

GOVERNANCE**PLI Scheme for Food Processing Industry**

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Central Sector Scheme - "Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI)" entailing an outlay of Rs. 10,900 crore.

Key Points**PLI Scheme:**

- In order to boost domestic manufacturing and cut down on import bills, the central government in March 2020 introduced a PLI scheme that aims to give companies incentives on incremental sales from products manufactured in domestic units.
- Apart from inviting foreign companies to set shop in India, the scheme also aims to encourage local companies to set up or expand existing manufacturing units.
- PLI Scheme has also been approved for sectors such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals, IT hardware including laptops, mobile phones & telecom equipment, white goods, chemical cells and textiles, etc.

Objectives of the PLISFPI:

- To support creation of global food manufacturing champions.
- To strengthen select Indian brands of food products for global visibility and wider acceptance in the international markets.
- To increase employment opportunities of off-farm jobs.
- To ensure remunerative prices of farm produce and higher income to farmers.

Features of PLISFPI:**Coverage:**

- It will support food manufacturing entities with stipulated minimum Sales and willing to make minimum stipulated investment for expansion of processing capacity and Branding abroad.
- The first component relates to incentivising manufacturing of four major food product segments viz. Ready to Cook/ Ready to Eat (RTC/ RTE) foods, Processed Fruits & Vegetables, Marine Products, Mozzarella Cheese.
- It also covers organic products, free-range eggs, poultry meat and egg products.
- The second component relates to support for branding and marketing abroad.

Duration: Scheme will be implemented over a six year period from 2021-22 to 2026-27.

Expected Benefits:

- Expansion of processing capacity to generate processed food output of Rs. 33,494 crore.
- Create employment for nearly 2.5 lakh persons by the year 2026-27.

Other Scheme Related to Food Processing Industry:

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampda Yojana (PMKSY)

SOCIAL JUSTICE**National Rare Disease Policy 2021**

Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has approved the National Rare Disease Policy 2021.

Earlier, the Delhi High Court had directed the Centre to set up a Rare Diseases Committee, a Rare Diseases Fund and to finalise and notify the National Health Policy for Rare Diseases on or before 31st March, 2021.

Key Points

- To increase focus on indigenous research and local production of medicines.
- To lower the cost of treatment of rare diseases.
- To screen and detect rare diseases early at early stages, which will in turn help in their prevention.

Major Provisions of the Policy:

The policy has categorised rare diseases in three groups:

- Group 1: Disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment.
- Group 2: Those requiring long term or lifelong treatment.
- Group 3: Diseases for which definitive treatment is available but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, very high cost and lifelong therapy.

Financial Support:

- Those who are suffering from rare diseases listed under Group 1 will have the financial support of up to Rs. 20 lakh under the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi.
- Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi: The Scheme provides for financial assistance to patients, living below poverty line (BPL) and who are suffering from major life threatening diseases, to receive medical treatment at any of the super specialty Government hospitals / institutes.
- Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible as per norms of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, for their treatment in Government tertiary hospitals only.

Alternate Funding:

- This includes voluntary crowdfunding treatment by setting up a digital platform for voluntary individual contribution and corporate donors to voluntarily contribute to the treatment cost of patients of rare diseases.

Centres of Excellence:

- The policy aims to strengthen tertiary health care facilities for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through designating eight health facilities as '**Centres of Excellence**' and these will also be provided one-time financial support of up to Rs. 5 crore for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.

National Registry:

- A national hospital-based registry of rare diseases will be created to ensure adequate data and comprehensive definitions of such diseases are available for those interested in research and development.

Concerns Raised:**Lack of Sustainable Funding:**

- In the absence of a sustainable funding support for Group 3 patients, the precious lives of all patients, mostly children, are now at risk and at the mercy of crowd funding.

Lack of Drug Manufacturing:

- Where drugs are available, they are prohibitively expensive, placing immense strain on resources.
- Currently few pharmaceutical companies are manufacturing drugs for rare diseases globally and there are no domestic manufacturers in India except for those who make medical-grade food for those with metabolic disorders.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Shrinking of Forex Reserves**

According to the recent data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's Foreign Exchange reserves shrank by USD 2.986 billion to reach USD 579.285 billion in the week ended 26th March 2021. The gold reserve component of the Forex Reserve increased whereas the other components - Special Drawing Rights (SDR), the Foreign Currency Assets (FCA) and the Reserve Position witnessed decline.

Key Points

- Foreign exchange reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.
- It needs to be noted that most foreign exchange reserves are held in US dollars.

Objectives behind Holding Forex Reserves:

- Supporting and maintaining confidence in the policies for monetary and exchange rate management.
- Provides the capacity to intervene in support of the national or union currency.
- Limits external vulnerability by maintaining foreign currency liquidity to absorb shocks during times of crisis or when access to borrowing is curtailed.

India's Forex Reserve include:

- Foreign Currency Assets
- Gold reserves
- Special Drawing Rights

Foreign Currency Assets:

- FCA is the largest component of the forex reserve. It is expressed in dollar terms.

- The FCAs include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold Reserves:

- Gold compares extremely favorably to other traditional reserve assets with high-quality and liquidity helping Central Banks to preserve capital, diversify portfolios, mitigate risks on the medium/long-term.
- Gold has consistently outperformed the average returns of other alternative financial assets.

Special Drawing Rights:

- The SDR is an international reserve asset, created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves.
- The SDR is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF. Rather, it is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. SDRs can be exchanged for these currencies.
- The value of the SDR is calculated from a weighted basket of major currencies, including the US dollar, the euro, Japanese yen, Chinese yuan, and British pound.
- The interest rate on SDRs or (SDRi) is the interest paid to members on their SDR holdings.

Reserve Position in the International Monetary Fund:

A reserve tranche position implies a portion of the required quota of currency each member country must provide to the IMF that can be utilized for its own purposes.

The reserve tranche is basically an emergency account that IMF members can access at any time without agreeing to conditions or paying a service fee.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**

USA and Iran would begin negotiations through intermediaries to try to get back into an accord limiting Iran's nuclear programme.

Key Point

- The announcement marked the first major progress in efforts to return both countries to the 2015 accord, which bound Iran to restrictions on its nuclear programmes in return for relief from U.S. and international sanctions.
- USA's previous President Donald Trump had pulled the USA out of the accord in 2018 and imposed tougher sanctions on Iran.
- Iran responded by intensifying its enrichment of uranium and building of centrifuges, while maintaining its insistence that its nuclear development was for civilian and not military purposes.
- Iran's moves increased pressure on major world powers and raised tensions among U.S. allies and strategic partners in West Asia.
- Agreement on the start of indirect talks came after the EU helped broker a virtual meeting of officials from Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and Iran, which have remained in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) accord

INTERNAL SECURITY**PLGA Attack in Sukma**

- A team of security forces was attacked by a People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) unit in the Tarrem area near the Sukma-Bijapur district border, Chhattisgarh. Several security personnel were killed and many were injured.
- PLGA was founded in 2000. It has been declared as a terrorist organisation and banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act-1967 (UAPA).

Key Points

- Over a few decades, Sukma region has become a fostering ground for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) activities.
- Uneven terrains and the tricky geographic locations made this region a safer hideout for the LWE activists.

Left Wing Extremism in India:

- Left-wing extremists, popularly known as Maoists worldwide and as Naxalites in India.
- The term Naxalism derives its name from the village Naxalbari of West Bengal. It originated as a rebellion against local landlords.

- The rebellion was initiated in 1967, with an objective of rightful redistribution of the land to working peasants under the leadership of Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mazumdar.
- Maoism is a form of communism developed by Mao Tse Tung. It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances.

Reasons for Left Wing Extremism:**Tribal Discontent:**

- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been used to target tribals, who depend on forest produce for their living.
- Massive displacement of tribal population in the naxalism-affected states due to development projects, mining operations and other reasons.

Gaps in the Socio-Economic system of the Country:

- Government measures its success on the basis of the number of violent attacks rather than the development done in the naxal-affected areas.
- Absence of strong technical intelligence to fight with naxalites.
- Infrastructural problems, for instance, some villages are not yet connected properly with any communication network.

Government Initiatives to Fight LWE:

- **Greyhounds:** It was raised in 1989 as an elite anti-naxal force.
- **Operation Green Hunt:** It was started in 2009-10 and massive deployment of security forces was done in the naxal-affected areas.
- **LWE Mobile Tower Project:** To improve mobile connectivity in the LWE areas, the Government in 2014, approved installation of mobile towers in LWE affected States.
- **Aspirational Districts Programme:** Launched in 2018, it aims to rapidly transform the districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas.

SAMADHAN: It stands for

- S- Smart Leadership,
- Aggressive Strategy,
- M- Motivation and Training,
- Actionable Intelligence,
- D- Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas),
- H- Harnessing Technology,
- Action plan for each Theatre, and
- N- No access to Financing.

This doctrine is the one-stop solution for the LWE problem. It encompasses the entire strategy of government from short-term policy to long-term policy formulated at different levels.

Way Forward

Though the number of incidents of LWE violence has come down in the recent past, continued efforts and focus are needed in eliminating such groups.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**New Emission Norms for Coal-Fired power Plants**

The Central government has pushed back deadlines for coal-fired power plants to adopt new emission norms by up to three years.

- It has also allowed utilities that miss the new target to continue operating after paying a penalty.

Key Points

- India had initially set a 2017 deadline for thermal power plants to install Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) units that cut emissions of sulphur dioxides.
- But that was postponed to varying deadlines for different regions, ending in 2022.
- According to the new order, plants near populous regions and New Delhi will have to comply by 2022, while utilities in less polluting areas have up to 2025 to comply or retire units.
- A task force will be constituted by the Central Pollution Control Board to categorise plants in three categories “on the basis of their location to comply with the emission norms”.
- In case of non-compliance, a penalty of up to ₹ 0.20 will be levied for every unit of electricity produced.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Committee formed to popularise the legacy of Anangpal II**

The government has recently formed a committee to popularise the legacy of 11th-century Tomar king, Anangpal II.

Key Points

- **Aim:** To establish Anangpal II as the founder of Delhi.
- **Headed by:** Brij Bhushan Singh, BJP MP from UP's Gonda
- Its proposals include building a statue of Anangpal II at the Delhi airport and building a museum dedicated to his legacy in Delhi.
- There is also a proposal to make Lal Kot an ASI-protected monument.

Important value additions

- Anangpal II was popularly known as Anangpal Tomar.
- He belonged to the Tomar dynasty that ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries.
- He is credited to have established and populated Delhi during his reign in the 11th century.
- It was he who built Lal Kot fort and Anangal Baoli.
- He was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan, who was defeated by the Ghurid forces in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) after which the Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**Qns What is LIDAR? Discuss its uses. (150 words)**

Ans:

Light detection and ranging (LiDAR) is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges to the Earth.

- LiDAR uses a pulsed laser to calculate an object's variable distances from the earth surface.
- LiDAR follows a simple principle — throw laser light at an object on the earth surface and calculate the time it takes to return to the LiDAR source. Given the speed at which the light travels (approximately 186,000 miles per second), the process of measuring the exact distance through LiDAR appears to be incredibly fast.
- These light pulses — put together with the information collected by the airborne system — generate accurate 3D information about the earth surface and the target object.
- There are three primary components of a LiDAR instrument — the scanner, laser and GPS receiver. Other elements that play a vital role in the data collection and analysis are the photodetector and optics.

Two Types: Airborne LiDAR installed on a helicopter or drone for collecting data and Terrestrial LiDAR systems installed on moving vehicles or tripods on the earth surface for collecting accurate data points.

Applications of LiDAR

- **Oceanography:** LiDAR technology is used to map the land and is used to measure seafloor and riverbed elevations. LiDAR is also used for calculating phytoplankton fluorescence and biomass in the ocean surface, which otherwise is very challenging.
- **Digital Elevation or Terrain Model:** Terrain elevations play a crucial role during the construction of roads, large buildings and bridges. LiDAR technology has x, y and z coordinates, which makes it incredibly easy to produce the 3D representation of elevations to ensure that concerned parties can draw necessary conclusions more easily.
- **Agriculture:** Typical applications of LiDAR technology in the agriculture sector include analysis of yield rates, crop scouting and seed dispersions. Besides this, it is also used for campaign planning, mapping under the forest canopy, and more.
- **Security:** LiDAR is used by military for carrying out various security operations near the national borders.
- **Rescue Missions:** When the authorities want to know the exact depth of the ocean's surface to locate any object in the case of a maritime accident or for research purposes, they use LiDAR technology to accomplish their mission

Advantages of using LiDAR

- **Data can be collected quickly and with high accuracy:** LiDAR is an airborne sensing technology which makes data collection fast and comes with extremely high accuracy as a result of the positional advantage.
- Surface Data has a higher sample density: LiDAR gives a much higher surface density compared to other methods of data collection such as photogrammetry. This improves results for some kinds of applications such as flood plain delineation.
- **Can be used day and night:** LiDAR technology can be used day and night thanks to the active illumination sensor. It is not affected by light variations such as darkness and light. This improves its efficiency.

Disadvantages of LiDAR

- High operating costs in some applications
- Ineffective during heavy rain or low hanging clouds because of the effects of refraction. However, the data collected can still be used for analysis.
- Degraded at high sun angles and reflections

DAILY QUIZ

1. Consider the following statements about BIMSTEC:

1. It is a regional organisation comprising South Asian countries only.
2. The Secretariat of BIMSTEC is located at Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only**
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Consider the following statements regarding Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS):

1. The scheme is not extended to MUDRA borrowers.
2. SIDBI is the guarantee provider under the ECLGS scheme.
3. Recently, business enterprises under the Tourism and Hospitality sectors have also been included under the ECLGS scheme.

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

- a) 1 and 2 only**
- b) 2 only
- c) 3 only
- d) None

3. With reference to Prime Minister's Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme, consider the following statements:

1. The PM-KUSUM scheme was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
2. It focuses only on providing standalone solar-powered agriculture pumps.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2**

4. With reference to Current Account Deficit (CAD), consider the following statements:

1. Current account records exports and imports in goods and services only.
2. CAD can be reduced by curbing non-essential imports such as gold, mobiles, and electronics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only**
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. Persistent Viral Shedding was in the news, it is a condition of-

- a) Full Immunity developed against the virus
- b) A special type of viral infection developed in Old age people.
- c) Recovered patients continue to carry some of virus within their system**
- d) When recovered patients are not affected again by the virus already infected.