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*C – Chennai; B – Bengaluru; D – Delhi; T – Thiruvananthapuram
State OMCs to buy biodiesel made from used cooking oil

Govt. pushes for green fuel as FSSAI order cracks down on re-using oil

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, in its bid to encourage the biodiesel sector, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday announced that from January 2020, three Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) would procure the entire supply of biodiesel produced from used cooking oil for a three-year period.

To promote production, under the scheme, the OMCs- Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum—will pay biodiesel producers INR 30 per litre in the first year, INR 27.5 per litre in the second, and INR 25 per litre in the third. The OMCs will also bear the cost of transportation and GST for the first year. The Ministry’s announcement comes just a day after the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, under the leadership of Dharmendra Pradhan, issued an order to FSSAI, clamping down on the re-using of oil more than three times.

Three Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) will procure the entire supply of biodiesel produced from cooking oil for a 3 year period

- Expression of Interest released
- 3 OMCs – IOCL, HPCL, BPCL

World Biofuel Day

- Celebrated on 10th August every year
- India → Create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels
- Efforts in biofuel sector
- 2019 Theme → Production of Biodiesel from used Cooking oil

National Policy on Biofuels - 2018

- 5% blending of biodiesel in High Speed Diesel by 2030 → Target
  - 500 crore litres of biodiesel required every year
  - 110 crore litres from ‘Used Cooking Oil’ (UCO), one of the sources of Biodiesel

FSSAI Order

- Food Safety Commissioners (FSCs) must ensure that Food Business Operators (FBOs) consuming >50 litres edible oil/day must stop reusing the oil more than three times.
Practice Question – Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements.

1. As per National Policy on Biofuels 2018, an indicative target of 5% blending of biodiesel in diesel is proposed by 2030.

2. Used Cooking Oil (UCO) is used as one of the source to manufacture biodiesel in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
A currency war

Who has the US accused China of deliberately weakening the yuan?

What does it mean for the global economy?

Why does the US blame China?

The US believes that China has been deliberately undervaluing the Chinese currency to gain an unfair advantage in trade. This has been to the benefit of US exporters and at the expense of US importers. The US also believes that China is using its currency to gain a trade surplus with the US.

Currency manipulation: acting intentionally to influence exchange rates to gain an advantage in trade.

Devaluation of the Yuan: reducing the value of the Chinese currency to make it more competitive with the US dollar.

What are the consequences of a currency war?

- Potential for a trade war: countries may raise tariffs and impose quotas on goods imported from each other.
- increased instability and volatility in financial markets.
- Disruption of global supply chains.
- Reduced global economic growth.

What can stop a currency war?

- Increased international cooperation and dialogue.
- Use of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Bilateral agreements to stabilize exchange rates.

Civilspedia

Devaluation of Yuan → boost Chinese exports

Before devaluation - $1 = 5 yuan
After devaluation - $1 = 10 yuan

more goods valued with yuan can be bought with dollar

→ Most central banks - use monetary tools - to regulate money supply

→ US - designated China - a “Currency manipulator”

Currency manipulator - use central banks - buys or sells foreign currencies for domestic currency - exchange rate

People’s Bank of China (PBoC) - devaluation of yuan w.r.t. dollar

US → legal action against China
to justify retaliatory action against China

US - China trade war - ongoing since 2018

US → expected to get worse

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Devaluation of Yuan → boost Chinese exports

Before devaluation - $1 = 5 yuan
After devaluation - $1 = 10 yuan

→ more goods valued with yuan can be bought with dollar

→ Most central banks - use monetary tools - to regulate money supply

→ Strengthen or weaken currency rate

China’s PBoC Intervention in the forex market

→ Supply of yuan → value ↓ and vice-versa
→ Why China devalues Yuan?

* Devaluation of Yuan against dollar - more units of yuan purchased by less dollars
* Transfer of purchasing power from local Chinese to Americans → boost Chinese growth

→ Impact on global economy

* If US retaliates - weakening dollar - “Currency War”
* Imposition of heavy tariffs - steep fall in International trade
* Currency devaluation - boost export temporarily → no sustained increase in production
**Practice Question – Prelims**

Q. Consider the following statements with respect to the summer monsoon in India.

1. The Himalayas trap the monsoon winds, forcing them to shed their moisture within the subcontinent.

2. The moisture transferred from the soil and crops to the atmosphere is not one of the contributing factors for the shift in the summer monsoonal rainfall towards the North-Western region of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
Tackling poachers across borders

DNA forensics is being used by India and Nepal to analyse wildlife crimes.

In July last year, officials of the Director of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized six pieces of ivory weighing 121.45 kg from a truck in Murshidabad district. Two persons were arrested for smuggling the ivory, which was supposed to have been sourced from an elephant killed in the Mahananda area of Nepal’s Bhojpur district a few weeks earlier.

The samples were sent for analysis to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau of India (WCCB) in Kolkata.

About five grams of ivory were also sent to the WCCB in India for further analysis in New Delhi.

The samples were then sent to the WCCB in Nepal for analysis in New Delhi.

By analysing the samples using DNA forensics, the WCCB in India and Nepal were able to identify the samples.

The samples were then sent to the WCCB in India for further analysis in New Delhi.

The samples were then sent to the WCCB in Nepal for analysis in New Delhi.

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Practice Question – Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

1. It is the apex anti-smuggling agency of India.

2. It works under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both 1 and 2  
d) Neither 1 nor 2
Pipe dreams for water transfer

It is time to consider out-of-the-box solutions to take water from a point of surplus to one of deficit.

Ramesh Mander

Last month, the “water train” made its poignant, slow arrival into the city, carrying 2.1 million litres of water for its parched residents. At the very same time, in another part of the country, unshakable tragedy had unfolded, with Assam and Bihar getting ravaged by the monsoons. And just when it feels that the country has been through enough, rain comes Karnataka and Kerala, taking many lives and causing more misery.

It is a cruel fact that it doesn’t rain evenly across the planet. With the issue that rapidly-increasing climate change is bringing, one man’s drought could well coincide with another man’s deluge.

These climatically turbulent times beg the question of whether it would be too far-fetched to use the ‘water train’ model widely and set up infrastructure to transport water from areas with surplus to parched lands. Historically, this notion has been toyed with and abandoned, mainly owing to the expense involved in ferrying water through thousands of kilometres of pipelines and against gradients, often involving pumping nooses requiring a lot of energy. Yet, it isn’t so much a technical problem as one of money, and perhaps politics.

⇒ Water Scarcity in Chennai — ‘Water train’ used for transporting water
⇒ Same time — floods ravaged Assam & Bihar
⇒ India — a ‘country of contrasts’
⇒ Floods in one part — drought in other part
⇒ One man’s drought — another man’s deluge

⇒ Novel methods — water conservation and transportation
⇒ Use of water trains to transfer water
⇒ Surplus to Scarcer region
⇒ Pipelines — for water transportation
⇒ Example:
  • Multi-billion dollar project — excess water from Mississippi to Las Vegas — a pipe dream

⇒ Transporting water across water (waterbody)
⇒ Hauling icebergs — address water scarcity in Africa; same plan — UAE
⇒ Greece — hauling massive amounts of water
⇒ Spragg bags and Zippers — successful

⇒ Emphasis on inland water — transport water
⇒ Advantage — less energy and fuel requirement
⇒ Disadvantage — expensive loading and unloading infrastructure
⇒ Indian rivers — lack depth and width
⇒ Dredging — may damage ecosystems
Recently India has witnessed droughts in several areas and floods in other areas at the same time. Suggest certain measures to tackle this persistent issue.

Practice Question – Mains
GS – III

Q. Recently India has witnessed droughts in several areas and floods in other areas at the same time. Suggest certain measures to tackle this persistent issue.
An IPCC report released has suggested that the impact of climate change on land will be severe. Discuss the important land related causes of climate change, their impact and possible solutions.

**Possible Solutions**

- Adopt farming practices - work with nature
- \( \downarrow \) food waste
- balanced and diversified diet
- \( \downarrow \) deforestation
- restore damaged ecosystem

**Facts on IPCC**

- Established in 1988 by UNEP and WMO
- leading international body for assessment of climate change

Objective: assess scientific information relevant to human induced climate change, impacts, options for adaptation and mitigation.
Plant reveals Andaman’s relation to peninsular India

Eugenia mooriana points to a geological connection

T. NANDAKUMAR

The discovery of a lesser-known plant species from the Andaman Islands could help scientists reconstruct the continental connection of the island region in the Bay of Bengal with peninsular India and Sri Lanka in the remote past.

During an exploration in the semi-evergreen forests of Wright Myo in the southern islands of the Andaman group in 2003, scientists from the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) here came across an interesting species belonging to the Eugenia genus. Only one population comprising about 12 mature plants as undergrowth was discovered from the location. The scientists, led by Sam P. Mathew, collected two seedlings of the species Eugenia mooriana, a plant that is hitherto known to occur only in Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.

The finding has been published in the latest issue of Nambio, the bulletin of the Botanical Survey of India. The plant flowers during February and is characterised by profuse, slender branches, slightly crimson leaves and white flowers with elliptic petals.

According to the authors, including Director, JNTBGRI R. Prakashkumar and Scientist S.M. Sharief, there are 1,036 common species for the Andaman Nicobar Islands and the Western Ghats of peninsular India. “The fragmented distribution of these floral species demonstrates the geological connection of these widely separated regions in the remote past,” says the study.

⇒ Discovery of a plant species in Andaman Islands
⇒ Expected to help scientists to study possible continental connection of island region with Peninsular India & Sri Lanka
⇒ Exploration in 2003 → Semi - Evergreen forests of Wright Myo, Andaman Island Group
⇒ Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute
⇒ Institute under Ministry of S&T of state govt. of Kerala, under Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment
⇒ Established in 1979 as an R&D organization
⇒ Objective: To establish a Conservatory Botanic Garden of tropical plants of the country and for the State of Kerala
⇒ Eugenia mooriana
⇒ Eugenia genus
⇒ Known to occur ‘only in’
  * Assam
  * Maharashtra
  * Karnataka
  * Tamil Nadu
  * Kerala
  * Sri Lanka
⇒ How the plant species is also found in Andaman Islands?
⇒ Possible continental connection with Peninsular India & Sri Lanka
The lesser-known species called as ‘Eugenia Mooniana’, was sometimes seen in the news for

a) The possible continental connection of the Andaman Island region with the Peninsular India.

b) Being found in the Andaman Islands though it was known to occur only in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Sri Lanka.

c) Both 1 and 2

d) None of the above

Charakterised by
* profuse and slender branches
* slightly crimson coloured leaves
* white flowers with elliptic petals

Around 1026 common species in Andaman Nicobar Islands and W. Ghats of Peninsular India

‘fragmented distribution’—demonstrates geological connection of two widely separated regions, in the remote past
Practice Question – Prelims

Q1. Consider the following statements.

1. As per National Policy on Biofuels 2018, an indicative target of 5% blending of biodiesel in diesel is proposed by 2030.

2. Used Cooking Oil (UCO) is used as one of the source to manufacture biodiesel in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Practice Question – Prelims

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the summer monsoon in India.

1. The Himalayas trap the monsoon winds, forcing them to shed their moisture within the subcontinent.

2. The moisture transferred from the soil and crops to the atmosphere is not one of the contributing factors for the shift in the summer monsoonal rainfall towards the North-Western region of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
Practice Question – Prelims

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.
1. It is the apex anti-smuggling agency of India.
2. It works under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Practice Question – Prelims

Q4. The lesser-known species called as ‘Eugenia Mooniana’, was sometimes seen in the news for

a) The possible continental connection of the Andaman Island region with the Peninsular India.
b) Being found in the Andaman Islands though it was known to occur only in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Sri Lanka.
c) Both 1 and 2
d) None of the above
Q. Recently India has witnessed droughts in several areas and floods in other areas at the same time. Suggest certain measures to tackle this persistent issue.

Q. An IPCC report released has suggested that the impact of climate change on land will be severe. Discuss the important land related causes of climate change, their impact and possible solutions.
Practice Question – Answers
12-08-2019

Q1. Option ‘c’ – Both 1 and 2
Q2. Option ‘a’ – 1 only
Q3. Option ‘a’ – 1 only
Q4. Option ‘c’ – Both 1 and 2

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