Prelim Bits 09-01-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Status of GI tag in India

17 products from across 6 States/Union Territories got the geographical Indications (GI) tag recently.

- **GI tag -** A GI tag is a sign used on products that have a ***specific geographical origin*** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- **Ownership** - Any trader's body, association, or organization can apply for a GI tag.
- **Conditions** - The applicants need to prove the uniqueness of the item with historical records and a complete breakdown of how the product is made.
- **Raw materials** - The raw materials for such products do not necessarily have to come from that region, *unless it is an* ***agricultural tag***.
- For instance, the mulberry silk used in Kancheepuram sarees comes from Karnataka, and the gold zari from Surat.
- **Status** - Over 500 products across all the States have been given GI tags so far.
- **Major Categories** - The products in the GI registry fall under five major categories.

1. Agriculture
2. Food Stuff
3. Handicrafts
4. Manufactured

5. Natural

- **Highest** - Handicrafts dominate the list, with over half the GI tags being given to products crafted by skilled artisans.

Categories (Highest to Lowest)	No. of Products
Handicrafts	285
Agriculture	196
Foodstuff	38
Manufactured	15
Natural	2

- **Variety of products** - There are 34 classes of products that can get GI tags.
- They range from chemicals and paint to foodstuffs, handicrafts, musical instruments, and even firearms and locomotives.
- **GI tags across States -** Every State in India has at least one GI tag.
- **Highest** - Tamil Nadu, with 61 GI-tagged products, has the highest number of GI-tags compared to other States.

States (Highest to Lowest)	Number of GI Tags
Tamil Nadu	61
Uttar Pradesh	56
Karnataka	48
Kerala	39
Maharashtra	35

Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC)

Harit Nauka guidelines and the River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047 were launched at the recently held inaugural Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) in Kolkata.

- **IWDC –** It is hosted by the Inland Waterways Authority of India.

- **Establishment in** – 2023

- **Objectives** – For comprehensive *development of inland waterways* and associated ecosystems with improved cargo efficiency, passenger movement, and river cruise tourism, with active participation from the States and UT's.

Harit Nauka

- **Harit Nauka** – It is the '***Guidelines for Green Transition of Inland Vessels***'.

- **Launched by** – Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.

- **Aim** – To embark on a journey towards a ***sustainable and eco-friendly future*** for our inland waterways.

River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047

- **Launched by** – Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.

- **Roadmap** – To ***enable capacity in an additional 26 waterways*** fit for river cruise tourism from an operational strength of 8 waterways.

- *To increase cruise routes with night stays* from 17 to 80 and to *increase river cruise terminals* from 15 up to 185, registering a growth of 1233%.

- To move the *cruise tourism traffic with night stays* up from 5000 to 1.20 lakh and the local cruise tourism traffic on National Waterways *without night stays* up from 2 lakh to 15 lakh by 2047.

- It had *identified 30+ additional potential routes* for different cruise types, including long and short, recreational, and heritage segments, to attract all tourist categories.

References

1. PIB| India's 1st IWDC meeting in Kolkata
2. Economic Times| Launch of River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047

DRDO anti-drone technology

With rising use of drones, DRDO develops own counter technology.

- **Indigenous -** The DRDO is developing an indigenous counter-drone technology, which is capable of counter-attacks including detection, soft kill and hard kill of all types of drones.

- The counter-drone system is ready for production and is already demonstrated to armed services and other internal security agencies.

- **Technology -** The technology is transferred to Bharat Electronics Limited, Bengaluru, who is the production agency for the system.

- In addition, Transfer of Technology is given to four more Indian firms for production of anti-drone systems.

- **TAPAS -** The Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial vehicle TAPAS was developed for ISTAR (Intelligence in Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Target Acquisition).

- **Battery -** Lithium Ion-based battery with indigenous battery management system has been developed by the DRDO in association with a private vendor and is being used on Tapas UAV.

TAPAS is currently only in developmental stage.

References

1. The New Indian Express – DRDO develops own counter technology
2. The Hindu – Anti-drone tech ready, handed over to BEL, private firms

Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC)

Recently, Department of Justice have announced nomination of Supreme Court judge Justice BR Gavai as the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC).

- **Constituted under** - ***Section 3A*** the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 which

states that the Central Authority (NALSA) shall constitute the committee.

Legal Services Authorities Act *was constituted in 1987 to give a statutory base to legal aid programmes and to provide free and competent legal services to eligible groups.*

- **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** was constituted in 1995 to monitor and evaluate the implementation of legal aid programmes and to lay down policies for making them available.
- **Objective** – To provide ***free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of society***, in cases falling under the top court's jurisdiction.
- **Composition** – It consists of a ***sitting SC judge***, who is the chairman, along with other members possessing the experience and qualifications prescribed by the Centre.

Currently in 2024, SCLSC consists of chairperson and 9 members.

- **Selection criteria** – Under Section 27 of the 1987 Act, the Centre is empowered to make rules in consultation with the CJI, by notification.
- Rule 10 of the NALSA Rules, 1995, entails the numbers, experience, and qualifications of the SCLSC members.
- **Appointment** – ***CJI nominates*** both the chairman and other members of SCLSC and appoints the Secretary to the Committee.
- **Powers of the Committee** – It can ***appoint officers and other employees*** as prescribed by the Centre, in consultation with the CJI.

Free Legal Aid in India
• **Article 39A** – The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid. • **Article 14** – It entails right to equality and make it obligatory for the state to ensure equality before law. • **Article 22(1)** – It entails the rights to be informed of grounds for arrest which make it obligatory for the State to ensure a legal system that promotes justice based on equal opportunity. *The Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes chaired by the then SC Justice PN Bhagwati started monitoring legal aid activities throughout India, thereby conceptualised the free legal aid in India.*

Reference

The Indian Express | New Chairman to SC Legal Services Committee

Other Important News

Bangladesh

• PM congratulates Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh for victory for ***4th consecutive term*** recently.
• Sheikh Hasina's Awami League won ***almost 75% (222 out of 300)*** Parliamentary seats of the seats in general election that was boycotted by the main opposition BNP and drew a low turnout.

PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration, 2023

• Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration 2023 ***restructed scheme*** & ***web portal*** launched recently.
• The award is to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts/ Organizations of the Central and State Governments.
• The Award Scheme restructured to recognize the performance of the **District Collectors** through targeted individual beneficiaries and implementation with a saturation approach.
• The PM's Awards, 2023 will consist of Trophy, Scroll and an incentive of ***Rs. 20 lakh*** to the awarded District/organization.

International Purple Fest 2024

• The International Purple Fest 2024 is a global celebration of inclusivity and empowerment that is being held in Goa.
• The festival aims to promote the rights of people with disabilities and create a platform for them to showcase their talents and abilities.

Countries of Particular Concern

• U.S. designates China, Pakistan and North Korea and some other countries as 'Countries of Particular Concern' recently.
• Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) are countries where the government engages in or tolerates "particularly severe" violations of religious freedom.
• The U.S. Department of State designates CPCs under the ***International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.***

Vellayani Lake

• Vellayani Lake of Punchakkari wetland is ***the largest freshwater lake in Trivandrum***, Kerala.
• The Vellayani Devi Temple, dedicated to ***Goddess Bhadrakali***, is located on the eastern banks of the lake.

MSMEs in India

• A recent report of CBRE-CREDAI says that Maharastra, TamilNadu and Uttar Pradesh (top 3 States) contribute 40% of registered MSMEs in India.
• Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are known by the acronym MSME.

Peregrine & Vulcan

• The Peregrine lander was built by Pittsburgh-based space robotics firm Astrobotic and aimed to become the first lunar lander constructed by a private company.
• This is also the first mission to fly under NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) initiative, where NASA pays private companies to send scientific equipment to the moon.
• Vulcan Centaur is a two-stage-to-orbit, heavy-lift launch vehicle developed by United Launch Alliance (ULA).

Sisal

• Sisal is a species of flowering plant native to southern Mexico.
• Sisal, (Agave sisalana), plant of the family Asparagaceae and its fibre, the most important of the leaf fibre group.
• The leaves have been used to make twine, cloth, carpets and ***mezcal***, a distilled alcoholic beverage.
• A recent study suggests that the sisal leaves could make sanitary napkins more sustainable in India.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

• Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, also known as ***Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day***, flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs is celebrated on ***January 9*** every year.
• **Aim -** To mark the contribution and achievements of the overseas Indian community to the development of India.
• It's a day to acknowledge the achievements ***of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)*** who have made significant contributions to their adopted countries.

Ugram

• Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) lab and a Hyderabd based private firm launched an indigenous assault rifle named Ugram recently.
• The rifle is weighing less than 4 kg with a 500-meter firing range.
• It is designed and developed to meet the operational requirements of the Indian armed forces, Para military forces and state police forces.

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