

DGTR recommends withdrawal of anti-dumping duty on viscose

Reference news

- The [Directorate General of Trade Remedies \(DGTR\)](#) has suggested the withdrawal of the anti-dumping levy on viscose staple fibre originating in or exported from Indonesia or China and imported by India.

Next Analysis-

What is Dumping?

Dumping is a process wherein a company (Ex: Chinese Firm X) exports a product (for Ex: to India) at a price that is significantly lower than the price it normally charges in its home (China) market.

What is Anti-Dumping Duty?

- An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are dumped.
- This is done with the rationale that these products have the potential to undercut local businesses and the local economy.
- According to global trade norms, including WTO, a country is allowed to impose anti-dumping duty to provide a level-playing field to domestic manufacturers.
- The duty is imposed only after a thorough investigation by a quasi-judicial body, such as DGTR (Ministry of Commerce & industry) in India.
- While the intention of anti-dumping duties is to save domestic jobs, these tariffs can also lead to higher prices for domestic consumers.
- In the long-term, anti-dumping duties can reduce the international competition of domestic companies producing similar goods.

Different from Countervailing Duty (CVD):

- Countervailing Duties (CVDs) are tariffs levied on imported goods to offset subsidies made to producers of these goods in the exporting country (Ex: China).
- CVDs are meant to level the playing field between domestic producers of a product and foreign producers of the same product who can afford to sell it at a lower price because of the subsidy they receive from their government

Exercise Talisman Sabre

Reference news:

Australia is keen that India join its biggest war games 'Exercise Talisman Sabre' in 2023.

- Quad group of countries, comprising India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., are also set to hold the annual Malabar naval exercise 2021 off the coast of Guam towards August-end. Australia was included in the Malabar 2020.

What is Exercise Talisman Sabre?

- Exercise Talisman Sabre is a biennial, multinational military exercise led by Australia and the United States.
- Leadership of the exercise switches between Australia and the US every 2 years.
- The exercise focuses on crisis-action planning and contingency response, enhancing both nations' military capabilities to deal with regional contingencies and the War on Terrorism.
- The exercise is historically held in odd-numbered years starting from 2005, with the ninth iteration taking place in 2021.
- Talisman Sabre 2021 was the largest bilateral combined training activity between the Australian and the USA and saw the participation of approximately 17,000 military personnel from seven

nations on land, air and sea. The other countries include Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and U.K.

What is Quad?

- The Quadrilateral security dialogue or [Quad](#) was first mooted by the Japanese Prime Minister in 2007.
- However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- In November 2017, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending "Quad" Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).
 - Australia is worried about China's growing interest in its land, infrastructure and politics and influence on its universities.
 - In the last decade, Japan believes that China has tried to bully it on several territorial issues.
 - China has border disputes with India. China is also blocking India's path into the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
 - A weakened US sees the coalition as an opportunity to regain its influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- India has been hesitant about the Quad, in part because it does not want to isolate China and because it has had a history of staying clear of security alliances.

Governor's pardon power overrides 433A: SC

Reference news: The Supreme Court recently held that the Governor of a State can pardon prisoners, including those on death row, even before they have served a minimum 14 years of prison sentence.

- Section 433A mandates that a prisoner's sentence can be remitted only after 14 years of jail
- According to the judgement, the [Governor's power to pardon](#) overrides Section 433A provision in the Code of Criminal Procedure
- It also noted that Section 433A of the Code cannot and does not in any way affect the constitutional power conferred on the President/Governor to grant pardon under Articles 72 or 161 of the Constitution.

Next Analysis-

- Article 72 deals with the power of the president to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.
- Article 161 deals with the power of the governor to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.
- The Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

Important value additions:

- Governors can only pardon in the cases which are related to state's law not the central law.
- Governor can reduce the sentence or can completely pardon it. It is up to him but cases must be within that state's law.
- He doesn't have any power if the offender has been awarded with the death sentence, whether by the state's law or central law. If the capital punishment has been given then only president of India can pardon it however governor can delay it.

- Governor doesn't have any power on matters related to military rules like court-martial, however the president can pardon or alter them too.

Sabki Yojna Sabka Vikas

Reference news-

People's Plan Campaign titled 'Sabki Yojna Sabka Vikas', for inclusive and holistic preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) was launched from 2nd October, 2020 to 31st January, 2021.

It was also launched in 2018 and 2019 for the same amount of period.

What are the features of the campaign?

- In this endeavor, convergence was sought with all Departments relating to 29 devolved subjects listed in XIth Schedule of the Constitution.
- **Objectives:**
 - Strengthening of elected representatives and Self Help Groups
 - Evidence based assessment of progress made in 2020-21 and proposals for 2021-22 in all 29 subjects of XI Schedule
 - Public disclosure on Schemes, finances etc.
 - Preparation of inclusive, participatory and evidence based GPDP for 2021-22 through structured Gram Sabha involving supervisors
- The campaign aimed to help Gram Panchayats (GPs) in preparation of convergent and holistic GPDP through identification of sectoral infrastructural gaps in respective areas.

Do you know?

- The 11th Schedule of Indian Constitution was added in 1992 by the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act. This schedule contains 29 subjects. This schedule covers important topics such as Panchayat's powers, rural development, poverty alleviation, market, roads and drinking water etc.

Demand for Import of Genetically Modified Soy Seeds

Reference news-

The poultry industry is demanding a permit for the import of crushed genetically modified (GM) soy seeds for captive consumption of farmers from the Central government.

About GM Crops

- A GM or transgenic crop is a plant that has a novel combination of genetic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology.
 - For example, a GM crop can contain a gene(s) that has been artificially inserted instead of the plant acquiring it through pollination.
- Conventional plant breeding involves crossing of species of the same genus to provide the offspring with the desired traits of both parents.
- Bt cotton is the only GM crop that is allowed in India. It has alien genes from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) that allows the crop to develop a protein toxic to the common pest pink bollworm.
 - Herbicide Tolerant Bt (Ht Bt) cotton, on the other hand is derived with the insertion of an additional gene, from another soil bacterium, which allows the plant to resist the common herbicide glyphosate.
- In Bt brinjal, a gene allows the plant to resist attacks of fruit and shoot borers.

- In DMH-11 mustard, genetic modification allows cross-pollination in a crop that self-pollinates in nature.

What is the Status of GM Soy seeds in India?

- India allows the import of GM soybean and canola oil.
- Import of GM soya bean seeds has not been approved in India.
 - The main fear is that import of GM soya bean will affect the Indian soya bean industry by contaminating non-GM varieties.

What are the Reasons for the Demand?

- The outbreak of Covid-19 has created a massive crisis which led to an initial depletion of demand in chicken products owing to false news about the linkage between the virus and poultry products.
- This created an unwarranted financial crisis and led to the erosion of working capital (used for day-to-day operations).
- Since the last several months, high speculation activities in soya contracts on National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) has been disturbing the sector.
 - The NCDEX is an online commodities exchange dealing primarily in agricultural commodities in India.
- The rise in the soybean process had led to the skyrocketing of prices of eggs and chicken products in the retail market.
 - The import for the particular time frame will stabilise the raw material market.

Hunger Hotspots Report : FAO-WFP

Reference news-

Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) released a report named Hunger Hotspots – August to November 2021.

- The 2021 Global Food Crises Report released in May 2021 had already warned of acute food insecurity, soaring to a five-year high, pushing at least 155 million people into acute food insecurity in 2020.
- Major Hunger Hotspots: Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan, northern Nigeria and Yemen are among 23 countries where acute food insecurity will worsen from August through November, 2021.

Next Analysis-

What are the Factors causing food insecurity?:

- **Violence:** Population displacement, abandonment of agricultural land, loss of life and assets, disruption of trade and cropping and loss of access to markets caused by conflicts can worsen food insecurity.
- **Pandemic Shocks:** In 2020, almost all low- and middle-income countries were affected by the Pandemic-induced economic downturns.
- Natural Hazards
- Poor humanitarian access: Humanitarian access is limited in various ways, including administrative/bureaucratic impediments, movement restrictions, security constraints and physical constraints related to the environment.

India's initiatives in Ensuring Food Security

- National Food Security Mission
- **PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PM-GKAY):** It aimed at providing each person who is covered under the National Food Security Act 2013 with an additional 5 kg grains (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidised foodgrain already provided through the Public Distribution System (PDS).

- One Nation One Ration Card: It will address the poor state of hunger in India, as highlighted by the Global Hunger Index, where India has been ranked 102 out of 117 countries
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi: It intends to supplement the financial needs of the Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in procuring various inputs to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields, commensurate with the anticipated farm income at the end of each cycle.

Experts warn against mandatory food fortification

Reference news-

Experts have warned of the adverse impacts on health and livelihoods because of Food Fortification.

Next Analysis-

What's the issue?

- Centre has plans to mandatorily fortify rice and edible oils with vitamins and minerals.
- But, experts say adding a few synthetic micronutrients could harm the health of consumers.
- Instead, dietary diversity and higher protein consumption can solve the undernutrition problem in India.

Background

- 15 States have been identified for implementing Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme on Fortification of Rice & its distribution through Public Distribution System.
- The Pilot Scheme has been approved for a period of three years beginning 2019-2020.

What are the Issues associated with fortification?

- Evidence supporting fortification is inconclusive and certainly not adequate before major national policies are rolled out.
- Many of the studies which FSSAI relies upon to promote fortification were sponsored by food companies which would benefit from it, leading to conflicts of interest.
- Mandatory fortification would also harm the vast informal economy of Indian farmers and food processors, including local oil and rice mills, and instead benefit a small group of multinational corporations.
- Also, a major problem with chemical fortification of foods is that nutrients don't work in isolation but need each other for optimal absorption.

What needs to be done?

- Undernourishment in India is caused by monotonous cereal-based diets with low consumption of vegetables and animal protein.
- So, instead of fortification of food, dietary diversity is a healthier and more cost-effective way to fight malnutrition.

What is food fortification?

- According to the WHO, food fortification is defined as the practice of deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and to provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health.

Net Zero Carbon Target may not be enough

Reference News-

Independent charitable organization Oxfam has said that 'net zero' carbon targets that many countries have announced maybe a "dangerous distraction" from the priority of cutting carbon emissions. Which countries have recently announced net-zero targets?

- In 2019, the New Zealand government passed the Zero Carbon Act, which committed the country to zero carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner.
- In 2019, the UK's parliament passed legislation requiring the government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases by 100 per cent relative to 1990 levels by the year 2050.
- More recently, US president Joe Biden announced that the country will cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.
- The European Union too, has a similar plan, called "Fit for 55", the European Commission has asked all of its 27 member countries to cut emissions by 55 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030.
- China also announced that it would become net-zero by the year 2060 and that it would not allow its emissions to peak beyond what they are in 2030.

What is Net-Zero goal?

- Net-zero, which is also referred to as carbon-neutrality, does not mean that a country would bring down its emissions to zero.
- Rather, net-zero is a state in which a country's emissions are compensated by absorption and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.
- Absorption of the emissions can be increased by creating more carbon sinks such as forests, while removal of gases from the atmosphere requires futuristic technologies such as carbon capture and storage.
- This way, it is even possible for a country to have negative emissions, if the absorption and removal exceed the actual emissions. A good example is Bhutan which is often described as carbon-negative because it absorbs more than it emits.
- It is being argued that global carbon neutrality by 2050 is the only way to achieve the [Paris Agreement](#) target of keeping the planet's temperature from rising beyond 2°C compared to pre-industrial times.

What are the concerns expressed in recent Oxfam report?

- The report says that if the challenge of change is tackled only by way of planting more trees, then about 1.6 billion hectares of new forests would be required to remove the world's excess carbon emissions by the year 2050.
- Further, it says that to limit global warming below 1.5°C and to prevent irreversible damage from climate change, the world needs to collectively be on track and should aim to cut emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 from 2010 levels, "with the sharpest being made by the biggest emitters."
- Currently, countries' plans to cut emissions will only lead to a one per cent reduction by the year 2030.
- Significantly, if only land-based methods to deal with climate change are used, food prices are expected to rise even more. Oxfam estimates that they could rise by 80 per cent by the year 2050.
- Oxfam's report shows that if the entire energy sector -whose emissions continue to soar- were to set similar 'net-zero' targets, it would require an area of land nearly the size of the Amazon rainforest, equivalent to a third of all farmland worldwide

Conclusion

The Oxfam report emphasises that reducing emissions cannot be considered a substitute for cutting emissions and these should be counted separately.

Today's MCQ**1. Consider the following statements about dumping-**

1. Dumping is a process wherein a company exports a product.
2. The price that is significantly lower than the price it normally charges in its home market.

Select the correct statement using the code given below-

- (a) only 1
- (b) only 2
- (c) both 1 and 2
- (d) neither 1 nor 2

2. Consider the following factors causing food insecurity-

1. Violence
2. pandemic
3. natural hazard
4. poor humanitarian access

Select the correct answer using the codes given below-

- (a) only 1
- (b) only 2
- (c) both 1 and 2
- (d) neither 1 nor 2

3. Which organization has released Hunger Hotspot Report-

1. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
2. World Food Programme (WFP)

Select the correct answer using the codes given below-

- (a) only 1
- (b) only 2
- (c) both 1 and 2
- (d) neither 1 nor 2

4. Which of the following Genetically modified crop is allowed in India?

- (a) Bt cotton
- (b) Bt Brinjal
- (c) DMH-11 mustard
- (d) Herbicide Tolerant Bt (Ht Bt) cotton