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29 OCTOBER 2025

EN-BUZZER

Daily News Analysis

For IAS/IPS/IFS Coaching - Call us at 7994058393

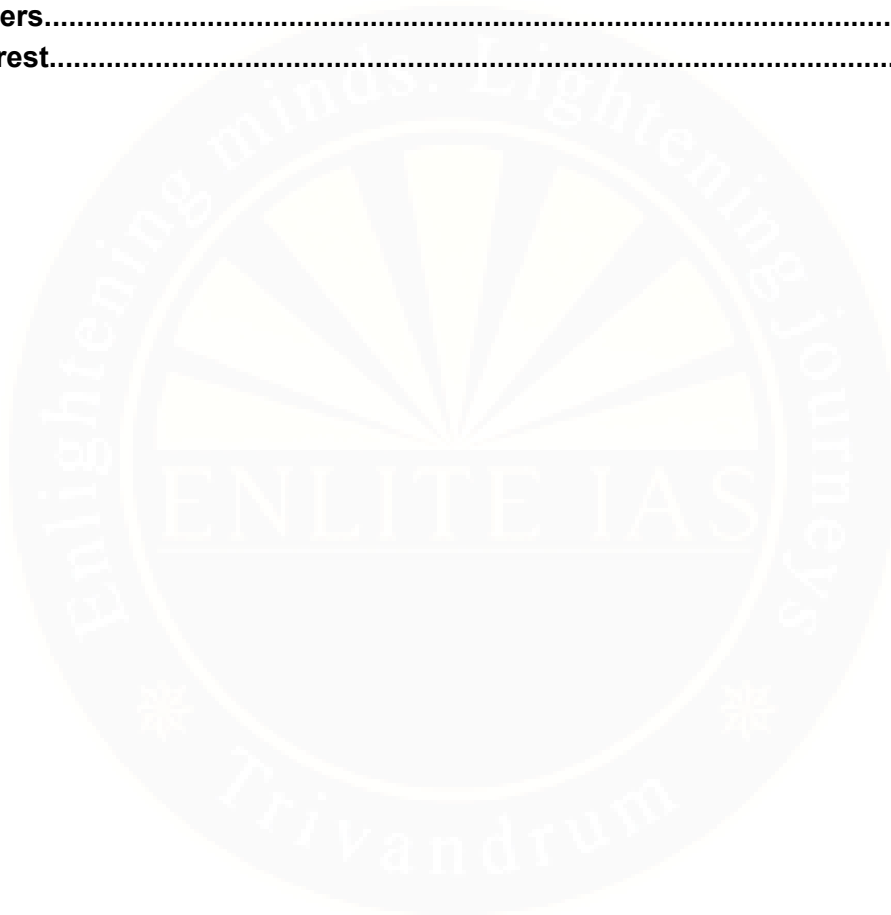
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1. Fertilizer Subsidy in India

- Prelims - Fertilizer Subsidy in India
- Mains - GS 3 - Economy

Why in the news?

- The Union Cabinet decided to increase fertilizer subsidy for the ongoing rabi crop of this winter season

Fertilizer Subsidy in India

- What is fertilizer?:

- A fertilizer is a natural or artificial substance containing chemical elements (such as Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K)) that improve the growth and productiveness of plants.
- There are 3 basic fertilizers in India - Urea, DAP, and Muriate of Potash (MOP).

- What is fertilizer subsidy?:

- A fertilizer subsidy is **financial support** provided by the government to the agricultural sector for the purchase of fertilizers. In India, agriculture is a vital sector employing a significant portion of the population.

- The fertilizer subsidy in India has two components:

- ★ **Urea subsidy** - Urea is the most widely used nitrogenous fertilizer in India, accounting for about 80% of the total consumption. Urea is sold at a statutorily notified uniform maximum retail price (MRP).

- ★ **Nutrient Subsidy (NBS) scheme** - The Nutrient Subsidy (NBS) scheme was introduced in 2010 to replace the earlier administered pricing system for decontrolled phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilizers. Under the NBS scheme, the government fixes a per kg subsidy rate for each nutrient, i.e., nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potash (K), and sulfur (S), based on their nutrient content, international and domestic prices, and exchange rate.

- Features of fertilizer subsidy:

- The fertilizer subsidy is one of the largest subsidies given by the central government, accounting for about 10% of its total expenditure on subsidies.



- It is highly skewed towards urea, which accounts for about 70% of the total subsidy, while P&K fertilizers account for about 30%.
- The government provides subsidies either directly to farmers or fertilizer manufacturers and also regulates both the distribution and pricing of fertilizers.
- Subsidies play a crucial role in stabilizing fertilizer prices.
- **Significance of fertilizer subsidy:**
 - The fertilizer subsidy has played a crucial role in enhancing food security and agricultural growth in India by increasing crop yields and reducing dependence on imports.
 - It has contributed to poverty reduction and rural development by improving farm incomes and the livelihoods of millions of farmers.
 - It has helped to maintain macroeconomic stability by reducing the fiscal deficit and current account deficit through lower imports and higher exports of agricultural commodities.
 - It has supported the domestic fertilizer industry by providing incentives for production, investment, and innovation.
- **Issues related to fertilizer subsidy:**
 - Subsidizing fertilizers leads to overuse and leads to falling in soil quality in the long run.
 - Fertilizer subsidies are damaging the fiscal health of the economy.

Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme

- **Aim:** Aimed at providing subsidies to fertilizer manufacturers based on the nutrient content of the fertilizers they produce.
- **Features:**
 - Subsidies Based on Nutrient Content: Encourages production and use of fertilizers with higher nutrient content (N, P, K, S) by linking subsidies to nutrient levels.
 - Price Control: Regulates the Maximum Retail Selling Price (MRSP) of fertilizers, ensuring affordability for farmers.
 - Promotion of Balanced Fertilization: Advocates for the appropriate application of nutrient combinations to enhance crop productivity and soil health.

2. Philippines

- **Prelims** - Location of Philippines
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

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Philippines

Why in the news?

- Malaysia handed over the chairmanship of ASEAN to the Philippines, with territorial disputes in the South China Sea set to dominate its agenda when Manila takes charge in 2026.

Philippines

- **Location:** It is an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia which is situated in the western Pacific Ocean
- **Capital:** Manila
- **Bordering Waterbodies:** South China Sea, Philippine Sea, Celebes Sea.
- **Maritime Border Countries:** Taiwan, Japan, Palau, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and China.
- **Highest mountain:** Mount Apo
- **Geographical Significance:** Situated on the western fringes of the **Pacific Ring of Fire** and it is a seismically active zone
- **Climate:** **Tropical maritime climate** that is usually hot and humid.
- **International Cooperation**
 - Philippines is a **founding member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)**, and is a member of the East Asia Summit, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Group of 24, and the Non-Aligned Movement.
 - The Philippines has claims in the Spratly Islands which overlap with claims by China, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam

PHILIPPINES

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 7994058393
 www.enliteias.com | enliteias@gmail.com

3. Sudan

- **Prelims** - Location of Sudan
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

Sudan



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Why in the news?

- Reports emerged detailing ethnically driven atrocities in the western Sudanese city of El-Fasher following its capture by paramilitary forces.

Sudan

- **Location:** Sudan is a East African country.
- **Capital:** Khartoum
- **Border Countries:** Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Red Sea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan.
- **Bordering Waterbodies:** Red Sea, Lake Nubia on the Sudanese-Egyptian border.
- **Rivers:** The **Blue Nile** and **White Nile** rivers meet in **Khartoum** to form the **Nile**, which flows northwards through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Climate:** Savannah Climate



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4. PM - POSHAN

- Prelims - PM - POSHAN
- Mains - GS 2 - Social Justice

Why in the news?

- Seven States and Union Territories have formally requested the Centre to broaden the scope of the PM-POSHAN scheme in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP), by adding breakfast to school meals.

PM - POSHAN

- **Launch:** It was launched in 2021 by replacing the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education
- **Objective:** To improve the nutritional status of school-going children, enhance enrolment, retention, and attendance, and encourage healthy eating habits among students.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Coverage:** All students of Bal Vatika to Class VIII in Government and Government-aided schools.
 - **Meal Provision:** One hot cooked meal per school day.
 - **Nutritional Norms:**
 - ★ Primary (Class I–V): 450 kcal & 12 g protein
 - ★ Upper Primary (Class VI–VIII): 700 kcal & 20 g protein
 - **Financial Assistance:**
 - ★ 90:10 for NE & Himalayan States
 - ★ 60:40 for other States
 - ★ 100% for UTs (without legislature)
 - **Infrastructure Support:**
 - ★ Construction/maintenance of kitchen sheds, cooking devices, and utensils.
 - ★ Digitized monitoring through **PM POSHAN portal** and **mobile app**.
 - **Other features:**
 - ★ Encourages use of **local vegetables, millets, pulses, etc.**



★ Promotes **social equity**- meals served to all children without discrimination.

★ **Tithi Bhojan**: Community participation through voluntary meal contributions.

- **Special provisions:**

- **Nutrition Gardens** in schools to provide fresh produce.
- **Women's SHGs and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** engaged in meal preparation and supply.
- **Millet inclusion** in line with the International Year of Millets (2023).
- **Mid-day Meal Rules (2021)**: Emphasize food safety, quality testing, and school health cards.

- **Expected Outcomes:**

- Improved nutritional and health outcomes.
- Increased attendance and learning outcomes.
- Strengthened community ownership and nutrition security for school children.

- **Associated Initiative:**

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan** (overall nutrition mission).
- **School Health and Wellness Programme** under Ayushman Bharat.
- **Eat Right India Movement** by FSSAI.



5. Cyclonic Landfall

- Prelims -Cyclonic Landfall
- Mains - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- Cyclone Montha made landfall in the Andhra Pradesh coast.

Cyclonic Landfall

- **What is it?:**
 - As per IMD a landfall occurs when the centre or eye of a tropical cyclone crosses the coast from sea to land.
 - A direct hit may occur when the cyclone's eyewall (zone of strongest winds) touches land even if the eye remains offshore.
- **Causes:**
 - High-velocity winds
 - Heavy precipitation
 - Coastal inundation due to storm surge
- **Impact:**
 - Extensive damage to kutcha houses
 - Power and communication lines disrupted
 - Rail and road traffic interruptions
 - Flying debris, uprooted trees
 - Flooding from intense rainfall and storm surges
- **Duration:** Landfall may last a few hours, depending on cyclone size and movement speed.
- **Post-Landfall Effects:**
 - Cyclones lose intensity after landfall due to:
 - ★ Decreased moisture supply from sea
 - ★ Increased surface friction over land
 - Marks the beginning of cyclone dissipation, though heavy rain may continue inland.



6. Red Sanders

- Prelims - Red Sanders
- Mains - GS 3 - Environment

Red Sanders



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Why in news?

- The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), under India's Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework, has released ₹55 lakh to 18 farmers cultivating Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*).

Red Sanders

- **Location:** Indian endemic tree species, with a restricted geographical range in the Eastern Ghats region of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Geographical Conditions Required:** It usually grows in rocky, degraded and fallow lands with Red Soil and a hot and dry climate.
- **Threats:** Illicit felling for smuggling, forest fires, cattle grazing
- **Reasons for Illicit Felling for Smuggling:** High in demand across Asia, particularly in China and Japan, for use in cosmetics and medicinal products as well as for making furniture, woodcraft and musical instruments.
- **Protection Status:**
 - IUCN Red List - Endangered
 - CITES - Appendix II
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972- Schedule IV

The potential and the problem



1,000 metric tonnes

The annual market demand for Red Sanders

Rs 50 lakh - 1 cr

The price commanded by a tonne of this timber in international markets

50-80%

The population decline in this species over the last 3 generations



Distribution of Red Sanders in India

1,000 sq km

The area of occupancy by Red Sanders that's endemic to the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh



60-100 years

For Red Sanders to reach good harvestable width

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7. Digital Arrest

- Prelims - Digital Arrest
- Mains - GS 3 - Internal Security

Why in the news?

- The Supreme Court suggested assigning the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate the growing menace of digital arrests carried out by fraudsters impersonating Judges and police officers using forged documents.

Digital Arrest

- **What is it?:** Digital Arrest is a recent cyber scam where fraudsters impersonate law enforcement or government officials using digital platforms to extort money from victims by generating fear and intimidation, which is a form of organized cyber fraud targeting vulnerable individuals.
- **Modes Operandi:**
 - Scammers pose as police, CBI, ED, or judicial authorities and contact victims via phone calls, emails, or messaging apps, claiming involvement in crimes like money laundering, drug trafficking, or sharing explicit content.
 - Tactics include sending official-looking arrest warrants, fabricated evidence (sometimes using deepfake technology), conducting fake court proceedings via video call, and continuous digital surveillance.
 - The victim is coerced to transfer money or share sensitive personal and financial information under threats of immediate arrest and legal actions.
- **Vulnerable Targets:**
 - Targets include senior citizens, less tech-savvy individuals, and people under immediate stress or fear, who comply due to the urgency and authority projected by criminals.
 - Scammers isolate victims by preventing them from contacting family or real officials, and use psychological manipulation, intimidation, and technical tools like AI voices and deepfakes to make the scam credible.
- **Impact on the Society:**
 - Financial losses are substantial: e.g., first quarter 2024 losses via “digital arrest” scams were reported at ≈ ₹120.30 crore.



- Several high-value cases: e.g., a scam involving a high-net-worth individual where fraudsters staged a fake Supreme Court hearing and extorted money via “digital arrest” threats.
- The damage is not just financial but also psychological: victims intimidated, coerced, told to stay isolated, which underscores the fraudulent “virtual detention” dimension.
- **Legal Status and Provisions:**
 - No provision of ‘Digital Arrest’ exists in Indian law or the Indian Penal Code; all claims of online “arrest” by law enforcement are fraudulent.
 - Enforcement and detection are challenging due to cross-border call spoofing, multiple intermediaries, anonymity of fraudsters, delayed reporting, and victims’ fear/embarrassment.
 - Recent government and police advisories stress public awareness, digital literacy, and cautious behavior when receiving suspicious calls or messages.
 - The CBI is considering nationwide, uniform investigations, and the judiciary urges legislation and resource support for efficient cybercrime management.
- **Way Forward:**
 - Use of various provisions of IPC and IT Act against Digital Arrest
 - ★ Information Technology Act, 2000: e.g., section 66C (identity theft), 66D (cheating by personation using computer resource).
 - ★ Indian Penal Code (IPC): e.g., section 415 (cheating), section 503 (criminal intimidation), section 419 (cheating by personation) etc.
 - Amend IT act to incorporate provisions related to prosecution in cases of Digital arrests.
 - Increase citizen awareness regarding the arising digital threats and how to manage them.
 - Use official portals: e.g., national cybercrime helpline 1930 (India) for reporting.
 - Strengthening international cooperation and cyber-forensics to track perpetrators across borders.