO lies in the negotiated and ratified agreements, endorsed by the majority of trading nations and approved by their respective parliaments. Its primary objective is to facilitate the smooth, predictable, and unhindered flow of trade.
- Additionally, the WTO encompasses various aspects of trade, including services such as telecommunications and banking, as well as intellectual property rights.



Evolution of WTO:

- In **1948**, several countries formed the **General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** with the aim of reducing high customs tariffs and other trade restrictions worldwide.
- Subsequently, in **1994**, member countries decided to establish a permanent institution to promote free and fair trade among nations, leading to the **transformation of GATT into the World Trade Organization on January 1, 1995**.
- While GATT mainly focused on tariffs and trade barriers, the WTO expanded its scope to encompass a broader range of trade-related issues. The negotiation process among GATT members aimed to eliminate trade barriers, resulting in seven rounds of extended negotiations. **The final round, known as the Uruguay Round, commenced in September 1986 and concluded in December 1993.**

- These negotiations covered not only the traditional subjects such as tariffs and non-tariff restrictions, but also extended to cover seven broad areas, viz.,
 - market access
 - agriculture
 - textiles
 - trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPS)
 - trade related investment measures and services (TRIMS)
 - trade in services
 - institutional matters

H Location: Geneva, Switzerland

Membership: It includes 164 members amounting to 98 percent of world trade

Functions of WTO:

- Administering WTO trade agreements
- Forum for trade negotiations
- Handling trade disputes
- Monitoring national trade policies
- Technical assistance and training for developing countries
- Cooperation with other international organizations

Structure of WTO:

- The Ministerial Conference is the supreme decision-making body of the WTO and usually meets every two years.
- Directly beneath it is the General Council, composed of ambassadors and delegation heads stationed in Geneva, and occasionally officials dispatched from members' capitals. The General Council holds multiple sessions annually at the WTO headquarters in Geneva.
- Moreover, the General Council assumes the roles of the Trade Policy Review Body and the Dispute Settlement Body.
- Operating at the subsequent tier, the Goods Council, Services Council, and Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council function under the authority of the General Council.
- All WTO members have the right to participate in all councils and committees, except for the Appellate Body, Dispute Settlement panels, and plurilateral committees, which are limited to certain members.

WTO Dispute Settlement System:

The dispute settlement system (DSS) of the WTO comprises two key components: the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) and the Appellate Body.

Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)

- To address conflicts among WTO members, the General Council convenes as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).
- Such disputes may arise regarding any agreement outlined in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round that falls under the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU).
- The DSB settles trade disputes by establishing panels, referring matters to arbitration, adopting reports, overseeing implementation, and authorizing suspension of concessions.
- The DSB refers the disputes to the Appellate Body.

Appellate Body

- The Appellate Body serves as a standing body consisting of seven individuals.
- Its purpose is to hear appeals arising from reports issued by panels in disputes initiated by WTO Members.
- The Appellate Body holds the authority to uphold, modify, or reverse the legal findings and conclusions of a panel.
- Appellate Body Reports are adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) unless all members decide against doing so.

Reasons for its non-functionality:

- **Lack of Members:** The WTO's Appellate Body is currently unable to hear appeals due to a lack of members. The last sitting Appellate Body member's term expired on November 30, 2020.
- **US' Blockade:** The United States has blocked the appointment of new judges to the WTO's Appellate Body for nearly two years due to concerns about judicial activism at the WTO and sovereignty.

US' stance:

- The US reproaches the appellate body for exceeding its mandate and engaging in judicial overreach.
- The US argues that the appellate body has been creating binding precedents, which goes against the WTO's dispute settlement understanding (DSU) that states there is no rule of precedent in international law.
- The US argues that until the appellate body's role is defined, it should not be resurrected.

Significance of the WTO's Dispute Settlement System:

- The DSS is considered to be the foundation of the multilateral trading system and the organization's "unique contribution to the stability of the global economy."
- It provides a forum for member countries to resolve trade disputes pertaining to

a “covered agreement” and encourages disputes to be resolved through negotiations .

- The priority is to settle disputes, through consultations if possible.
- The DSS is vital to the functionality of the WTO as it provides an amenable platform for member states to settle their disputes. In its absence, disputes will persist and the relevance of the WTO as a multilateral organization will be lost.
- It underscores the rule of law and makes the trading system more secure and predictable

Additional Information:

Reports Published by WTO:

- **World Trade Statistical Review**
- **World Trade Report**
- **Global Trade Outlook**
- **Goods Trade Barometer (Earlier known as World Trade Outlook Indicator)**

Sources:

Restoring the World Trade Organization’s crown jewel – The Hindu

Q1. With reference World Trade Organization, consider the following statements:

1. The World Trade Organisation came into existence from 1st January 1948.
2. The highest-ranking decision-making body of the WTO is the Ministerial Conference, which meets every two years.
3. The WTO also oversees trade in services such as telecommunications and banking, as well as other issues such as intellectual property rights.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Trade & Development Report
2. Goods Trade Barometer
3. World Trade Report
4. Global Trade Outlook
5. World Economic Situation and Prospects

How many of the above mentioned reports are published by the World Trade Or-

ganization?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All Five

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the structure and significance of the WTO dispute settlement system and analyse the reasons for its non-functionality

INDUS WATERS TREATY

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Indus Waters Treaty”. The topic “Indus Waters Treaty” has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About the Indus Waters Treaty ?

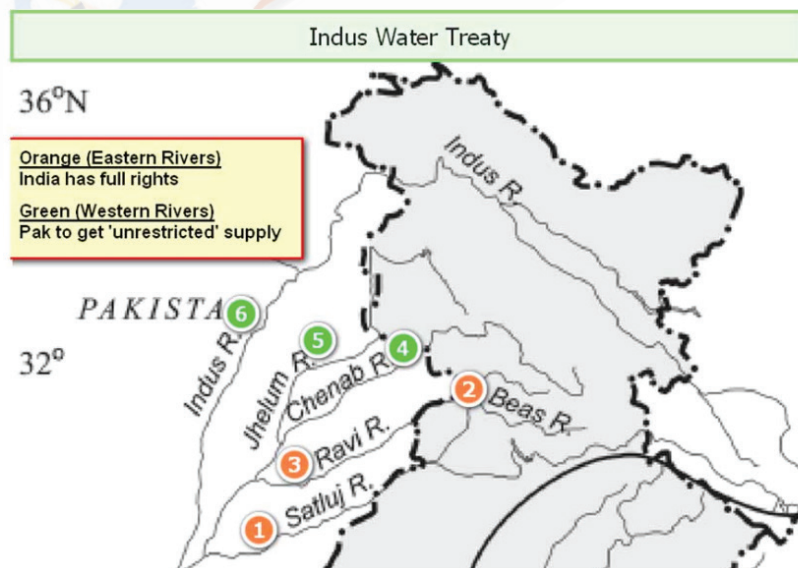
For Mains:

GS 2: International Relations

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms?

Hydroelectric Project Dispute Between India and Pakistan?

About Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)?



Why in the news?

Pakistan has expressed the hope that India would implement the Indus Waters Treaty

in “good faith” after New Delhi said it cannot be compelled to participate in “illegal” proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects in Kashmir.

About IWT

The Indus Waters Treaty is a bilateral agreement between India and Pakistan, facilitated by the World Bank, signed on September 19, 1960. It governs the utilization and sharing of water resources from the Indus River system, encompassing six rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. The primary objective of the treaty is to foster collaboration and peaceful management of transboundary water resources between the two countries. It provides a framework for the allocation and use of these rivers, promoting equitable distribution and preventing disputes over water. The treaty plays a crucial role in ensuring water security and fostering cooperation between India and Pakistan.

Allocation of Rivers:

- Three rivers (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej) in the eastern part were allocated to India for unrestricted use.
- Three rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) in the western part were allocated to Pakistan for unrestricted use.
- India allowed the use of the western rivers for domestic, non-consumptive, and agricultural purposes.

Construction of Projects:

The agreement allows India to build run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects on the western rivers, but this is contingent upon specific conditions.

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:

Communication via Permanent Indus Commission (PIC):

- The PIC consists of a commissioner from each country.
- Parties inform each other about planned projects on the Indus River.
- PIC facilitates the exchange of necessary information.
- Aimed at resolving differences and avoiding escalation.

Neutral Expert:

- If the PIC fails to resolve the issue, it advances to the next level.
- The World Bank appoints a neutral expert.
- The expert attempts to resolve the differences between the parties.

Court of Arbitration (CoA):

- If a neutral expert fails to resolve the dispute, it goes to the CoA.
- The CoA resolves the dispute through arbitration.

- The IWT states that the Neutral Expert and CoA steps are mutually exclusive, meaning that only one of them can be used at a time for a given dispute.

Note: The following information does not fit under the headings as requested.

Hydroelectric Project Dispute Between India and Pakistan:

- The dispute involves the Kishanganga hydroelectric project on the Kishanganga River and the Ratle hydroelectric project on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Pakistan objects to these projects, claiming violations of the Indus Waters Treaty, concerns about reduced water flow, environmental impact, and differing treaty interpretations.
- In 2016, Pakistan withdrew its request for a Neutral Expert and proposed a Court of Arbitration instead.
- India opposes the constitution of the CoA, arguing that it contravenes the provisions of the IWT.

World Bank Intervention:

- The World Bank, which brokered the IWT, intervened in the dispute.
- The bank paused the process after receiving separate requests from India and Pakistan, urging resolution through the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), the communication mechanism established by the treaty.
- Pakistan refused to discuss the issue during PIC meetings, prompting the World Bank to initiate actions on the appointment of a Neutral Expert and the establishment of a CoA.

India's Opposition:

- India opposed the constitution of the CoA, arguing that it contravened the provisions of the IWT.
- India raised concerns about the jurisdiction and competence of the Court of Arbitration (CoA), asserting that it was not appropriately constituted in accordance with the provisions of the treaty.
- India did not appoint arbitrators or attend the court's proceedings, emphasizing the need for a single dispute resolution process.

Ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration:

- The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) has issued a ruling stating that the Court of Arbitration (CoA) has the jurisdiction to address Pakistan's objections regarding India's hydroelectric projects.
- The ruling was unanimous, binding on both parties, and not subject to appeal.
- The PCA rejected India's objections to the competence of the CoA, as raised through its communications with the World Bank.

India's Response:

India has maintained that it will not participate in the proceedings at the PCA, arguing that the dispute is already being examined by a Neutral Expert under the framework of the IWT.

About Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

- The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1899 and based in The Hague, Netherlands.
- Its purpose is to serve the international community in the field of dispute resolution and facilitate arbitration and other forms of dispute settlement between states.
- The PCA has a three-part organizational structure:
 1. Administrative Council: Responsible for overseeing policies and budgets.
 2. Members of the Court: A panel of independent potential arbitrators.
 3. International Bureau: The Secretariat of the PCA, headed by the Secretary-General.
- The PCA operates a Financial Assistance Fund aimed at helping developing countries cover some of the costs involved in international arbitration or other dispute settlement procedures offered by the PCA.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pakistan-hopes-india-would-implement-indus-waters-treaty-in-good-faith/article67051033.ece>

Q.1 Which of the following rivers are allocated to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty?

- (A) Ravi and Beas
- (B) Indus and Jehlum
- (C) Chenab and Sutlej
- (D) Ravi and Chenab

Answer: (B)

Q.2 Which organization facilitated the negotiation and signing of the Indus Waters Treaty?

- (A) United Nations
- (B) World Trade Organization
- (C) World Bank
- (D) International Monetary Fund

Answer: (C)

Q.3 Explain the key provisions and significance of the Indus Waters Treaty in

promoting cooperation and managing transboundary water resources between India and Pakistan.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE TECHNOLOGIES

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Electric Vehicle Technologies”. The topic “Electric Vehicle Technologies” has relevance in the “Science and Technology” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is EV? What are different EV Technologies?

For Mains:

GS3: Science and Technology- Indigenization and developing new technology

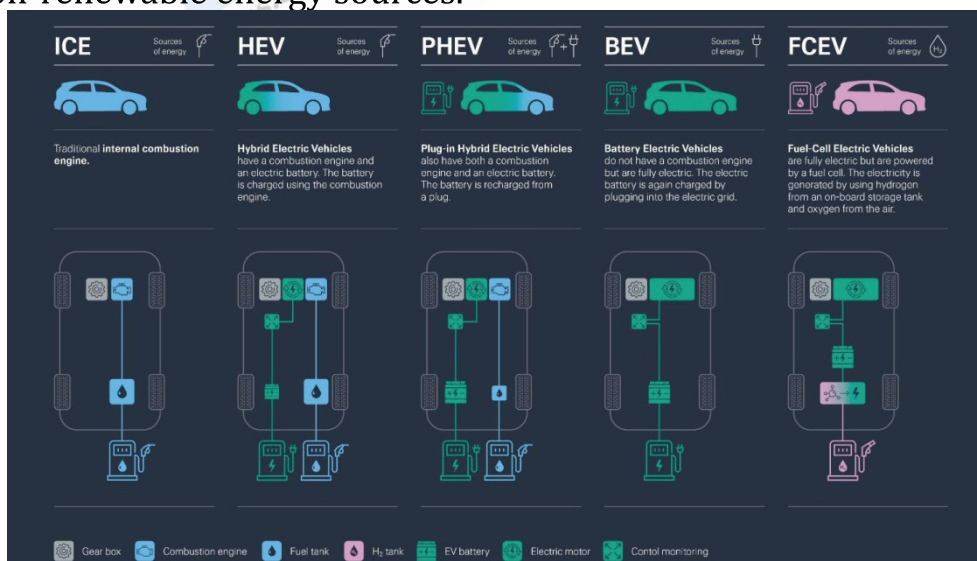
Why in the news?

As central and state governments chart the path to a net zero emissions future, the Electric Vehicle Push has been at the heart of the strategy.

Electric Vehicle:

An electric vehicle (EV) is a type of vehicle that uses electricity as its primary source of power instead of relying on internal combustion engines that run on fossil fuels. EVs are propelled by electric motors, which are powered by rechargeable batteries.

By eliminating the need for gasoline or diesel, electric vehicles offer a cleaner and more sustainable mode of transportation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on non-renewable energy sources.



Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV):

A battery electric vehicle (BEV) is a type of electric vehicle (EV) that is powered solely by a battery pack. BEVs do not have a gasoline engine or any other form of internal combustion engine. Instead, they use the energy stored in the battery pack to power an electric motor, which turns the wheels.

Advantages of Battery Electric Vehicles:

- **Zero tailpipe emissions:** BEVs produce zero tailpipe emissions, which can help to improve air quality.
- **Reduced noise pollution:** BEVs are much quieter than gasoline-powered vehicles, which can make them more pleasant to drive and live near.
- **Lower operating costs:** The cost of electricity is typically much lower than the cost of gasoline, which can save BEV owners money on fuel costs.
- **Increased efficiency:** BEVs are more efficient than gasoline-powered vehicles, which means they can travel further on a single charge.

Issues with Battery Electric Vehicles:

- **Charging time:** It can take several hours to fully charge a BEV, which can be inconvenient if one needs to charge the car quickly.
- **Cost:** BEVs are still more expensive than gasoline-powered vehicles. However, the cost of BEVs is expected to come down as the technology improves.
- **Charging infrastructure:** The availability of public charging stations is still limited in some areas. This can be a problem for people who do not have access to a home charger.
- **Environmental impact of battery production:** The production of BEV batteries requires the mining of raw materials, such as lithium and cobalt, which can have environmental impacts.
- **Disposal of battery waste:** BEV batteries contain hazardous materials, so they must be disposed of properly.

India's Electric Mobility Plan:

- **India's electric mobility plan is primarily focused on battery electric vehicles (BEVs) replacing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, with lithium-ion being the most viable battery option for the time being.**
- The main government subsidy for EVs in India is the **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) India scheme**.
 - The FAME India scheme provides **subsidies for the purchase of electric vehicles, as well as for the installation of charging infrastructure.**
- In addition to the FAME India scheme, some states in India also offer their own subsidies for EVs.

Issues with BEV Push:

- **Upfront subsidy:**
 - State subsidies are crucial for promoting electric vehicle adoption, as seen in markets like Norway, the US, and China.
 - These subsidies include tax breaks, access to bus lanes, toll road exemptions, and free parking with charging facilities.
 - However, there is a concern that **these subsidies primarily benefit the middle and upper middle classes and not the economically weaker sections.**
- **Charging network:**
 - Investing in charging infrastructure has proven to be more effective in driving electric vehicle adoption than upfront purchase subsidies.
 - Countries like Norway and China have seen rapid adoption by expanding public charging infrastructure.
 - The number of electric vehicles (EVs) in India is increasing, but there is a shortage of public charging stations.
 - This is especially concerning given the dominance of two- and three-wheelers in the market, with **only about 2,000 public charging stations currently operational across the country.**
- **Electricity source:**
 - In countries with successful EV adoption, a significant portion of electricity comes from renewable sources.
 - However, **in India, the grid is largely powered by coal-fired thermal plants**, raising concerns about the environmental impact of EVs. While EVs can reduce tailpipe emissions, the pollution from thermal plants remains.
- **Value chain:**
 - India faces challenges in diversifying its dependency on lithium-ion batteries for EVs.
 - The demand for such batteries is projected to increase, but **over 90% of global lithium production is concentrated in a few countries-** such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, China, Australia
 - This makes **India heavily reliant on imports, which may limit its control over the supply chain and raise concerns about resource availability and viability.**

New Technologies:

Hybrids

- A hybrid vehicle is a type of vehicle that uses two or more distinct types of power, such as an electric motor and an internal combustion engine.
- Hybrids offer improved fuel efficiency through the electrification of the powertrain.
- They do not require a charging infrastructure base like battery electric vehicles (BEVs).
- Hybrid vehicles facilitate the manufacture of the battery ecosystem, which can be

leveraged for a BEV push.

- Hybrid vehicles still rely on Li-ion batteries, which pose environmental concerns.

PHEV

- A plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) is a type of hybrid vehicle that has a battery that can be plugged into an external power source to charge.
- The battery can power the vehicle for a limited distance, after which the gasoline engine kicks in.
- PHEVs offer the best of both worlds, as they can provide the benefits of an electric vehicle for short trips, while also having the range of a gasoline-powered vehicle for longer trips.

Ethanol & Flex Fuel

- Flex fuel vehicles have internal combustion engines that can run on multiple types of fuel, such as petrol and ethanol.
- A nationwide pilot is underway to deploy this technology in other markets like Brazil, Canada, and the US.

FCEVs

- A fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) is a type of electric vehicle that uses a hydrogen fuel cell to generate electricity. The fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, which powers an electric motor.
- FCEVs are practically zero-emission vehicles.
- The lack of fueling station infrastructure has hindered their widespread adoption.
- FCEVs require dedicated hydrogen refuelling stations, which differ from conventional gasoline stations.
- Safety concerns arise due to the pressurised and cryogenically stored hydrogen, which is then used to generate electricity through an electro-chemical reaction.

Hydrogen internal combustion engine vehicles (Hydrogen ICE):

- Hydrogen ICE vehicles resemble conventional internal combustion engine vehicles with modifications to run on hydrogen.
- Certain engine components, such as the fuel delivery system and spark plugs, are modified to enable compatibility with hydrogen.
- Hydrogen ICE vehicles are not zero-emission like FCEVs.

Synthetic Fuels such as Porsche's eFuels:

- Porsche is developing synthetic fuels that can make internal combustion engines as clean as electric vehicles.
- eFuels are produced from carbon dioxide and hydrogen using renewable energy.
- Porsche's eFuels are currently being tested in Chile.

- The goal is to make eFuels usable in all petrol-engine cars, making their use virtually CO₂-neutral.
- Synthetic fuel will be used in Formula One starting from 2026.

Conclusion

India's push towards electric vehicles is a crucial step in achieving a net-zero emissions future. While there are challenges such as upfront subsidies, charging infrastructure, electricity sources, and diversifying the value chain, exploring alternative technologies like hybrids, flex fuels, FCEVs, and synthetic fuels can complement the transition to electric mobility and address specific concerns.

A comprehensive strategy that addresses these challenges will be essential for India's successful transition to a sustainable and cleaner transportation system.

Sources:

The problem with battery electric vehicles | Explained News, The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to Electric Vehicle (EV) Technology, consider the following statements:

1. Increased efficiency
2. Higher Capital costs
3. Reduce Noise Pollution
4. Reduced maintenance costs

Which of the statements given above is/are advantages of EVs?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following statements in context of Electric Vehicle (EV) Technology,

1. Fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) uses can run on multiple types of fuel, such as petrol and ethanol along with Battery pack.
2. Hydrogen internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles are similar to conventional ICE vehicles, modified to run on hydrogen instead of gasoline or diesel.
3. Hybrid vehicles typically do not need a charging infrastructure like battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

How many of the statements stated above are correct ?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three

(d) None

Answer: (a)

Q3. Discuss the challenges and prospects of India's electric vehicle push in achieving a net-zero emissions future.

E20 AND GLOBAL BIOFUEL ALLIANCE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "E20 and Global Biofuel Alliance". The topic "E20 and Global Biofuel Alliance" has relevance in the "Science and Technology and Environment" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is E20? What is the Global Biofuel Alliance?

For Mains:

GS3: Development of new technology and Environmental Pollution

Why in the news?

During an industry event, the Petroleum Minister announced that E20 petrol, which contains 20 percent ethanol, is currently accessible at 1,350 fuel retail outlets. Furthermore, he stated that the availability of E20 petrol will expand nationwide by 2025.



What is E20?

- **E20 is a fuel blend of 20% ethanol + 80% gasoline.** It is a cleaner-burning fuel than gasoline, and it can help to reduce emissions of pollutants such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxides.
- **Ethanol**, a dehydrated form of ethyl alcohol (C_2H_5OH), can be derived from high-starch crops such as sugarcane, maize, and wheat. In India, the primary source of ethanol production is sugarcane molasses through fermentation.
- Blending ethanol with gasoline yields various fuel mixtures. **Due to the oxygen content in ethanol molecules, they facilitate more thorough combustion of the fuel in engines, leading to reduced emissions and a decrease in environ-**

mental pollution.

- Furthermore, since ethanol is derived from plants that utilise solar energy, it is recognized as a renewable fuel.
- Ethanol and ethanol-gasoline blends offer cleaner burning characteristics and boast higher octane levels compared to non-ethanol gasoline.

Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP)

- The Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) program was initiated in January 2003 with the **aim of encouraging the adoption of eco-friendly and alternative fuels while reducing the reliance on imports for energy needs.**
- The objective of the Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) is **to promote the blending of Ethanol with motor spirit**, aiming to reduce pollution, save foreign exchange, and enhance the value generated within the sugar industry.
- This initiative empowers the industry to address outstanding cane price payments to farmers while simultaneously benefiting the environment and the economy.

Benefits of Ethanol Blending

- **Saving Rs 30,000 crore of foreign exchange per year:** By blending 20% ethanol with petrol, the country can reduce imports, saving a significant amount of foreign currency.
- **Energy security:** Ethanol blending promotes reliance on domestic renewable resources, reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
- **Lower carbon emissions:** Ethanol's cleaner combustion leads to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to mitigating climate change.
- **Better air quality:** Ethanol blending results in fewer pollutants, leading to improved air quality and reduced health risks.
- **Self-reliance:** Increased ethanol production enhances the country's independence in meeting its fuel demands.
- **Use of damaged foodgrains:** Ethanol production can utilize damaged or surplus foodgrains, reducing waste and supporting food security.
- **Increasing farmers' incomes:** Ethanol production provides an additional market for farmers' crops, enhancing their income and livelihoods.
- **Employment generation:** Expanding the ethanol sector creates job opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, and related industries.
- **Greater investment opportunities:** Ethanol blending encourages investments in ethanol production, fostering economic growth and development.

Challenges to Ethanol Blending:

- **Availability of sufficient feedstock** on a sustainable basis viz., sugarcane, food grains

- **Inter-state movement of ethanol**
- **Weather related issues affecting the crop**
- **Prices of feed-stock and ethanol**
- **Need for additional storage tanks** for ethanol at marketing terminals / depots
- **Need for ethanol compliant dispensing units**
- **Handhold vendors to develop ethanol compatible parts**
- **Optimization of engine for higher ethanol blends**
- **Conduct of durability studies on engines and field trials before introducing E20 compliant vehicles**

Timeline

Year	Event
January 2003	5% Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme launched in 9 states and 4 Union Territories.
November 2006	Sale of 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol begins in additional 10 states.
April 2019	The EBP Program extended to all of India except Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, with OMCs selling petrol blended with ethanol up to 10%.
By 2022	Government target of 10% blending of ethanol with petrol.
By 2025 (Earlier 2030)	Government target of 20% blending of ethanol with petrol.

What is the Global Biofuel Alliance?

The Global Biofuel Alliance is an initiative by **India, Brazil, and the United States**, as **leading biofuel producers and consumers**, to work together towards the development of a Global Biofuels Alliance along with other interested countries.

Aims and Objectives:

- The primary focus is to promote collaboration and enhance the adoption of sustainable biofuels, particularly in the transportation sector.
- This includes placing importance on bolstering markets, facilitating international trade of biofuels, sharing concrete policy lessons, and providing technical assistance for biofuels programs at a global scale.
- Furthermore, there is an emphasis on highlighting the best practices and successful instances that have already been implemented.

The Alliance will cooperate with the Clean Energy Ministerial Biofuture Platform, the Mission Innovation Bioenergy initiatives, and the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP). The Global Biofuel Alliance is **one of the key initiatives under India's G20 Presidency**. It was **announced by the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas during India Energy Week 2023**.

India Energy Week 2023 was held from February 27 to March 1, 2023 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, India.

Source:

E20 petrol already available at 1,350 fuel outlets, on track for pan-India rollout by 2025: Puri | Business News, The Indian Express
Global Biofuel Alliance: One of the priorities under India's G20 Presidency (pib.gov.in)

Q1. With reference to Ethanol, consider the following statements:

1. Ethanol can be derived from crops such as sugarcane, maize, and wheat.
2. Blending of ethanol in the gasoline leads to reduced emissions due to cleaner combustion.
3. Ethanol blended petrol has lower octane number than non-blended petrol.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Increasing farmers' incomes
2. Highly enhanced engine performance
3. Lower carbon emissions
4. Use of damaged foodgrains

How many of the above-mentioned statements are benefits of ethanol blending?

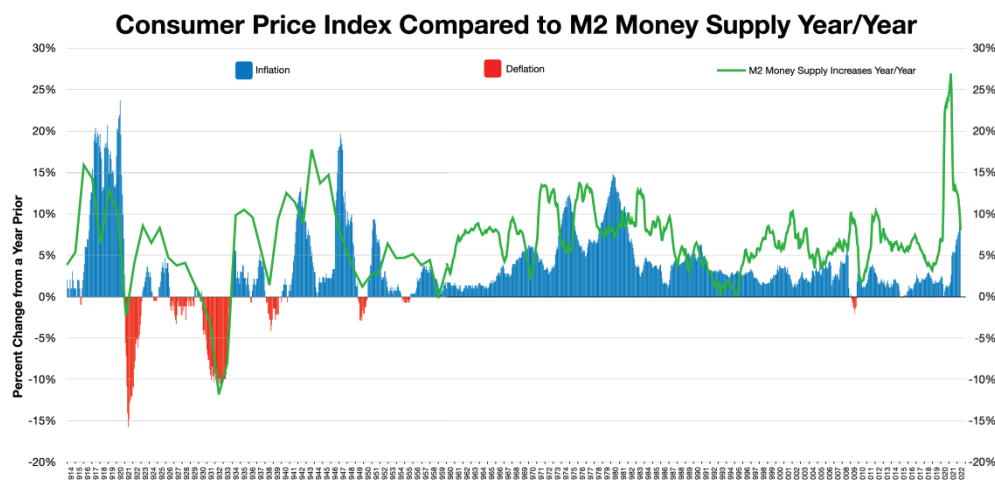
- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (d)

Q3. Discuss the significance and challenges of the ethanol blending program in India.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX – CPI

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Consumer Price Index". The topic "Consumer Price Index" has relevance in the "Indian Economy" section of the UPSC CSE exam.



For Prelims:

What is CPI? What is its basket? What are different versions?

For Mains:

GS3: Indian Economy and Issues related to it

Why in the news?

Recent reports show that Retail Inflation denoted by Consumer Price Index has risen to a three-month high of 4.81 per cent.

Consumer Price Index

A consumer price index (CPI) measures changes in the prices of a basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households. It measures changes in the price level for the specified consumers in the particular region.

There are different versions of CPI in India such as–

CPI	Base Year	Publishing Agency
CPI (Combined)	2012	Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
CPI (Rural)	2012	Central Statistics Office, MoSPI
CPI (Urban)	2012	Central Statistics Office, MoSPI
CPI (AL/RL) (Agricultural Labour / Rural Labour)	2012	Labour Bureau
CPI (UNME) (Urban Non-Manual Employees)	2004-05	Central Statistics Office, MoSPI
CPI (IW) (Industrial Workers)	2001	Labour Bureau

All-India Combined Consumer Price Index (CPI-Combined)

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) uses the All-India Combined Consumer Price Index

(AICPI) as its primary measure of consumer price changes.

- The index is now being calculated with a base year of 2012 = 100, and several improvements have been made in accordance with international standards.
- The basket of items and weighting diagrams for the revised series were created using the Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP) data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) of the 68th Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) in 2011-12.

The weights in CPI-C are as follows:

Major Groups	Weight (%)
Food and beverages	45.86
Misc. group	28.32
Housing	10.07
Fuel & light	6.84
Clothing & footwear	6.53
Pan, tobacco and intoxicants	2.38
General	100.00

Core Inflation

- Core inflation is a measure of inflation that excludes the prices of food and energy.
- It is calculated by subtracting the prices of food and energy from the overall inflation rate. This is done to get a better understanding of the underlying trend in inflation, as the prices of food and energy can be volatile.
- While in CPI-C, major fuel items such as 'petrol for vehicle' and 'diesel for vehicle', which have relatively large weights, are not included in 'fuel and light'. These fuel items are classified under "transport and communication", a subcategory of the "miscellaneous" group.

Core Inflation = Overall Inflation – (Weight of Food and Beverages + Weight of Fuel and Light)

Refined Core Inflation

- The Economic Survey 2021-22 constructed a "refined" core inflation rate by excluding main fuel items such as petrol, diesel, and lubricants and other fuels for vehicles, as well as food and beverages and fuel and light, from the headline retail inflation rate.

Refined Core Inflation = Overall Inflation – (Weight of Food and Beverages + Weight of Fuel and Light + Weight of Transport Fuel Items)

Need for Changes in CPI Basket:

Reflecting evolving consumption patterns:

- As societies progress and economic conditions evolve, people's consumption patterns shift. New products and services emerge, and the relative importance of dif-

ferent expenditure categories changes.

Improving accuracy:

- The CPI is used as a measure of inflation, which has significant implications for economic policy and decision-making.
- To make informed policy decisions, it is crucial to have an accurate measure of inflation that aligns with the current consumption patterns.

Addressing changing relative prices:

- The relative prices of goods and services can fluctuate over time. Some items may become relatively more expensive, while others may become relatively cheaper.
- If the CPI basket does not account for these changes in relative prices, it may not accurately reflect the cost of living for consumers.

Accounting for technological advancements:

- Technological advancements introduce new products and services into the market, which can significantly impact consumer behavior and spending patterns.
- For example, the rise of digital services, internet usage, and other technology-related expenses may not be adequately captured in the current CPI basket.

Addressing biases and flaws:

- The current CPI basket may have biases or flaws that need to be addressed. For example, the weightage assigned to certain items may be disproportionate or not reflective of their actual importance in household budgets.

Ultimately, an accurate and up-to-date CPI basket is essential for policymakers, economists, and society as a whole to have a clear understanding of inflation, consumer spending patterns, and the economic well-being of the population. Only through adapting and evolving the CPI can we accurately measure the true cost of living and make informed decisions that align with the dynamics of the modern economy.

Sources:

How the CPI basket conceals the inflation picture – The Hindu

Q1. With reference Consumer Price Index (CPI), consider the following statements:

1. Food and beverages has the highest weight in the CPI Basket while Fuel & light has the lowest weight.
2. The Labour Bureau of India publishes the CPI for Urban Non- Manual Employees.
3. Core inflation is a measure of inflation that excludes volatile prices of food and energy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Refined core inflation is a measure of inflation that excludes the prices of volatile items like fuel and light, but includes food and beverages.
2. The Reserve Bank of India uses the Combined Consumer Price Index as its main indicator of consumer price changes.
3. CPI (IW) is used for calculating dearness allowance for Central Government Employees.

How many of the abovementioned statement/s is/are correct ?

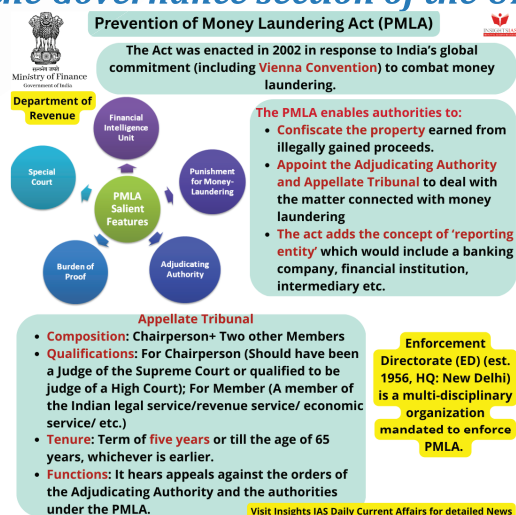
- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Q3. Explain the need for a revised CPI basket, challenges faced, and implications for accurate inflation measurement.

PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT (PMLA)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “PMLA”. The topic “PMLA” has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.



For Prelims:

About the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)?

For Mains:

GS 2: Governance

Why has GSTN been brought under the PMLA?

What is the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)?

Why in the news?

The Centre's move to bring the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) under the purview of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was to empower the relevant investigating agencies to deal with tax fraud and money laundering matters, and not giving outright access to data to any party

What is the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002?

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 was enacted with the objective of preventing money laundering and enabling the confiscation of property that is derived from or involved in money laundering activities. It serves as a crucial component of India's legal framework in the fight against money laundering and associated offenses.
- Definition of Money Laundering: The act defines money laundering as any process by which proceeds of crime are involved in any transaction, directly or indirectly, to conceal the illicit origin of the property.
- Criminal Offense: Money laundering is considered a criminal offense under the PMLA, and individuals involved in money laundering activities can face legal action and penalties.
- Confiscation of Property: The PMLA enables authorities to confiscate property derived from money laundering or involved in money laundering activities.
- Attachment of Property: The act provides for the attachment of properties involved in money laundering offenses during the investigation and trial process.
- Prohibition on Dealing with Attached Property: Once a property is attached under the PMLA, any transaction or dealing with that property is prohibited without prior permission from the authorities.

Why has GSTN been brought under the PMLA?

Enhancing the Fight Against Money Laundering and GST Fraud:

- The move aims to strengthen efforts in combating money laundering and combatting Goods and Services Tax (GST) fraud.
- It is believed that bringing GSTN under the ambit of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) will help enhance the fight against financial crimes.

Improved Information Sharing:

- The recent notification amends a previous 2006 notification, allowing for improved information sharing between GSTN, Enforcement Directorate (ED), and Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) under the provisions of the PMLA Act, 2002.
- This amendment facilitates better coordination and collaboration among these entities in identifying and tackling money laundering activities and GST fraud.

Identification of Suspected GST Identification Numbers:

- In a recent drive against fake registrations, field tax officials identified over 69,600 suspected GST identification numbers for physical verification.
- Out of these, more than 59,000 were verified, and it was found that 25% of them were non-existent.
- This highlights the need for robust measures to prevent GST fraud and money laundering through the GST system.

What is the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)?

- GSTN is an organization that has developed an indirect taxation platform for the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India.
- It provides IT infrastructure and services to taxpayers, Central and State Governments, and other stakeholders.
- GSTN helps taxpayers in preparing and filing returns, making payments, and complying with indirect tax regulations.
- It is a government-owned company incorporated in 2013, and the Board of GSTN has approved its conversion into a government company.

Regulating Authorities:

- The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the PMLA and investigating money laundering cases.
- The Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) is a unit of the Indian government's Department of Revenue and gathers financial intelligence on money laundering offenses.
- FIU-IND operates under the PMLA and collaborates with enforcement agencies and foreign Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs).
- By bringing GSTN under the PMLA ambit, the authorities aim to leverage the provisions of the act to tackle money laundering activities and strengthen efforts against GST fraud. This step emphasizes the importance of combating financial crimes and ensuring the integrity of the GST system.

SOURCE:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/brought-gst-under-pmla-purview-to-empower-investigators-in-fight->

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 is/are correct?

1. The PMLA was enacted to prevent money laundering and provide for the confiscation of property derived from or involved in money laundering.
2. The PMLA forms the core of India's legal framework to combat money laundering and related crimes.
3. The Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the PMLA and investigating money laundering cases.
4. Money laundering is defined as the process by which illicit funds are converted into legal assets to conceal their illicit origin.

Choose the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3, and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, and 4 only

ANSWER: D

Q.2 What is/are the most likely advantages of implementing 'Goods and Services Tax (GST)'?

1. It will replace multiple taxes collected by multiple authorities and will thus create a single market in India.
2. It will drastically reduce the 'Current Account Deficit' of India and will enable it to increase its foreign exchange reserves.
3. It will enormously increase the growth and size of the economy of India and will enable it to overtake China in the near future.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

Q.3 "Discuss the significance of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 in combating financial crimes in India. Analyze the key provisions of the PMLA and its impact on money laundering prevention and asset confiscation. Also, evaluate the challenges and potential areas of improvement in the implementation and enforcement of the act."

DATA GOVERNANCE

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Data Governance”. The topic “Data Governance” has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

Core Data Governance Framework?

For Mains:

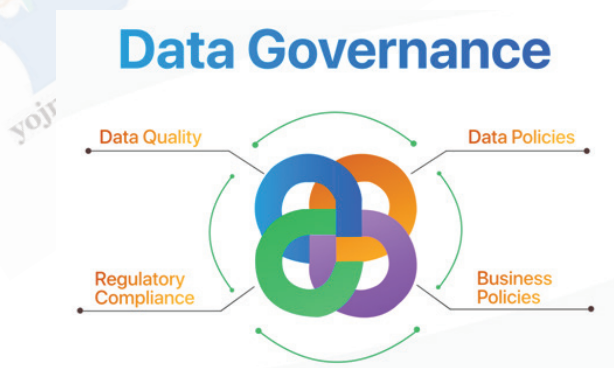
- GS 2: Governance
- Global Regulations?
- Data Governance in India?
- Way Forward?

Why in the news?

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill (DPDP), 2022, to be introduced in the Monsoon session of Parliament with some significant changes.

Core Data Governance Framework:

- If passed, the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill (DPDP) will become India's core data governance framework.
- It was introduced six years after the Supreme Court declared privacy as a fundamental right.
- Proposed Legislation in the IT and Telecom Sectors:
- The Digital India Bill aims to replace the existing Information Technology Act, 2000.



- It is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for the digital ecosystem.

Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022:

- The Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022, focuses on the telecommunications sector.
- It aims to establish a new regulatory framework for the rapidly evolving telecom industry.

- Non-Personal Data Governance Policy:
- The Non-Personal Data Governance Policy is a policy that specifically governs non-personal data.
- It aims to provide guidelines and regulations for the handling and usage of non-personal data.

What are the Expected Changes?

Lowering Age of Consent:

- The draft bill proposes a graded approach to determine the age of consent for data processing.
- This change addresses concerns raised by social media companies and aligns with data protection regulations in the European Union and the United States.

Definition of a Child and Exemptions:

- The definition of a child may include individuals below 18 or a lower age as determined by the Central Government.
- Certain entities dealing with children's data may be exempted from obtaining parental consent if they demonstrate safe data processing practices.

Relaxations on Cross-Border Data Flows:

- The upcoming bill introduces relaxations on cross-border data flows, moving from a whitelisting approach to a blacklisting mechanism.
- The bill allows global data to flow by default to jurisdictions other than a specified negative list of countries.

Global Regulations:

- The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in the European Union provides comprehensive data protection laws for personal data processing.
- The United States has limited sector-specific regulations, and there is no comprehensive set of privacy rights or principles like the GDPR.
- China has enacted the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) and the Data Security Law (DSL) to protect personal data.

Challenges with Data Governance in India:

- Insufficient Awareness.
- Weak Enforcement Mechanisms.
- Lack of Standardization.
- Inadequate Safeguards for Sensitive Data.

Data Governance in India:

IT Amendment Act, 2008.

- Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code)

Rules, 2021.

- Proposal of the Digital India Act, 2023 to replace the IT Act, 2000.
- Judgements like Justice K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India, 2017 and recommendations by the B.N. Srikrishna Committee, 2017.

Way Forward:

- The government should prioritize data protection and establish an independent and empowered data protection board.
- Balancing stringent regulations with fostering innovation is crucial.
- Finding the right balance will ensure effective governance and enforcement of data protection regulations.

SOURCE:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/tech-trends/data-protection-bill-new-version-eases-norms-on-info-transfer/3164067/>

Q.1 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India?

- (a) Article 15
- (b) Article 19
- (c) Article 21
- (d) Article 29

Answer: (c)

Q2. Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statement?

- (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution.
- (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV.
- (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III.
- (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44th Amendment to the Constitution.

Answer: (c)

Q.3 Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy.

INDIA-FRANCE RELATIONSHIP

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "India-France Relationship". The topic "India-France Relationship" has relevance in the

"International Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

India- France Initiatives



For Mains:

GS2: Agreements Involving India and its interests, Bilateral Relations of India, Indian Diaspora

Why in the news?

Prime Minister Modi will be attending the Bastille Day Parade as Guest of Honour on invitation by Emmanuel Macron, President of France. This visit also marks the 25th anniversary of India-France Strategic Partnership.

Historical Background:

- The relationship between India and France dates back to the 17th century, when the French East India Company established a trading post in Surat, Gujarat. The French were interested in trading for spices and other goods from India, and they also sought to establish political and military influence in the region.
- The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 laid the foundation for the modern-day partnership.
- After the Nuclear Tests in 1998, India and France signed a strategic partnership agreement. This agreement formalised the close relationship between the two countries and committed them to cooperation in a number of areas, including defence, trade, and technology

Economic Collaboration:

- India and France are important trading partners, and the two countries have a bilateral trade agreement that was signed in 1998. In 2021, the trade between India and France was worth €12.7 billion.
- India and France are also cooperating in the field of technology, and the two countries have signed a number of agreements to promote cooperation in areas such as space, nuclear energy, and information technology.
- In 2003, India and France signed a bilateral agreement on space cooperation. The agreement covers a wide range of areas, including satellite launch, satellite

communication, and remote sensing.

- India and France are also working together on the development of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), a project to demonstrate the feasibility of fusion power.
- French companies have made significant investments in India, contributing to job creation and technology transfer. Some of the most notable French companies with a presence in India include Airbus, Renault, Capgemini, and Danone.
- NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Lyra signed an MoU to enable UPI and RuPay payments in Europe. This would allow Europeans to use these Indian payment methods online and in stores.

Defence and Security Cooperation:

- India and France have a strong defence relationship, and the two countries have collaborated on a number of major defence projects, such as the Rafale fighter aircraft and the Scorpène-class submarines.
- In 2016, India signed a deal to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets from France for €7.8 billion. The first batch of Rafale jets was delivered to India in September 2020.
- India and France are also working together on the development of the next generation of fighter jets, the Future Medium Combat Aircraft (FMCA).

Cultural Exchanges and People-to-People Contacts:

- In 2006, India and France signed a bilateral agreement on cultural cooperation. The agreement covers a wide range of areas, including the exchange of artists, scholars, and students.
- There is a large Indian diaspora in France, estimated to be around 500,000 people. The Indian diaspora in France is made up of people from all over India, and they have made significant contributions to French society.
- Thousands of Indians visit France every year, and there are also a large number of French people who live in India. These contacts help to promote understanding and friendship between the two countries.

Climate Partnerships:

- The two countries have worked together on a number of initiatives to mitigate climate change, including the International Solar Alliance and the Paris Agreement.
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an international organisation that was founded by India and France in 2015. The ISA's mission is to promote the use of solar energy in developing countries. The ISA has 121 member countries, and it is headquartered in Gurugram, India.
- In October 2022, France and India signed a roadmap on green hydrogen to establish a reliable and sustainable value chain for decarbonised hydrogen. In February 2022, they signed a roadmap on the blue economy and ocean governance.

- In 2021, India and France launched the Climate Action and Finance Partnership, a joint initiative to promote climate action and finance in developing countries.

Challenges in the bilateral ties:

- **Regional Security Concerns:** Both India and France share concerns about regional security threats, especially in the Indian Ocean region. They cooperate on maritime security and counterterrorism, but need to enhance their cooperation to address emerging challenges.
- **Defense Procurement:** India experiences delays and cost overruns in several defense deals with France due to issues such as cost escalation, delivery delays, and disagreements over technology transfer.
- **Technology Transfer:** India faces challenges in obtaining advanced military technology and equipment from France due to intellectual property rights and proliferation risks.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** France worries about India's growing defense ties with other countries, especially the United States. France would want India to maintain a balanced approach and not become overly dependent on any one country.
- India and France have a strong foundation on which to build, and they are committed to working together to address the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. The two countries could collaborate in a number of areas, including trade, defense, technology, climate change, space, education, culture, and tourism. By working together, India and France can help to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the world.

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. France was among the last European maritime powers to enter the East India trade in the 17th century.
2. France is a member of the G-7, OECD, G-20 and Quad.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both
- (d) None

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)
2. Climate Action and Finance Partnership
3. Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)
4. International Solar Alliance (ISA)
5. **How many of the abovementioned initiatives/ organisations have India and France Partnership?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the evolution of India-France strategic partnership over the last 25 years and its relevance in the current geopolitical context.

