

TOPICS COVERED

1. SC will hear petitions to stay CAA on April 9. (GS Paper II: Citizenship)
2. RITES conducting feasibility studies along IMEC corridor (GS Paper II: IR)
3. 27.6 million people engaged in forced labour in 2021: ILO (GS Paper I: Society)
4. The curious case of Sosamma Iype and the Vechur cow (GS Paper I: Post Independence History, GS Paper III: Agriculture and Environment)
5. Selection and election: On the appointment of Election Commissioner. (GS Paper II: Election)
6. Ties that epitomise India's neighbourhood first policy (GS Paper II: IR: India-Bhutan Relations)
7. Guaranteed MSP is an ethical imperative (GS Paper III: MSP)

SC will hear petitions to stay CAA on April 9 (GS Paper II: Citizen

- The Supreme Court has agreed to consider the possibility of staying the operation of the rules notified under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA, which were issued on April 9.
- The **government declined to assure that it would not grant fast-tracked citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan during the case's pendency.**
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, refused to make any statement regarding the matter.
- A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud aimed to alleviate the concerns of 237 petitioners regarding the potential implementation of the CAA rules.
- Chief Justice Chandrachud informed the petitioners' side, led by senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Indira Jaising, that the **government lacks the necessary infrastructure for implementing the CAA rules.**
- Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra's counsel cautioned against relying on a "hope-and-trust jurisprudence" in favor of the government, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding rights.
- The Chief Justice reassured Moitra's counsel that the **court is attentive to the matter.**
- Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Haris Beeran, representing the Indian Union Muslim League, requested the liberty to approach the court if the government initiated the citizenship process under the CAA.
- Sibal argued that since the Centre waited nearly five years to notify the CAA rules, they could wait until July 2024, highlighting the **irreversible nature of citizenship once granted.**
- **Fast-tracking citizenship based on religious identity was argued to violate fundamental rights to non-discrimination and equality under the Constitution** by advocates supporting the petitioners' stance.
- Advocate Kaleeswaram Raj noted the Supreme Court's **stay on the controversial farm laws**, supporting the argument against fast-tracking citizenship based on religious grounds.

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) aimed to grant citizenship to "illegal migrants" from specific religious communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who entered India before December 31, 2014.
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta clarified that the law doesn't revoke anyone's citizenship; instead, it considers granting or refusing citizenship to those who entered by the specified date.
- Advocate Nizam Pasha, representing the petitioners, raised concerns about linking the CAA's implementation to the **exclusion of 19 lakh people from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) list in Assam**, suggesting that the CAA might apply to them.
- Pasha expressed apprehension that **non-Muslims excluded from the NRC might have their citizenship applications processed abruptly, while Muslims could face executive action, highlighting potential prejudice.**
- Senior advocate **Vijay Hansaria**, representing **petitioners from Assam, argued that the CAA and its rules posed a threat to the state's demography**, particularly in 27 districts brought under its purview without valid reasons.
- Hansaria pointed out that the CAA excluded tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, along with areas covered under 'The Inner Line' notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) excluded certain areas from its application.
- These excluded areas include tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura.
- These areas are specifically mentioned under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
- Additionally, the CAA also excluded areas covered under 'The Inner Line.'
- The Inner Line is a permit system that regulates the entry of non-residents into certain areas, particularly in the northeastern states.
- This Inner Line is established under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.**
- Therefore, the CAA does not apply to these excluded areas due to their special status under the Sixth Schedule and the Inner Line permit system.

- He highlighted a contradiction between the CAA's cutoff date of December 31, 2014, for granting citizenship under Section 6B(1) and Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, which mandated deportation for foreigners who crossed over after March 25, 1971.

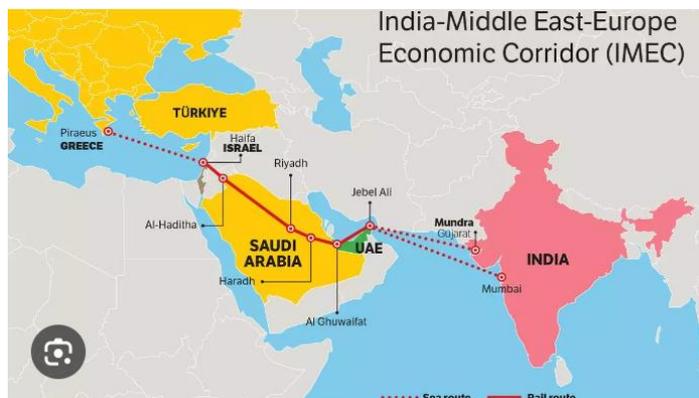
Tariff regulator snubs revenue projections at Adani airport in Thiruvananthapuram

- Tariff regulator snubs revenue projections at Adani airport in Thiruvananthapuram
- The Thiruvananthapuram airport, controlled by the Adani Group, is projecting revenue from non-aeronautical services like food and beverages, but it is significantly lower than expected.
- The **revenue projection is only 12% of the norm and one-third of what the airport earned before privatization.**
- The **Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) has recommended increasing this projection fourfold, from ₹103 crore to ₹395 crore over five years.**
- The Adani-run airport has dismissed AERA's projection as "notional revenue."

- AERA has raised concerns about how the master contract for non-aeronautical services was awarded to an Adani group subsidiary, with restrictive bid criteria and a low revenue share of 10%.
- This structure led to a reduction in the mandatory 30% of non-aero revenue, impacting airport users as only 3% of the total revenue is funneled back for cross-subsidizing costs borne by airlines and passengers.
- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has also criticized this formula as unjustified.
- These observations were made in a consultation paper floated by AERA to determine revised tariffs for the five-year control period from April 2022 to March 2027.
- Various stakeholders, including airlines, airports, and ground handling agencies, were invited to submit their comments by March 15 before AERA issues a tariff order.
- Thiruvananthapuram Kerala International Airport Ltd (TKIAL) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd, which signed a concession agreement with the Airports Authority of India in January 2021 to operate, manage, and develop the airport for 50 years after a privatization process.

RITES conducting feasibility studies along IMEC corridor

(GS Paper II: IR)



- RITES Ltd., a leading railway PSU, is a key contender for development along **the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
- RITES chairman and managing director, Rahul Mithal, stated that RITES and AD Ports are assessing the feasibility of development along missing links in the existing rail corridor passing through **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel**.
- Various missing links across the rail portion and corridors along the IMEC need augmentation to handle increased volumes.
- Assessments are being conducted to determine the required capacity augmentation, designs, and costs involved.

- Proposed rail routes include:
 - Jebel Ali (UAE) to Haifa: 2,565 km with a missing link of 745 km
 - Abu Dhabi to Haifa: 2,449 km with a missing link of 629 km
 - **Dammam port to Haifa:** 2,149 km with a missing link of 289 km
 - **Ras Al-Khair port to Haifa:** 1,809 km with a missing link of 269 km
- AD Ports aims to invest in infrastructure augmentation not only in the UAE leg but across the entire corridor.
- Analysis is underway to determine the cargo potential for IMEC and to augment infrastructure at ports.
- The early stages involve planning alignments, corridors, facilities, required infrastructure, and funding mechanisms by each country involved.

27.6 million people engaged in forced labour in 2021: ILO

GS Paper I: Society

- A study by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** in Geneva revealed that **forced labor generates illegal profits worth \$36 billion annually.**

- **Specialized Agency of the United Nations:** The ILO is the UN body dedicated to advancing social justice and promoting decent work opportunities for all. It's the only tripartite UN agency.
- **Tripartite Structure:** Comprises representatives of governments, employers, and workers. This fosters collaboration, dialogue, and balanced decision-making.
- **Founded:** 1919, in the aftermath of World War I, established under the **Treaty of Versailles.**
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.

Key Objectives:

- **Set Labor Standards:** Develops and promotes international labor conventions and recommendations, which serve as guidelines for national legislation in member states.
- **Decent Work Agenda:** Focus on four strategic areas:
 - Creating jobs
 - Guaranteeing rights at work
 - Extending social protection
 - Promoting social dialogue
- **Technical Cooperation:** Provides support to member countries in implementing labor standards, strengthening labor institutions, and designing policies for inclusive growth.

- This marks a **37% increase in illegal profits since 2014**, driven by both a rise in the number of people forced into labor and higher profits from victim exploitation.
- Surveys conducted among workers, including Indians in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, contributed to the study's findings.

- The report, titled "Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labor," highlights that traffickers and criminals now generate close to \$10,000 per victim, up from \$8,269 a decade ago.
- The largest annual illegal profits from forced labor are in Europe and Central Asia (\$84 billion), followed by Asia and the Pacific (\$62 billion), the Americas (\$52 billion), Africa (\$20 billion), and the Arab States (\$18 billion).
- Forced commercial sexual exploitation accounts for over two-thirds (73%) of total illegal profits, despite representing only 27% of total victims in privately imposed labor.
- Other sectors with high annual illegal profits from forced labor include industry (\$35 billion), services (\$20.8 billion), agriculture (\$5.0 billion), and domestic work (\$2.6 billion).
- These illegal profits deprive workers of their rightful wages due to coercive practices by exploiters, according to ILO Director-General Gilbert F. Hounghbo.
- Forced labor perpetuates poverty cycles and undermines human dignity, necessitating urgent action from the international community to address this injustice.
- The report highlights that in 2021, 27.6 million people were engaged in forced labor worldwide, representing 3.5 individuals per 1,000 people. Additionally, between 2016 and 2021, the number of people in forced labor increased by 2.7 million.

The curious case of Sosamma Iype and the Vechur cow

(GS Paper I: Post Independence India (Negative Impact of Green & White Revolution)

GS Paper III: Agriculture, Environment: Preservation of Native Breed)

Ethics & Essay)



The Vechur cow | Photo Credit: The Hindu

Origins

- The Vechur cow is a rare breed of cattle native to the **Kottayam district of Kerala, India**.
- It takes its name from the **village of Vechoor**.

Size

- It's the **smallest cattle breed in the world** according to the Guinness Book of Records.
- Average height: 87 cm (about 2 feet 10 inches)
- Average length: 124 cm (about 4 feet 1 inch)



Distinguishing Features

- Docile and gentle temperament.
- Small, manageable size.
- Highly adaptable to heat and humidity.
- Disease-resistant.
- Requires low food input.

Milk

- Produces higher milk yield relative to its food intake compared to larger breeds.
- Milk is believed to have medicinal properties and is considered **easily digestible**.
- Recent studies suggest a higher presence of **A2 beta-casein**, which may be beneficial for those avoiding the A1 variety sometimes implicated in health issues.

Conservation

- The Vechur cow breed nearly faced extinction due to crossbreeding policies.
- Professor Sosamma Iype and her team at Kerala Agricultural University led pivotal conservation efforts in 1989.
- While still considered rare, the population is rebounding and the breed is becoming a symbol of native cow conservation in India.

- Dr. Sosamma Iype won the **Padma Shri in 2022 for saving and resurrecting the Vechur cow breed**, an indigenous cattle breed.
- Her story highlights India's struggle to **balance rapid industrialization with biodiversity conservation**.

Agrarian transformations, erasure of breeds

- India faced poverty and food scarcity at Independence, leading to the need for modernizing agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Agricultural universities were established to modernize farming and livestock practices, leading to the **Green and White Revolutions**.
- The **White Revolution aimed to boost milk production through crossbreeding, but it led to the decline of indigenous breeds like the Vechur cow.**
- The **Vechur cow, known for its adaptability**, faced extinction due to the preference for larger, commercially viable cattle breeds.
- Traditional farming practices using smaller-sized cattle became unpopular, endangering breeds like the Vechur cow.
- Dr. Sosamma Iype's efforts saved the Vechur cow from extinction, preserving its unique characteristics and genetic purity.
- Professor Iype recalls her childhood memories of drinking Vechur milk but later discovers the breed has nearly disappeared.

Commented [AG1]: Post Independence India
Negative Impact of Green and White Revolution

A student's search

- Anil Zachariah, her former student, embarks on a quest to find the mythical Vechur cow and eventually discovers one in Vaikom, Kerala.
- Anil joyfully shares the news with Professor Iype, igniting her passion to resurrect not only the Vechur but also other endangered indigenous breeds.
- Professor Iype establishes the **Vechur Conservation Unit** at the Kerala Agricultural University, starting with eight cows and expanding rapidly.
- **Despite facing numerous obstacles such as government resistance, jealous colleagues, false accusations, and media scrutiny, Professor Iype remains resilient and continues her mission.**
- She is hailed as a gentle yet formidable figure, earning the title of "**Vechur Amma**" for her dedication to preserving Kerala's indigenous breeds.

Commented [AG2]: Ethics + Essay : Struggle for social cause.

The project that became a template

- The success of the Vechur Conservation Project in Kerala attracted national attention and gained support from governmental institutions like the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**.
- R.M. Acharya from ICAR was amazed by Prof. Iype's vision and asked **how she conceived and executed such a project when even ICAR had not considered it.**
- ICAR adopted the Vechur Conservation Project as a model for the entire country, recognizing its effectiveness and potential impact.
- Prof. Iype's motivation was not just scientific achievement but also **giving back to society**, particularly to impoverished farmers and cattle rearers who once valued the Vechur breed.

Commented [AG3]: Example of dedication and perseverance.

- In 1998, she established the Vechur Conservation Trust to promote **community participation and enable farmers to rear the Vechur breed**, empowering them to become more self-reliant.
- Prof. Iyengar is not seeking personal fame but is regarded as a visionary and a messiah for her dedication to **turning ideals into reality**.
- Her efforts have not only saved the Vechur cow but have also left a significant mark on India's cultural and agricultural landscape, earning her recognition as an **authentic Indian heroine**.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION: GS PAPER I: POST INDEPENDENCE INDIA, GS PAPER III: Agriculture

Question: Discuss the significance of indigenous cattle breeds like the Vechur cow in India's agricultural landscape and the threats they face due to modernization efforts. (150 Words/10 marks)

Question: Analyze the impact of agrarian transformations, particularly the Green Revolution and White Revolution, on indigenous cattle breeds in India. (150 Words/10 Marks)

ANSWER APPROACH:

- Introduce with context under which indigenous cattle breeds like the Vechur cow threatened.
- Then bring their significance.
- Further bring the conservation effort that needed with help of example of Vechur cow/Prof. Iyengar
- Then conclude with a positive note.

ANSWER: Modal Answer of this question will be provided in tomorrow's PDF

Selection and election: On the appointment of Election Commissioners

(GS Paper II: Election)

- Two vacancies in the Election Commission of India (ECI) were filled quickly after the resignation of Arun Goel.
- Critics argue that this rapid appointment process raises concerns about the independence of the selection process.
- **Arun Goel's resignation, citing "personal reasons," was unexpected and came just before the Commission finalized the Lok Sabha election schedule.**
- The appointment occurred amidst a Constitution Bench hearing regarding the **independence of selection process**.

- The **Act governing the selection process of the Chief Election Commissioner and other ECs may not align with the desired level of independence.**
- The **competence or suitability of the newly appointed ECs, Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, is not in question.**
- However, the circumstances surrounding the appointments and Goel's resignation have raised valid criticisms and concerns.

- The **Supreme Court emphasized** the need for the **Election Commission of India (ECI) to be independent from the executive to ensure free and fair elections.**
- Initially, an **interim arrangement** involved a selection committee comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, and Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- **Parliament** was tasked with enacting a law to formalize the appointment process under **Article 324** of Indian Constitution.
- The **government enacted a law** constituting a selection panel consisting of the Prime Minister, a Union Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition.
- There's debate over whether a committee with a two-one majority from the executive can truly ensure independence.
- The argument that Prime Ministers have historically selected CECs and ECs is countered by the need for a process rooted in **constitutional principles.**
- The focus is on establishing an independent body for fair elections, even if the CJI's involvement in the selection process is questioned.

Length and breadth: On Rahul Gandhi and his yatras

Rahul Gandhi's yatras have energised the Congress, but unsettled some allies

- Rahul Gandhi, a Congress leader, concluded the **Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Mumbai** on March 17.
- The **yatra covered over 10,000 kilometers across India**, with Rahul Gandhi meeting people from various segments of society.
- This yatra marked his evolution as a leader, positioning him as a prominent anti-BJP figure.
- While the **first edition, from Kanniyakumari to Srinagar**, had novelty and euphoria, the **second edition, from Manipur to Mumbai**, was more practical.
- The first yatra focused on spreading a message of love and harmony with the slogan "Nafrat Ke Bazaar Mein Mohabbat Ki Dukaan."
- The Congress insisted that the yatra was an ideological campaign, not an electoral one, to manage expectations.

- The yatra helped the Congress win elections in Karnataka and Telangana but faced losses in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.
- The **second edition of the yatra focused on the theme of social justice**, aiming for broader representation of caste groups in power.
- Both editions successfully energized party cadres and connected them with party leadership ahead of the general election.
- Success for the Congress may lead to pushback from their own allies within the anti-BJP alliance.
- A weak Congress can act as a unifying force within the alliance, especially in states where it is subservient to regional forces.
- However, in states like West Bengal, where the Congress didn't concede to the Trinamool Congress, alliances failed.
- The Bharat Jodo Yatra also showcased a renewal of the party's organizational capacity.
- The upcoming 2024 general election will test Rahul Gandhi's political ideology focused on left-leaning welfarism and nascent secularism.

Ties that epitomise India's neighbourhood first policy

(GS Paper II: IR: India-Bhutan Relations)



- **Despite vast differences in size and population** between Bhutan and India, Bhutan with an area of 38,394 square kilometre and a population of 7.7 lakh as compared with its giant neighbour India with an area of 3.28 million sq.km and a population of 140 crores have been the closest of partners and the best of friends, the two nations have maintained a remarkably close and friendly relationship for over 50 years.

- The key to this strong bond lies in the mutual respect and equal treatment that both countries extend to each other.
- Both India and Bhutan understand that the size of a nation does not determine the quality of its relationship with others.
- **India has consistently respected Bhutan's unique identity, religious practices, and desire for economic prosperity** while preserving its way of life.
- **Bhutan, in turn, trusts India and sees no threat to its sovereignty** or identity from its southern neighbor.
- Bhutan looks to India for support in its growth, development, and prosperity, a role that India has fulfilled effectively over the years.
- This trust between the two nations has been nurtured over decades, resulting in a unique level of camaraderie and cooperation between their leadership.
- The evidence of this strong relationship is visible in recent interactions and collaborations between India and Bhutan.

The Gelephu project

- **The King of Bhutan visited India in November 2023** and hinted at plans for a **Mindfulness City in Gelephu, southern Bhutan**.
- Gelephu Mindfulness City aims to be a **Special Economic Zone attracting foreign investment and promoting prosperity in Bhutan**.
- India, along with its business entities, is expected to play a significant role in this project.
- The project **emphasizes sustainability, well-being, and environmental concerns, aligning with Bhutan's status as a carbon-negative country**.
- Gelephu city will **prioritize human well-being, including yoga, spa therapies, and mental relaxation channels**.
- The **Prime Minister of Bhutan recently visited India** for further discussions, followed by excellent discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu.
- Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to visit Bhutan in return, highlighting the importance of regular dialogue and cooperation between the two nations.
- These back-to-back visits signify the attention both governments are placing on nurturing the India-Bhutan relationship.
- **This approach reflects India's Neighbourhood First policy**, fostering continued growth and development in India-Bhutan ties.

The anchor of hydropower cooperation

- India and Bhutan share a strong cooperation in hydropower projects, which has been pivotal in their bilateral relations.
- Completed hydroprojects supply **clean electricity to India and generate revenue for Bhutan, aiding its transition out of the Least Developed Country status**.
- The **Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project**, though delayed, is expected to be completed in 2024, showcasing successful **government-to-government cooperation**.

- A new joint venture model for hydroprojects between India and Bhutan was proposed, but none of the five proposed projects has progressed significantly.
- There's a need to reevaluate this new model and develop a more practical and potentially successful approach for future hydroprojects.
- India has been a significant development assistance partner for Bhutan, contributing ₹5,000 crore to its 12th Five Year Plan.
- India prioritizes projects aligned with the needs and priorities of the Bhutanese people, emphasizing direct benefits to them.
- Regular discussions and collaboration between New Delhi and Thimphu are crucial for maintaining a successful partnership for prosperity.
- It's essential to continue this model of cooperation and prioritize Bhutan's development needs in the future as well.

Commented [AG4]: Concern Area

Measures to consider

- India can contribute to the success of the Gelephu Mindfulness City by implementing various measures:
 - a. Commence direct flights between major Indian cities like Mumbai/Delhi and Gelephu to facilitate easier access.
 - b. Offer technological expertise and knowledge to assist Bhutan in building necessary hard infrastructure, with the private sector taking the lead.
 - c. Encourage high-end Indian tourists and businesspersons to visit Gelephu in controlled numbers, promoting tourism and economic activities.
 - d. Encourage Indian businesses to establish operations in Gelephu, fostering investment and economic growth in the city.
- Gelephu's proximity to remote areas of West Bengal and Assam means that the success of the Mindfulness City will have positive socio-economic effects on these regions as well.
- The collaboration between India and Bhutan in developing Gelephu exemplifies the win-win cooperation between the two nations, showcasing the mutual benefits of their partnership.

Guaranteed MSP is an ethical imperative

(GS Paper III: MSP)

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a set price at which the government promises to buy crops from farmers if the market price falls below that level.

Mechanism:

- **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP):** This government body recommends MSPs based on several factors including:
 - **Cost of Cultivation:** This includes expenses incurred by farmers for seeds, fertilizers, labor, etc.
 - **Market Prices:** Both domestic and international prices of the commodity are considered.
 - **Demand and Supply:** Fluctuations in these factors are taken into account.
 - **Price Trends:** Past price movements of the commodity are analyzed.
 - **Fair Return to Farmers:** MSP aims to ensure a minimum profit margin for farmers.
- **Government Decision:** The CACP recommendations are reviewed and approved by the government (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs), which can make adjustments based on other economic factors.

Mechanism to Fix FRP (Fair and Remunerative Price)

The Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) is similar to MSP but applies specifically to sugarcane. Here's how it's determined:

Mechanism:

- **Consideration of CACP Recommendations:** Similar to MSP, the CACP recommends FRP based on production costs and a fair return for sugarcane farmers.
- **Formula-Based Approach:** The government formula takes into account factors like the recovery rate of sugar from sugarcane, the cost of production of sugarcane, and the prevailing price of sugar.

Note: Unlike MSP, which is a procurement price, FRP is a price mills have to pay to farmers for sugarcane.

A2+FL and C2

A2+FL and C2 are different cost categories considered when calculating MSP (Minimum Support Price) and FRP (Fair and Remunerative Price) for farmers in India.

A2+FL Cost:

- **A2:** Represents the actual cash expenses incurred by the farmer for cultivation. This includes:
 - Seeds
 - Fertilizers
 - Pesticides
 - Hired labor
 - Leased land rent
 - Fuel
 - Irrigation charges
 - Machinery usage costs (if rented)
- **FL:** Stands for Family Labor. This considers the value of the unpaid labor put in by the farmer's family members on the farm. It's an imputed cost, meaning an estimated value is assigned to the work they contribute.

C2 Cost:

- **C2** is the most comprehensive cost category and includes everything in A2+FL, plus additional imputed costs:
 - **Imputed Rent for Owned Land:** This represents the notional rent the farmer could have earned if they had leased out their own land instead of cultivating it themselves.
 - **Interest on Owned Capital:** This considers the forgone interest income the farmer could have earned if they had invested the money used for buying farm equipment, etc., elsewhere.

Summary of differences:

Cost Category	Description
A2	Actual cash expenses incurred by the farmer for cultivation
FL	Imputed value of unpaid family labor
A2+FL	Total cash expenses + value of family labor
C2	A2+FL + imputed rent for owned land + interest on owned capital

- Agrarian concerns have resurfaced as the general elections approach, with farmers from Green Revolution areas protesting at the capital's border.
- The ruling government attempted to address farmer distress by **offering to procure pulses, maize, and cotton at Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, but this was **conditional upon crop diversification**.
- However, **farmers rejected these efforts, stating that core issues were left unaddressed**.
- The **primary issue remains fair pricing of farm produce**, with demands for **legal assurances** of MSP.
- Beyond legal mandates, **the challenge of maintaining food self-sufficiency and addressing distribution issues** is crucial.
- **Legal guarantees for MSP are seen as ethically imperative to ensure food security.**
- **MSP serves as a vital tool for ensuring that agricultural commodity prices remain above a predetermined benchmark, especially since farmers lack significant influence in determining prices, leading to market failure.**

Produce and perish trap

- Despite the annual announcement of **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for 23 crops**, its **implementation remains poor**, benefiting only a small percentage of farmers, mainly in Punjab cultivating paddy and wheat.
- **Most transactions occur below MSP, making farming economically unviable for many Indian farmers**, trapping them in a cycle of produce and perish, leading to **debt and suicides**.

- There's a pressing need to ensure MSP, including the recommendation by agricultural scientist **M.S. Swaminathan for a 50% profit margin**.
- **Various articles in the Constitution and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants support legal measures to guarantee MSP.**
- An opinion survey revealed strong support among landowners, farm laborers, and the public for farmers' demand for a legal right to MSP.
- Sugarcane growers benefit from a **'statutory' MSP, strictly adhered to by sugar factories**.
- Some states like Maharashtra and Karnataka have made attempts to ensure MSP through amendments to agricultural acts or commissions.
- **Maharashtra attempted to amend its Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act to prevent the purchase of agricultural produce below MSP**, but the effort failed due to a lack of political will and a comprehensive strategy. The **Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission has laid out a clear roadmap, including potential financial commitments, to ensure a legally binding MSP for crops cultivated in the State.**
- A private member bill on The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative MSP for Agricultural Commodities was tabled in Parliament in 2018.
- Draft bills in states like Andhra Pradesh aim to establish a legal recourse to MSP, showing a gradual movement towards this goal.

The solution

- **A minor amendment to State APMC Acts or the Essential Commodities Act** at the national level can ensure that farmers' produce is not sold below MSP.
- Budgetary concerns can be minimized with accompanying measures like **crop planning, market intelligence, and post-harvest infrastructure development**.
- These measures help manage post-harvest surplus effectively, preventing market distortions.
- **Enhancing MSP to provide a 50% profit margin** over total cost is feasible, considering current profit margins are around 22%.
- Effective procurement and distribution, as outlined in the National Food Security Act, 2013, can ensure MSP while addressing hunger and malnutrition.
- **Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) includes schemes for price support, price deficiency payment, and incentives to private traders to ensure MSP.**
- Despite having necessary components to guarantee MSP, PM-AASHA has been sidelined in policy circles due to political expediency.

Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) aimed towards ensuring remunerative prices to farmers for their produce.

The recent scheme is expected to complement the increase in MSP which will be translated to farmer's income by way of robust procurement mechanism in coordination with the states.

COMPONENTS

The three components outlined under the scheme is thus aimed towards enhancing agricultural productivity, reducing cost of cultivation which will enable boosting and securing farmer's income in the long run.

- [Price Support Scheme \(PSS\)](#)
- [Price Deficiency Payment Scheme \(PDPS\)](#)
- [Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme \(PPPS\)](#)

Price Support Scheme (PSS)

- **Objective:** Protect farmers from significant price drops by guaranteeing a Minimum Support Price (MSP).
- **Mechanism:**
 - Government agencies (like NAFED and FCI) step in to procure crops from farmers directly when market prices fall below MSP.
 - Stores the procured crops for distribution or release later.
- **Crops covered:** Mainly pulses, oilseeds, copra, and cotton.

Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)

- **Objective:** Supplement farmers' income when market prices fall below MSP, without the burden of government procurement.
- **Mechanism:**
 - Farmers sell their produce in the open market.
 - The government calculates the difference between MSP and the modal price (or selling price in the notified market).
 - Farmers receive direct compensation through bank transfers.
- **Crops Covered:** Primarily oilseeds, sometimes pulses.

Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS)

- **Objective:** Test the feasibility of private sector participation in crop procurement at MSP to improve efficiency and increase options for farmers.
- **Mechanism:**
 - Government selects private entities (agribusinesses, FPOs, etc.) that will procure crops from farmers.
 - Private agencies procure at MSP in notified markets.
 - Government covers procurement expenses and handling fees for the private players.
- **Crops Covered:** Initially focused on pulses and oilseeds.

- Currently, farmers receive only about 30% of the price paid by consumers; ensuring MSP would increase their share.
- Establishing a legally binding MSP may reduce the share of intermediaries, leading to opposition from them.
- Government intervention, including a legally binding MSP, is often seen as problematic due to adherence to free market ideology.
- This adherence to free market principles hinders a just solution to the ongoing crisis in farmer incomes.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION: GS PAPER III

Question: Evaluate the feasibility of legal guarantees for Minimum Support Price (MSP) in India. (250 Words/15 Marks)

ANSWER APPROACH

- Introduce with definition of MSP and contextual background of precarious condition of farmers.
- Then bring the hurdles in legalization of MSP.
- Then suggest the solution to bring feasibility in legalizing MSP.
- Conclude with an optimistic note

ANSWER: Modal Answer of this question will be provided in tomorrow's PDF

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question 1: Consider the following statements about Vechur cattle breed:

1. It is the smallest cattle breed in the world.
2. It is a high milk-yielding breed.
3. It is found in the Western Ghats region of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Question 2: Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognized political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Question 3: For election to the Lok Sabha, a nomination paper can be filed by (UPSC 2017)

- (a) anyone residing in India.
- (b) a resident of the constituency from which the election is to be contested.
- (c) any citizen of India whose name appears in the electoral roll of a constituency.

(d) any citizen of India.

Question 4: Which government body recommends MSPs for various crops in India?

- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)
- National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED)
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

Question 5: What is FRP in the context of sugarcane farming?

- Fast Recovery Price
- Fair and Remunerative Price
- Farm Revenue Price
- Fixed Remuneration Price

Question 6: Consider the following statements about the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):

- It involves direct government procurement of crops.
- It provides compensation to farmers based on the difference between MSP and market price.
- It is currently implemented for sugarcane in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only

<p>Question 1: Consider the following statements about Vechur cattle breed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">It is the smallest cattle breed in the world.It is a high milk-yielding breed.It is found in the Western Ghats region of India. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 and 2 only1 and 3 only2 and 3 only1, 2 and 3	<p>Answer: b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 Correct - The passage mentions Vechur cow being the smallest cattle breed according to the Guinness Book of Records.2 Incorrect - While the milk yield is efficient relative to its size, Vechur is not known for high milk production compared to larger breeds. (iii) Correct - The passage states Vechur cows are native to the Kottayam district of Kerala, which falls within the Western Ghats region.
<p>Question 2: Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2017)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both	<p>Answer: (d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Statement 1: Incorrect. The Election Commission of India consists of the Chief Election Commissioner and any number of Election Commissioners as may be appointed by the President of India. Although it often functions with multiple

<p>general elections and bye-elections.</p> <p>3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognized political parties.</p> <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only</p> <p>(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 3 only</p>	<p>members, a single commissioner can also head the commission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement 2: Incorrect. The Election Commission of India, an independent constitutional body, decides the election schedule for general elections and bye-elections, not the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. • Statement 3: Correct. The Election Commission resolves disputes related to the splits or mergers within recognized political parties.
<p>Question 3: For election to the Lok Sabha, a nomination paper can be filed by (UPSC 2017)</p> <p>(a) anyone residing in India.</p> <p>(b) a resident of the constituency from which the election is to be contested.</p> <p>(c) any citizen of India whose name appears in the electoral roll of a constituency.</p> <p>(d) any citizen of India.</p>	<p>Answer: (c) any citizen of India whose name appears in the electoral roll of a constituency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility to contest Lok Sabha elections: A candidate must be a citizen of India and at least 25 years old. They also need to be a registered voter on the electoral roll of any constituency in India. It is not mandatory for them to be a resident of the constituency where they file their nomination. <p>Incorrect options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) While anyone can reside in India, citizenship is a requirement. • (b) Residency in the specific constituency is not a requirement. • (d) While citizenship is necessary, being a registered voter in a constituency is a specific requirement.
<p>Question 4: Which government body recommends MSPs for various crops in India?</p> <p>a. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare</p> <p>b. Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)</p> <p>c. National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED)</p> <p>d. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)</p>	<p>Answer: b</p> <p>CACP's Role: The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Its primary responsibility is to recommend Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) to the government for a variety of mandated crops.</p>
<p>Question 5: What is FRP in the context of sugarcane farming?</p> <p>a. Fast Recovery Price</p> <p>b. Fair and Remunerative Price</p>	<p>Answer: b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRP Meaning: The Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) is the minimum price that sugar mills must

<p>c. Farm Revenue Price d. Fixed Remuneration Price</p>	<p>pay to sugarcane farmers for their produce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination: The Government of India fixes the FRP based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), considering factors like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost of production of sugarcane ○ Recovery of sugar from sugarcane ○ Prevailing prices of sugar
<p>Question 6: Consider the following statements about the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It involves direct government procurement of crops. 2. It provides compensation to farmers based on the difference between MSP and market price. 3. It is currently implemented for sugarcane in India. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1 and 2 only b. 2 only c. 2 and 3 only d. 1 and 3 only 	<p>Answer: b</p> <p>Explanation: The PDPS compensates farmers without direct procurement, and it's mainly used for oilseeds, not sugarcane.</p> <p>The Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) is the scheme specifically used for sugarcane, where mills are mandated to pay a set price to farmers. The PDPS focuses on oilseeds and pulses, where the government compensates farmers for the difference between MSP and the market price, without direct procurement.</p>

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION: GS Paper I: Society, GS Paper II: Health Sector

Question: Examine the limitations of mainstream discourse on women's mental health, which often focuses narrowly on specific conditions and overlooks the role of societal violence and structural inequalities. (250 Words/15 Words)

ANSWER APPROACH

- Introduce with the linkage of violence against women and the mental health issue they faces.
- Then bring the limitations of mainstream discourse on women's mental health.
- Conclude with suggestive notes.

ANSWER

Mainstream discourse on women's mental health often falls short, presenting a limited view that overlooks crucial societal and structural factors impacting their well-being. This narrow focus on specific conditions can obscure the broader context in which women experience mental health challenges.

- Mainstream discourse on women's mental health often revolves around specific conditions like depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, or issues related to reproductive roles such as postpartum depression.
- These discussions overlook the broader impact of societal violence and structural inequalities on women's mental well-being.
- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) highlights a significant prevalence of violence against women in India, with around 30% experiencing physical violence and 6% reporting sexual violence.
- However, mainstream discussions fail to adequately address how such violence contributes to mental health conditions and homelessness among affected women.
- **Reductionist Biomedical Lens:** Women's experiences of distress are often viewed through a reductionist biomedical lens, focusing solely on symptoms and diagnoses while neglecting the underlying impact of violence and societal factors.
- This approach overlooks the complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors in shaping women's mental health.
- **Marginalization of Lived Experiences:** Many women encounter health systems that dismiss their lived experiences, leading to a lack of recognition and support for the underlying causes of their mental health issues.
- This marginalization perpetuates societal biases and exacerbates the risk of homelessness among vulnerable populations.
- **Failure to Address Systemic Issues:** Mainstream discourse often fails to address systemic issues such as poverty, caste-based marginalization, and societal violence, which significantly contribute to women's mental health challenges.
- Without addressing these root causes, efforts to improve mental health care remain limited in their effectiveness.

Thus, the mainstream discourse on women's mental health must broaden its focus to include the impact of societal violence and structural inequalities. By recognizing the interconnectedness of these factors and adopting a more holistic approach, policymakers and healthcare professionals can better address the diverse needs of women experiencing mental health issues and homelessness.