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Kolhapuri chappal

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in News?

The Italian luxury fashion house Prada stirred up controversy when its models launched the men's spring-summer 2026 collection wearing leather slippers strikingly similar to Kolhapuri chappals.

- **The recent issue -** Kolhapuri chappals have a geographical indication (GI) tag that certifies how a product originates from a specific geographical area and possesses qualities or a reputation due to that origin.
- A GI tag helps preserve traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and the livelihoods of its local practitioners.

  The Kolhapuri chappals received GI designation on December 11, 2018, granted to four districts each in **Maharashtra and Karnataka**.

- Although Prada doesn't call the footwear Kolhapuri or credit their origin as an inspiration for their line, it is reported to be selling them at many times the price for which one can typically buy a pair in India.
- The manufacturers of Kolhapuri chappals are reportedly planning to move court against Prada's allegedly unethical business practice.
- The chappal makers argue that the design of Prada's footwear amounts to cultural appropriation, and a violation of the GI tag because it is too close to the original Kolhapuri.

  Cultural appropriation refers to the practice of a designer or fashion house taking elements from another culture and incorporating them into their work, often claiming they were acting unknowingly.

- **GI Tag and its Protection**

- **Geographical Origin Link** - The product must originate from a specific place and its quality, reputation, or characteristics must be essentially attributable to that geographical origin.
- **Defined Production Standards** - Detailed production methods, materials and quality benchmarks must be specified in the application.
- **Registered Proprietors & Authorized Users** - Only those entities (for example, producer groups, associations, or cooperative societies) that are registered as authorized users can legally use the GI.
- **Prohibition on Transferability** - GI tags are non-transferable and cannot be licensed like trademarks.
- **Enforcement and Monitoring** - Owners and governments are expected to monitor misuse and initiate legal action against counterfeiting or false usage.
- **No Generic Term Usage** - A GI should not be or become a generic name for a product.
- **Challenges to protect traditional crafts** - Protecting traditional crafts is difficult because the intellectual property (IP) systems that exist today were *designed for individual innovation, not collective heritage.*
- IP protections and systems require a known, identifiable creator or inventor.
- Traditional crafts are usually created collectively by a community over time.
- Traditional crafts are ancient, widely known, and already in the public domain, so they fail the novelty test.
- Many traditional crafts are passed down orally, without records, drawings, or technical details.
- IP systems rely heavily on documentation to verify and protect rights.
- Most IP protections, except trademarks, have a smaller life of protection, whereas traditional crafts need perpetual protection, which is incompatible with such limits.

Reference

The Indian Express | Kolhapuri chappal

Operation Deep Manifest

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seizes Pakistani-origin goods worth Rs 9 crore under 'Operation Deep Manifest'

- **Operation deep manifest –** It is a targeted enforcement operation by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
- **Aim** – To intercept and seize **illicit Pakistani-origin goods** being routed into India via third countries, mainly the UAE.
- **Reason for the operation –** India imposed a complete ban on direct and indirect import/transit of Pakistani-origin goods after the Pahalgam terror attacks.
- The ban came into effect on **May 2, 2025**, replacing the earlier 200% customs duty on Pakistani goods.
- The operation enforces this **zero-tolerance policy** on economic ties with Pakistan.
- **Key seizure details** – 39 containers seized at Nhava Sheva port contained 1,115 metric tonnes of goods of total estimated value of Rs 9 crore.
- The goods were dry dates falsely declared as UAE-origin but traced back to **Karachi, Pakistan**, via Dubai.
- **Modus operandi –** Importers mis declared the origin of goods who were using Jabel Ali port as a transhipment point for Pakistani-origin goods attempting to enter India under false declaration.

  Jebel Ali Port is located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the largest port in the Middle East and one of the world's busiest ports.

- Manipulated in shipping documents and financial trails linked to Pakistani entities were detected, indicating illicit financial flows.
- **Significance** – It is the part of DRI's enhanced enforcement drive after Operation Sindoor.
- DRI is employing data analytics and intelligence gathering to monitor suspect consignments.
- It reflects India's commitment to economic and national security, especially in the context of regional threats.

Reference

DD News| Pakistani-origin goods seized under 'Operation Deep Manifest

SPREE Scheme

Prelims : Polity and governance | Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently, Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced the relaunch of SPREE Scheme in the 196th ESIC meeting in Shimla.

- **SPREE** – Scheme to Promote Registration of Employers/Employees
- **Launched in** – Originally launched in 2016 by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).
- **Aim** – It aims to bring unregistered employers and left-out workers under the ESI Act.
- **Relaunch –** Part of a broader ESIC drive to improve compliance, expand coverage, and reduce litigation.
- **Relaunch period –** July 1 to December 31, 2025.
- **Beneficiaries –** Unregistered employers and informal sector workers, including,
    - Temporary staff
    - Contractual employees
- Those enrolling during the window are considered covered from their stated or actual registration date.

Other Major ESIC Decisions

- **Amnesty scheme 2025** – It is a limited-time opportunity that offers employers an opportunity to settle long-standing disputes and avoid litigation.
- It is active from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.
- It includes cases involving interest and damages.
- Regional Directors empowered to withdraw cases where dues are cleared.
- **Job loss claims relaxation** – ESIC Director General can grant relaxations for late claims under the Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana.

    The Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana (RGSKY) is an unemployment allowance scheme launched by the ESIC in 2005.

- **Revised AYUSH Policy –** Integration of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy into ESI hospitals.

- **Healthcare in underserved areas –** Pilot project to partner with charitable hospitals in remote districts.

Reference

The Times of India| ESIC on Friday relaunched the SPREE scheme

Synthetic Human Genome Project

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Science and technology

Why in news?

Recently a UK-based laboratory started Synthetic Human Genome Project initiative to construct human DNA from scratch.

- **Synthetic Human Genome Project** – It is considered a world-first project in **synthetic** human DNA construction.
- **Initiative by** – It is led by researchers from the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge.
- **Aim** – It aims to assemble **artificial chromosomes** in the lab.
- **Objectives –** To explore how genes govern repair, development, and illness.
- To enable the creation of disease-resistant cells that can help regenerate damaged organs like the heart, liver, and immune system.
- **Funding** – It is backed by an initial grant of £10 million from the Wellcome Trust, the world's largest medical charity.
- **Relevance on Human Genome Project –** The Synthetic Human Genome Project builds directly on the Human Genome Project achievements.
- While the Human Genome Project focused on reading existing DNA, the synthetic project aims to construct human DNA from scratch, including artificial chromosomes.
- **Potential benefits** – It could revolutionise treatment for genetic disorders and age-related diseases.
- It opens the possibility of new therapies to improve health and longevity.
- It could lead to breakthroughs in creating disease-resistant cells for repairing organs like the heart, liver, and immune system.
- **Ethical concerns and risks –** Fears of creating **designer humans** or **synthetic life** with unforeseen consequences.
- Risk of misuse for harmful purposes, including **biological warfare**.

- Concerns about who controls and regulates synthetic human DNA technology.
- **Ethical oversight mechanism** – A parallel mechanism is established, which involves sociologists, ethicists, and public consultations to understand public perceptions, benefits, and concerns.

Reference

The Indian Express| Synthetic Human Genome Project

Revised Guidelines for Waste-to-Energy Projects

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in news?

Recently the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) issued the Revised Guidelines under the National Bioenergy Programme.

- **National Bioenergy Programme** – It is launched by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- **Objectives –** To promote the use of **bioenergy technologies** for clean energy generation.
- It supports efficient use of biomass, biogas and industrial/agricultural waste for energy production.
- It contributes to India's Net-Zero Emissions target by 2070.
- **Sub schemes** – It includes sub-schemes for:
  - Waste to Energy (WtE)
  - Biogas Programme
  - Biomass Programme
- **Waste-to-Energy (WtE) Project** – It facilities to convert urban, industrial, agricultural, and municipal waste into useful energy such as biogas, compressed biogas (CBG), or electricity.

Revised Guidelines

- MNRE announced to make the ecosystem efficient, transparent, and performance-driven.
- It focuses on reducing paperwork and easing approval processes.
- **Central Financial Assistance (CFA) structure –** CFA is now released in

two stages,

- 50% on obtaining Consent to Operate from State Pollution Control Board (with bank guarantee).
- Remaining 50% after achieving 80% of rated capacity or maximum eligible capacity.
- **Pro-rata CFA** – It is available for plants performing between 50-80% of capacity.
- No CFA for plants with less than 50% plant load factor.
- **Time flexibility for claiming CFA –** Developers can claim CFA within 18 months from the date of commissioning, or date of in-principal CFA approval, whichever is later.

Reference

DD News| Revised Guidelines for Waste-to-Energy Projects

