Prelim Bits 12-10-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Goan Cashews

Goan cashew (Fruit and Nut) was recently granted the geographical indication (GI) tag.

- Goan cashew derived from the Portuguese name 'caju' or 'kaju' in Konkani.
- **Uniqueness of Goan Cashews** - It has unique identity, flavour and taste.
- The overall climatological practices of Goa and traditional farming practices is the reason for uniqueness.

Cashew feni (brew) was awarded Geographical Indication registration in 2009 as a speciality alcoholic beverage from Goa.

Evolution of Cashews in Goa
• Originally, it was **native to northeast Brazil** in Latin America. • It was introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th century (1570). • Initially, it was known mainly as a crop for afforestation and soil conservation. • According to research, the 1st cashew factory in Goa started operations in 1926. • By 1961, the cashew processing industry accounted for about 60% of industrial production in Goa, a bulk of which was exported.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- Geographic Indication (GI) is defined under Article-23 and 24 of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- India is a member of the WTO and thus enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 which came into force from 2003.
- 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.
- The products can both be ***Natural or Man-made***.
- GI Tag is valid for ***10 years***.
- The essential difference between GI and other intellectual properties (IP) is that, GI is a collective intellectual property right.
- The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was ***Darjeeling Tea*** in the year 2004-05.

References

The Indian Express | Goa Cashews

Mera Yuva Bharat

Centre has approved to create autonomous body Mera Yuva Bharat to harness immense youth energy for nation-building.

- My Bharat will be platform for youth development and youth-led development.

It will provide equitable access to youth to actualize their aspirations and build Viksit Bharat.

> *It will be unveiled on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary on October 31 which is celebrated as National Unity Day every year.*

- **Beneficiaries** – Youth in the age group of *15-29 years* including those located overseas.
- It is in line with the definition of youth in the National Youth Policy.

> *India has 40 crore people in the age group of 15-29 years.*

Objectives
• Leadership development in the youth • Better alignment between youth aspirations and community needs. • Enhanced efficiency through convergence of existing programmes. • Act as a one stop shop for youth and ministries. • Create a centralised database. • Ensuring accessibility by creating a physical ecosystem.

- **Issue** - *No financial remuneration* will be given.
- **Significance** – Youth will act as the *Yuva Setu (a youth bridge)* between the government and the citizens and will become *active drivers of development* and not merely passive recipients.

References

The Indian Express| Mera Yuva Bharat

Report card on the Performance of Information Commissions in India 2022-23

Recently, a citizens' group has compiled a report on the performance of information commissions across the country.

- It is a compilation of the information accessed under the RTI Act and the performance of Information commissioners (ICs) across the country.
- **Objective** - To improve the functioning of commissions and strengthening the Right to

Information (RTI) regime.
- **Released by** - Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS).

Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS) or Society for Citizens Vigilance Initiatives (SCVI), set up in 2003, is a citizens' group working to promote transparency and accountability in government functioning and to ensure active participation of citizens in governance.

Key findings of the report

- **Vacancies in Information Commissions -** Several IC's have been functioning at reduced Capacity.
  - 4 IC's are non-operational without commissioners.
  - 6 Information Commissions are currently headless that includes the CIC and 5 SIC.
- **Backlogs** - It is steadily increasing in commissions with over 3 lakh pending in 27 IC's as of June 2023.
  - **Maharashtra** SIC had the highest number.
- **Time required for disposal**
  - West Bengal SIC would take 24 years & 1 month to dispose a matter.
- **Penalties imposed –** ICs imposed penalty in an extremely small fraction of the cases in which penalty was imposable.
  - Uttar Pradesh imposed the highest amount of penalty.
- **Lack of Transparency** – Despite the statutory obligation, 19 out of 29 ICs (66%) have not even published for 2021-22.
  - 26% of ICs have not made their latest annual report available on their website.

References

1. The Hindu| Report card on Information Commissions
2. SNSINDIA| Key findings of the report

Royalty Rates for Critical Minerals

Recently, the Cabinet has approved royalty rate in respect of 3 critical and strategic minerals.

- It is done by amending the *2nd Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957* (MMDR Act).
- The Act currently specifies a *royalty rate of 12%* of the average sale price (ASP) for minerals that are not specifically listed in that Schedule which is much higher than global benchmarks.
- Ministry of mines has devised a method to calculate the ASP of these critical minerals, which will help in determining bid parameters.

Reduced Royalty Rates
3% for lithium
3% for niobium
1% for Rare Earth Elements (REEs)

- **Critical minerals**- Minerals which are essential for economic development and national security, the lack of availability of these minerals, extraction or processing of these minerals in few geographical locations may lead to supply chain vulnerability and disruption.
- **Significance** – It will allow the centre to auction lithium, niobium and REEs blocks for the 1st time in the country.
- It will *encourage indigenous mining* and thereby *reduce imports*.
- It effectively aligns India's royalty rates with global benchmarks.

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has established "inferred" lithium resources of 5.9 million tonnes in Salal-Haimana area of Reasi District of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023

- It came into force in August 2023.
- Delisted 6 minerals (including lithium bearing minerals and niobium) from the list of 12 atomic minerals, allowing concessions for these minerals to private sector through auction.
- Mining lease and composite license of 24 critical and strategic minerals shall be auctioned by the central government.

References

Livemint| Royalty rates for critical minerals

Other important news
Operation Ajay • It is an operation to repatriate the Indians from conflict hit ***Israel*** done by Ministry of External Affairs, India. • There are around 18,000 Indians in Israel including students, professionals and traders.
Phonotaxis • It is the movement of an animal in response to sound. • It has mostly been observed among crickets, moths, frogs, and toads, among a few other creatures. • While positive type of phonotaxis are used to attract females (ex- Mediterranean house geckos), negative phonotaxis are used to repel or warn.

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

• ICRISAT has partnered with the One Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) recently by signing CGIAR Integration Framework Agreement (IFA).
• ICRISAT is a Hyderabad based international research institute to address the challenges of hunger, malnutrition, poverty.
• It focusses on Tropical dryland agrifood system innovation.

Makhir ginger

• It is a unique traditional ginger variety of Meghalaya.
• It is also known as “Sying Makhir” or “Ing Makhir”.

Lakadong turmeric

• It is a variety of turmeric that is found in the Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya.
• It is known as the world's best turmeric due to its high curcumin content with 7-12%.
• Curcumin has numerous health benefits, including anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Ayyampalayam Nettai

• It is a disease-resistant, drought-resistant coconut variety native to Ayyampalayam in Dindigul district of ***Tamil Nadu***.
• The trees have more than *60% oil content* and an extremely sweet kernel.
• It promotes ***intercropping***

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