

## UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 05-12-2023

### **66 Indian Airports are operating on 100% Green Energy**

Airports like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru have achieved Level 4+ and higher Airports International Council (ACI) Accreditation and have become Carbon neutral.



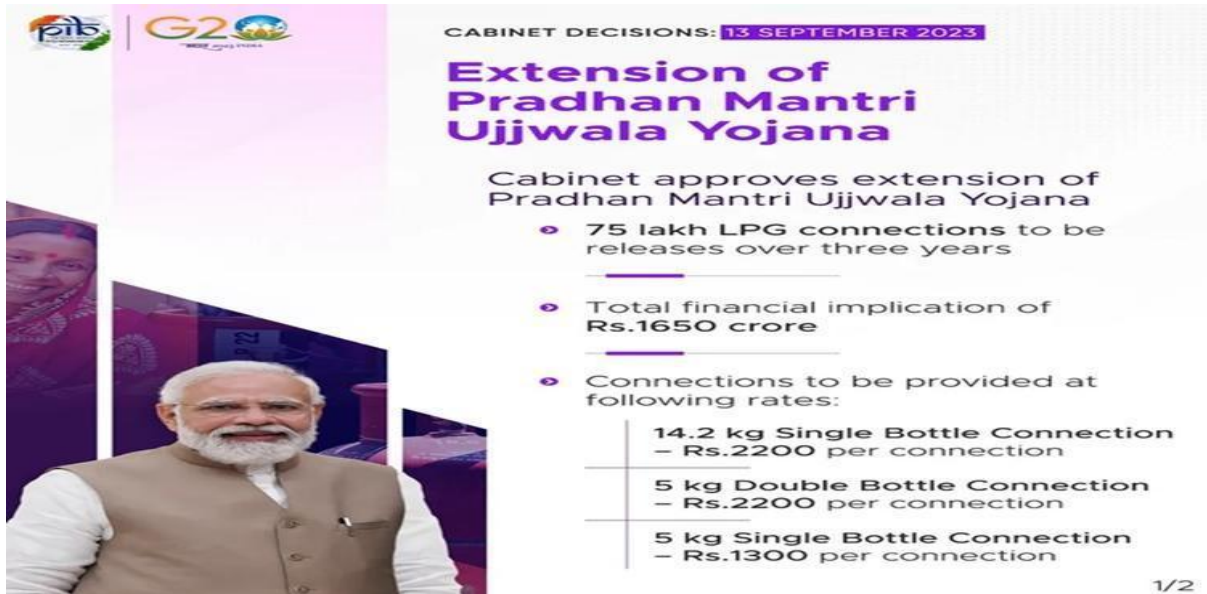
MoCA has taken initiatives for working towards Carbon neutrality and achieving net zero carbon emission at airports in the country by way of standardising Carbon Accounting and Reporting framework of Indian Airports

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has taken initiatives for working towards Carbon neutrality and achieving net zero carbon emission at airports in the country by way of standardising the Carbon Accounting and Reporting framework of Indian Airports. For this purpose, airport operators with scheduled operations have been advised to map the carbon emission at their respective airports and to work towards carbon neutrality & net zero emission in a phased manner. MoCA has also advised developers of the upcoming Greenfield Airports and the respective State Governments to work towards achieving Carbon Neutrality & Net Zero which inter-alia includes use of green energy.

With the above efforts of Government of India, Airports like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru have achieved Level 4+ and higher Airports International Council (ACI) Accreditation and have become Carbon neutral. Additionally, 66 Indian Airports are operating on 100% Green Energy.

## Extension of benefits of PMUY

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was started in May, 2016 with an objective to provide clean cooking fuel to poor households across the country. Under PMUY, a deposit free LPG connection is provided to adult women from poor households. As on 31.10.2023, there are 9.67 Crore active LPG Connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) which includes 69.26 lakh connections in Rajasthan. Government started a targeted subsidy of ` 200/- per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 12 refills per Annum (and proportionately pro-rated for 5 Kg connections) to the PMUY consumers in May 2022. In October 2023, Government has increased targeted subsidy to ` 300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 12 refills per Annum (and proportionately pro-rated for 5 Kg connections).



**CABINET DECISIONS: 13 SEPTEMBER 2023**

### Extension of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

Cabinet approves extension of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- 75 lakh LPG connections to be released over three years
- Total financial implication of Rs.1650 crore
- Connections to be provided at following rates:

14.2 kg Single Bottle Connection	- Rs.2200 per connection
5 kg Double Bottle Connection	- Rs.2200 per connection
5 kg Single Bottle Connection	- Rs.1300 per connection

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Further, Government had also provided upto 3 free refills to PMUY beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package from April 2020 to December 2020 etc. Under this Scheme, 14.17 crore free refills were provided across the country.

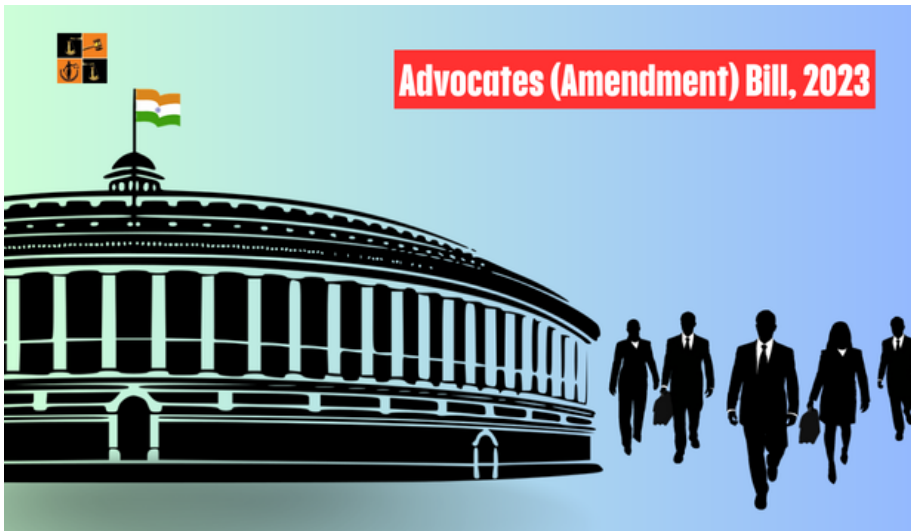
The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) has approved and extended the guarantees to 78,06,655 Micro and Small Enterprises under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises, since inception in 2000 till 31.10.2023.

Ministry of MSME organises various awareness programmes in association with Industry's Associations, Micro and Small Enterprises and Banks. As informed by CGTMSE, during the current year 52 programmes and training sessions for Banks/Financial Institutions have been organized.

As per the guidelines of Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises, CGTMSE provides credit guarantee to its Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) for the credit extended by them to Micro and Small Enterprises under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises. As per the Gazette Notification dated 18.10.2022, "In case of an upward change in terms of investment in plant and machinery or equipment or turnover or both, and consequent re-classification, an enterprise shall continue to avail of all non-tax benefits of the category (micro or small or medium) it was in before the re-classification, for a period of three years from the date of such upward change."

## Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023

During a debate on the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said that the central government is open to a policy on transfer of high court judges. The Bill has been passed by the Lok Sabha.





### **About Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023:**

- The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in August, 2023.
- It amends the Advocates Act, 1961. The Bill repeals certain sections related to touts under the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879.
- The 1961 Act consolidates the law related to legal practitioners and constitutes Bar Councils and the All-India Bar.
- The Bill, which was already passed in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session, aims at regulating the legal profession by a single act and seeks to target touts.

### **Key Features of Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023:**

#### **Touts:**

The Bill provides that every High Court, district judge, sessions judge, district magistrate, and revenue officer may frame and publish lists of touts.

Tout refers to a person who:

either proposes to procure or procures the employment of a legal practitioner in a legal business in return of any payment, or frequents places such as the precincts of civil or criminal courts, revenue-offices, or railway stations to procure such employment.

The Court or judge may exclude from the premises of the Court any person whose name is included in the list of touts.

#### **Preparation of lists:**

The authorities empowered to frame and publish the list of touts may order subordinate courts to hold an inquiry into the conduct of persons alleged or suspected to be touts.

Once such a person is proven to be a tout, his name may be included by the authority in the list of touts.

No person will be included in such lists without getting an opportunity of showing cause against his inclusion.

#### **Penalty:**





Any person who acts as a tout while his name is included in the list of touts will be punished with imprisonment up to three months, a fine up to Rs 500, or both.

### News Summary:

**During a debate on the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, Union Law Minister informed the Lok Sabha that the Central government is open to a policy on transfer of high court judges.**

He said that after 1993, when the **Collegium system** came into place, the Supreme Court Collegium recommends transfer and appointment of judges.

### What is the Process of Appointment of High Court Judges?

**Under Article 217 of the Constitution of India, the President appoints High Court judges.**

The Chief Justice of a High Court is appointed by the President after consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Governor of the state concerned.

For appointment of other judges, the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court is also consulted.

This consultation process has been interpreted by the Supreme Court in the **Third Judges case (1998)** in the following manner:

The CJI has to consult a collegium of two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.

After consultation, the CJI recommends names to the President for appointment.

The President, in case of objection, can send the recommended names back to the collegium, to reconsider, with reasons in writing.

After reconsideration, if the collegium reiterates its recommendations, the President has to appoint the recommended names as Judges.

### Transfer of Judges:

Currently, the President can transfer a judge from one High Court to another, after consulting the Chief Justice of India.

## The State of Food and Agriculture 2023

The State of Food and Agriculture 2023 - a report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has revealed the massive hidden costs of the global agrifood systems, which exceed an astounding \$10 trillion.



In middle-income countries like India, these costs constitute nearly 11% of the GDP, which manifests as higher poverty, environmental harm and health-related impact (undernourishment, unhealthy dietary patterns, etc).

### What are Agri-Food Systems?

Agrifood systems have three main components:

**Primary production:** It includes food from agricultural and non-agricultural origins.

**Food distribution:** It links production to consumption through food supply chains and domestic food transport networks.



**Household consumption:** It is the downstream outcome of functioning agrifood systems, subject to varying degrees of demand shocks.

### **About the State of Food and Agriculture 2023 Report:**

- **This edition of the report** introduces the concept of the hidden costs and benefits of agrifood systems and provides a framework through which these can be assessed.
- **The report aims to initiate a process** that will better prepare decision-makers for actions to steer agrifood systems towards environmental, social and economic sustainability.

### **Highlights of the State of Food and Agriculture 2023:**

- The report highlights massive hidden costs of the global agrifood systems, exceeding an astounding \$10 trillion.
- The report blames unsustainable business-as-usual activities and practices for these escalating costs, pointing to a need to transform agrifood systems.
- One way to do so is to shift to multi-cropping systems that have the potential to protect farmers' well-being, improve nutritional outcomes for the communities, and positively impact ecological health.

### **Improvements in Agricultural Productivity in India and its Adverse Impacts:**

- This has been achieved over the last five decades by mainstreaming monocropping systems and chemical-intensive farming practices.
- **The Green Revolution** focused credit on inputs and marketing of high-yielding varieties of paddy and wheat on agricultural lands, which now constitute more than 70% of India's agricultural production.
- **However, the infusion of seeds** purchased from multinational corporations and fertilisers undermined seed sovereignty and dismantled Indigenous knowledge systems.
- **This trend also compromised the nutritional needs** of households and resulted in adverse ecological consequences including soil fertility and excessive extraction of groundwater.



- **This privatisation and deregulation of agricultural inputs** also increased indebtedness among agrarian households.

**In 2013**, the debt to asset ratio of a farmer household in India was 630% higher than in 1992.

### **What is the Policy Environment in India and Issues with it?**

Under the **National Food Security Act 2013**, 65% of households (around 800 million people) in India are legally assured a right to food at subsidised rates through the Public Distribution System and welfare programmes such as -

- The Integrated Child Development Services
- The Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

**The procurement of food crops:** It is coordinated by the Food Corporation of India (FCI), which is required to maintain a central pool of buffer stock and to procure, store, transport, and maintain foodgrain stocks in the country.

However, this procurement policy heavily favours rice and wheat.

Not surprisingly, the area under cultivation of coarse grains dropped by 20% between 1966-1967 and 2017-2018.

### **Policies favouring investments in water-intensive cash**

**crops:** Water-intensive cash crops like sugarcane and arecanut have flourished under policies

Favouring investments in dams and canal irrigation (favouring sugarcane) and Free electricity for borewells (favouring arecanut).

### **What can be Done to Help Farmers in India?**

**A systemic shift in food regimes**, from local to global value chains, is essential.

**Diversified multi-cropping systems**, rooted in agroecology principles, could be a viable solution to revitalise degraded land and soil.

Practices known by various names locally, like ‘**akkadisaalu**’ in Karnataka, involve intercropping with a combination of legumes, pulses, oilseeds, trees, shrubs, and livestock.

**Alternative farming systems** may increase farmer’s income and improve the environment.



**For example**, millets, whose yield per hectare is comparable to those of rice and wheat, are more nutritious and grow in semi-arid conditions without burdening groundwater tables.

**By redirecting subsidies**, currently accruing to corporations, farmers can be paid for their contribution to sustaining natural capital, instead of incentivising them to deplete it.

## Methane Alert and Response System

**Recently, the Methane Alert and Response System (MARS) notified governments of 127 plumes spanning four continents and identified 1,500 plumes in its pilot stage.**

### About the Methane Alert and Response System:



- It is a data-to-action initiative with the mission to put open, reliable, and actionable data into the hands of individuals who can reduce methane emissions.



- It was announced at the Conference of Parties (COP 27) in November 2022 and began its initial pilot phase in January 2023.
- The pilot phase presented an opportunity for UNEP's International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO) to engage with partners, countries, and operators to refine MARS processes and procedures before making data public.
- It uses satellites to scan the globe for major emission sources and alerts countries and companies so that they can take methane action and accelerate progress supporting the Paris Agreement and Global Methane Pledge.
- This initiative works in partnership with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- MARS brings together four critical components to drive transparency and enable emission reductions:
  - Detection of large sources of human-caused methane emissions.
  - Notification of relevant countries and companies about these detected emissions.
  - Response from notified stakeholders to address the emissions.
  - Tracking progress of actions taken to reduce emissions and collaboration to prevent future methane.

### **What is the International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO)?**

- It was presented at the G20 Leaders' Summit in 2021.
- It focused initially on emissions of Methane from the fossil industry.
- It reconciles methane data from scientific measurement studies, satellites through the Methane Alert and Response System (MARS), rigorous industry reporting through the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 (OGMP 2.0), and national inventories.
- The Oil & Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 (OGMP 2.0) is UNEP's flagship programme that includes a partnership of companies to improve the accuracy and transparency of methane emissions data from the oil and gas sector through a committed framework.