



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23-12-2024

GS-2

1. India-Kuwait Strategic Partnership

GS-3

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4. Carbon Market
5. Protected area regime

India-Kuwait Strategic Partnership

Syllabus: GS-2: Bilateral Relations.

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently met with Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait.

Key Takeaways

1. Strategic Partnership and Economic Cooperation

- The discussions emphasized sectors such as **pharmaceuticals, information technology, FinTech, infrastructure, and security**, which are pivotal for bilateral economic growth.
- Commitment to a “Strategic Partnership” underscores their long-term vision for fostering robust relations.

2. Indian Diaspora's Contribution

- PM Modi appreciated the Amir's supportive role for over **one million Indian expatriates** in Kuwait.
- The Amir acknowledged the Indian community's significant role in Kuwait's development, showcasing the importance of people-to-people ties.

3. Vision 2035 and Regional Leadership

- Modi lauded Kuwait's **Vision 2035**, aiming for economic diversification and sustainable growth, aligning with global trends.
- Kuwait's leadership in hosting the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit** was highlighted as an effort toward strengthening regional cooperation.

Significance of the Meeting

- The discussions reflect a forward-looking agenda, with India and Kuwait aligning on shared objectives of **economic development, regional stability, and enhanced bilateral cooperation**.
- This engagement further solidifies India's ties with the Gulf region, an area of strategic importance for trade, energy security, and expatriate welfare.

Future Outlook

- Collaborative projects in identified sectors could lead to substantial advancements in technology, infrastructure, and healthcare.
- The reaffirmed commitment to regional cooperation and mutual growth sets a positive trajectory for deeper ties in the coming years.

National Consumer Day

Syllabus: GS-3; Indian Economy- Consumer Rights

Context:

- Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Shri Pralhad Joshi, will deliver the inaugural address and also launch various key initiatives on the National Consumer Day, for the protection of Consumer Rights.

Key Initiatives Launched

1. Safety Pledge by e-Commerce Platforms

- **Objective:** Voluntary public commitment by e-commerce platforms to ensure the safety of goods sold online.
- **Aligned with:** Global best practices.
- **Signatories:** 13 major platforms (Reliance Retail, Tata Sons, Zomato, Ola, Swiggy, etc.).
- **Significance:** Strengthens consumer protection in the e-commerce sector.

2. Consumer Protection Apps and Dashboard

- **Apps Launched:**
 - **'Jago Grahak Jago' App:** Alerts consumers about unsafe URLs during online activities.
 - **'Jagriti' App:** Enables users to report suspicious e-commerce URLs for investigation.
 - **'Jagriti Dashboard':** Generates real-time reports on dark patterns.
- **Technology:** Operates on Airawat AI Supercomputer (National Supercomputing Mission).
- **Purpose:** Identify and curb dark patterns on e-commerce platforms.

3. 'e-Maap' Portal for Legal Metrology Services

- **Function:** Unified digital platform integrating state legal metrology portals.
- **Benefits:**
 - Streamlines licensing, verification, and registration.
 - Reduces compliance burdens.
 - Enhances transparency and ease of doing business.

4. AI-enabled National Consumer Helpline 2.0 (NCH 2.0)

- **Features:**
 - AI-powered chatbots.
 - Multilingual support.
 - Faster grievance redressal.
- **Significance:** Empowers consumers through AI-driven tools.

5. SMART Standards (Effective from 2025)

- **Objective:** Develop machine-readable standards.
- **Features:**
 - Interactive: Easy navigation.
 - Intelligent: Extract relevant information.
 - Dynamic: Instant access to cross-references.
- **Implementing Body:** Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

6. Inauguration of Testing Facilities

- **Organic Food Testing Laboratory (Guwahati):**
 - Recognized by FSSAI and BIS.
 - Focus on public health and food safety.
- **Low Voltage Switchgear Testing Facility (Mumbai):**
 - Ensures electrical safety.
 - Supports R&D for manufacturers.
- **Software Testing Facility (Ahmedabad):**
 - Tests weighing and measuring instruments.
 - Promotes 'Make in India' by reducing certification costs.

7. Tomato Grand Challenge (TGC) - Felicitation of Winners

- **Objective:** Develop technologies for tomato storage and preservation.
- **Winning Projects:**
 - **Manav Rachna Institute:** 'Tomatolixir' (biopesticide).
 - **NIT Rourkela:** Zero Energy Cooling Mobile Unit.
 - **Fruvetech Pvt Ltd, IIT Delhi:** 'Tomostat Tomotrans' (post-harvest storage device).

8. Competitions by National Law Universities (NLUs)

- **Winners Felicitated:**
 - National Quiz Competition (NLU Delhi).
 - Moot Court Competition (NUSRL Ranchi).
 - Essay Competition (NLSIU Bengaluru).

9. Empowerment of State Legal Metrology Departments

- **Initiative:** Handing over standard weights and measures to 4 states.
- **Objective:** Ensure fair trade and consumer protection.
- **Compliance:** Traceable to international standards.

10. MoU with Gujarat National Law University (GNLU)

- **Purpose:** Collaboration for consumer protection and legal metrology.
- **Activities:** Research, training, seminars, and grievance redressal mechanisms.

Reports and Publications

- **Reorientation of Consumer Commissions:** Impact assessment by IIM Rohtak.
- **e-Book on Packaged Commodities Rules:** Consolidated updates and amendments.

Theme of National Consumer Day 2024

- **Theme:** "Virtual Hearings & Digital Access to Consumer Justice."
- **Significance:**
 - Highlights the role of technology in consumer grievance redressal.
 - Emphasis on digital platforms, e-filing, and e-commerce.
- **Technical Sessions:**
 - Health washing and its effect on consumer choices.
 - Effective execution of consumer commission orders.

- E-Jagriti/Virtual hearings for hassle-free justice delivery.

Historical Background

- **First Celebrated:** 24th December (Commemorating enactment of Consumer Protection Act, 1986).
- **Importance:** Safeguards consumer rights and prevents exploitation.
- **Updated Law:** Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (Focus on digital platforms and e-commerce).

National Farmers' Day

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Agriculture.

Context:

- **National Farmers' Day**, celebrated on **December 23**, recognizes the indispensable contributions of farmers to India's socio-economic development.
- This day honors the agricultural community's relentless efforts in ensuring food security and sustaining rural economies, while also preserving the nation's rich agricultural heritage.

Significance of Farmers in India

Farmers are the backbone of the Indian economy, playing a pivotal role in:

- **Food Production:** Ensuring a consistent supply of grains, fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products to meet the nation's food demands.
- **Employment Generation:** Providing livelihoods to a significant portion of the population, especially in rural areas.
- **Sectoral Support:** Driving growth in allied sectors like horticulture, livestock, and agri-processing industries.
- **Economic Contributions:** With agriculture contributing substantially to India's GDP, farmers are critical to the nation's economic stability.

Key Government Initiatives for Farmers

To uplift and empower the farming community, the government has introduced numerous schemes:

- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):** Provides direct income support of ₹6,000 annually to small and marginal farmers.

- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):** Offers comprehensive insurance coverage against crop failure due to natural disasters or pests.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana:** Secures farmers' futures by offering pension benefits post-retirement.

Record Food Grain Production

India's agricultural success is evident in its record-breaking food grain production:

- **2023 Output:** An unprecedented **332.2 million tonnes**, surpassing the previous year's **329.7 million tonnes**.
- **Significance:** This achievement underscores the resilience of Indian farmers, bolstered by supportive government policies and favorable climatic conditions.

This success plays a critical role in combating hunger and malnutrition, ensuring food security for a growing population.

Preserving Agricultural Heritage

Farmers are stewards of India's rich agricultural traditions. Their contributions include:

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Cultivating indigenous crop varieties to maintain ecological balance.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Adopting eco-friendly farming techniques that safeguard the environment and ensure the long-term viability of agriculture.

The Future of Indian Agriculture

To sustain and enhance agricultural productivity, Indian farmers must embrace:

- **Modern Technology:** Leveraging innovations like precision farming, drip irrigation, and mechanization.
- **Government and Societal Support:** Ensuring continued investments in infrastructure, research, and capacity-building programs.
- **Climate Resilience:** Adopting climate-smart practices to mitigate the impacts of changing weather patterns.

Conclusion

National Farmers' Day serves as a reminder of the critical role farmers play in shaping India's economy, culture, and future. Supporting their welfare and innovation ensures the sustainability of agriculture, contributing to a prosperous and food-secure nation.

Carbon Market

Syllabus: GS-3: Climate Change – Mitigation Strategy.

Context:

- COP29, the ongoing climate conference in Azerbaijan's capital Baku, has given a fillip to the idea of using carbon markets to curb carbon emissions.

COP29 and Carbon Markets

- **Event:** COP29, ongoing climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- **Key Development:** Approval of standards to set up an international carbon market, expected to launch next year.

What is a Carbon Market?

- **Definition:** A market for trading rights to emit carbon dioxide.
- **Mechanism:**
 - Governments issue carbon credits, each equivalent to 1,000 kg of CO₂ emissions.
 - Limited issuance of credits controls overall carbon emissions.
 - Carbon credits can be traded; price determined by supply and demand.
- **Carbon Offsets:**
 - Businesses can buy offsets from NGOs or entities promising actions like tree planting to neutralize emissions.
 - First introduced in the U.S. in the 1990s under the cap-and-trade model for sulphur dioxide.

Benefits of Carbon Markets

- **Addresses Externality:**
 - Pollution as an externality arises when costs of environmental damage are not accounted for.
 - Carbon markets impose costs on emissions, incentivizing reduction in pollution.
- **Market Efficiency:**
 - Facilitates efficient allocation of emission rights through trading.
 - Encourages firms to minimize emissions to avoid financial costs.

➤ **Technological Advancements:**

- Real-time data tracking and standardised accounting improve emission monitoring.

Challenges and Criticisms of Carbon Markets

➤ **Manipulation Risks:**

- Governments may increase the supply of carbon credits, lowering their price, which undermines emission reduction goals.
- Risk of illegal emissions despite a strict cap.

➤ **Effectiveness of Offsets:**

- Firms may invest in offsets for virtue signaling rather than genuine environmental impact.
- Ensuring the effectiveness of offset mechanisms is challenging.

➤ **Economic Concerns:**

- Over-restriction of carbon credits by politicians may hinder economic growth.
- Difficulty in determining the optimal supply of carbon credits.

➤ **Corporate Resistance:**

- Large corporations advocate for voluntary systems, opposing strict government intervention.
- Concerns over varied supply chains and rising operational costs.

Takeaways from COP29

- Standardized frameworks aim to improve corporate carbon accounting.
- Debate persists between mandatory and voluntary systems for emission reductions.
- Need for balancing environmental goals with economic feasibility and corporate adaptability.

Protected area regime

Syllabus: GS-3: Internal Security.

Context:

- On December 17, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reimposed the Protected Area Regime (PAR) in the States of Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram to restrict and monitor the movement of foreigners.

Key Highlights:

- **PAR Reimposed in:**
 - **States:** Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram
 - **Purpose:** To restrict and monitor foreigner movement
- **Requirement:**
 - Foreigners must obtain **Protected Area Permits (PAP)**
 - Prior government permission is mandatory

The Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958

- **Key Provisions:**
 - **Entry Restrictions:** No foreigner can enter/stay in protected areas without a permit
 - **Permit Details:** Must specify:
 - **Place of entry**
 - **Place of residence**
 - **Period of stay**
- **Protected Areas (Under 1958 Order):**
 - **States/UTs:**
 - Parts of **Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand**
 - Entire **Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim** (partly restricted)
- **Restricted Areas (Under 1963 Order):**
 - **Entire Andaman & Nicobar Islands**
 - Parts of **Sikkim**

Relaxation Timeline:

- **Relaxation Period:**
 - **Start:** December 30, 2010
 - **Purpose:** Improve security, promote tourism
 - **Extension:** Continued till **December 31, 2027**
- **Withdrawal:** December 17, 2023

Reasons for Withdrawal:

- **Security Concerns:**
 - Ethnic violence in Manipur (since May 3, 2023)
 - **Ethnic Groups Involved:** Kuki-Zo vs. Meitei
 - **Chief Minister's Statement:** Blames “outsiders and foreign hands”
- **Myanmar Crisis Impact:**
 - **Cause:** Military coup (February 2021)
 - **Influx:**
 - **Mizoram:** 40,000+ refugees
 - **Manipur:** 4,000+ refugees
 - **Ethnic Ties:** Kuki-Chin-Zo groups in Mizoram and Manipur
- **Border Details:**
 - **India-Myanmar Border:** 1,643 km
 - **States Sharing Border:** Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram
 - **Free Movement Regime (FMR):** Suspended (January 2023)

Procedure for Obtaining PAP:

- **Authorities to Approach:**
 - Indian Missions
 - MHA
 - District Magistrates
 - Resident/Home Commissioners
 - Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO)

➤ **Special Cases:**

- **Citizens of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan require MHA prior approval**
- **Mandatory Registration:**
 - Foreigners must register with FRRO within **24 hours**
 - **Myanmar Nationals** (with visas) must also register within 24 hours