

NEW E-WASTES RULES THREATEN JOBS, COLLECTION NETWORK

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (GOVERNMENT POLICIES & INTERVENTIONS), GS PAPER-III (ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION & DEGRADATION)

CONTEXT: Government has proposed a new framework for regulating e-waste in India that may upset informal sectors.

The **draft notification on e-waste rules** proposes to **do away with Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) and dismantlers** with all responsibility of recycling vested with authorized recyclers.

ABOUT E-WASTE

- E-Waste refers to **all items of electronic and electrical equipment (EEE) and its parts** that have been discarded by their owner as waste without the intent of re-use.
- **India is the third-largest e-waste generator in the world after China and the USA (Global E-waste Monitor 2020).**
- It is categorized into 21 types under two broad categories:
 1. **Information technology and communication equipment.**
 2. **Consumer electrical and electronics.**
- India's first e-waste clinic for segregating, processing, and disposal of waste from household and commercial units has been set-up in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.**

ABOUT THE ISSUE

- Under E-Waste Management Rules 2016, it is mandatory for the organization to comply with the **Extended producer responsibility of recycling e-waste**. Complying with that, most firms outsourced recycling to organizations called **Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)** (CPCB has registered 74 PROs)
- In May this year, Environment Ministry issued a draft notification that **does away with PRO and dismantlers** and vests all responsibility of recycling with **authorized recyclers**, only a handful of whom exist in India.
- Now, **Authorized Recyclers will source a quantity of waste, recycle it, and generate electronic certificates**. Companies can buy these certificates equivalent to their annual committed target and thus do not have to be involved with engaging PROs and dismantlers.

BENEFITS

- **Streamline and standardize** the system.

- **Introduce an Electronic management system** that would track the material that went in for recycling.
- **Make recycling remunerative:** Currently, the entire system is not remunerative for recyclers, who do the job of recycling.
- **Increase reliability:** The current system managed by PRO is not always reliable as there have been several instances of double-counting (where the same articles recycled once for one company are credited into the account for multiple companies).

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE MOVE

- **Job loss:** Several PROs have mailed their objections to the Environment Ministry arguing that dismantling a fledgling system was detrimental to the future of e-waste management in India and job loss.
- **Loss of investment** for established PROs.
- **Loss of accountability:** PROs provide check and balance against unauthorized recycling.

OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE DRAFT RULE

- **COVERAGE:** It covers manufacturer, producer, recycler, and refurbishers under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Framework who shall register on centralized portal of Central Pollution Control Board.
- EPR is a policy approach under which **producers are given a significant responsibility-financial/physical-for treatment or disposal of post-consumer products.**
- **TARGETS:** Consumer Goods Companies and makers are supposed to ensure at least 60% of e-waste generation as indicated in EPR plan by 2022-23, 70% by 2023-24, and 80% from 2024-25 onwards.
- **EPR CERTIFICATE GENERATION:** By CPCB through the portal for recycling and refurbishing.
- **TRADING:** Bring into effect a system of trading in certificates akin to carbon credits, that will allow companies to temporarily shore up shortfalls.

INDIA'S 'WHEAT WAIVER' WTO DEMAND

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-III (EFFECTS OF LIBERALIZATION ON THE ECONOMY)

CONTEXT: Recently, India demanded World Trade Organization (WTO) find a permanent solution to the issue of public stockholding (PSH) of food.

BACKGROUND

- **India's MSP policy** for procurement of produce (for supporting farmers' income as well as providing subsidized food for the poor) had fallen out of WTO rules.

- The PSH policy of India serves the twin objectives:
 1. **Offering remunerative prices to farmers**
 2. **Providing subsidized food to the underprivileged.**
- Under WTO law, such price support-based procurement from farmers is considered a **trade-distorting subsidy**.
- Currently, India has temporary relief due to a '**peace clause**' that bars countries from raising legal challenges against these subsidies.
- WTO's peace clause (**inserted in Bali Ministerial, 2013**) **protects India's food procurement programmes against action from WTO members in case the subsidy ceilings are breached.**
- India's concern is that WTO should have the policy space to hold public food stocks using the MSP. However, there is no mention of price support in the **Geneva declaration**.

CAN THE COUNTRY EXPORT PUBLIC STOCK HOLDING FOOD GRAINS?

- WTO prohibits countries from exporting foodgrain procured at subsidized prices. This is because:
 - a. Gives an **unfair advantage** in global agricultural trade.
 - b. A country will sell foodgrain in the international market at a very low price. This will **depress global prices** and have an **adverse impact on the agricultural trade of other countries**.
- Accordingly, in **paragraph 4 of the 2013 WTO decision on PSH for food security purposes**, countries procuring food for food-security purposes shall ensure that such procured food does not "**distort trade or adversely affect the food security of other Members**".
- This is also reflected in **paragraph 10 of the Geneva ministerial food security declaration**. The declaration states that countries may release surplus food stocks into the international market in accordance with WTO law. The WTO may agree to a temporary waiver to allow the export of wheat from public stockholdings given the ongoing food crisis in some countries.

STATUS OF PSH AT RECENT WTO MINISTERIAL MEETING

- India's demand for a permanent solution to the PSH policy has acquired a new dimension in the recent WTO meeting. The Russia-Ukraine war has unleashed a food crisis in many countries.
- India insists that it should also be allowed to export food, especially wheat, from the pool of foodgrain procured under the MSP.

WHAT CAN INDIA DO TO PROTECT ITS PSH POLICY?

- India should revisit its stand on asking for a waiver for wheat exports from its public stockholding. To help the food crisis in other countries, India can strengthen its commitment to the United Nations World Food Programme.
- India should focus on its core agenda of pushing for a permanent solution for its PSH programme to attain the goal of food security.
- India can lift the ban imposed on private traders to export wheat.

PRELIMS FACTS

ALPHA FOLD

- It is an **artificial intelligence (AI) tool**, developed by **DeepMind Technologies** (Google sister company), that has **predicted and published the structures of nearly all proteins**.
- **Proteins** are commonly referred to as **building blocks of life, made up of a combination of amino acids**.
- Researchers can use Alpha Fold to advance their work on critical issues including **sustainability, food insecurity, and neglected diseases**.

MOLECULAR MOTOR

- Scientists have built a **molecular-scale motor using the DNA origami method** (involves folding of DNA to create 2D and 3D objects at nanoscale).
- Molecular motors are a class of **proteins that drive intracellular movement** by converting chemical energy to mechanical work.
- Some examples of the role of molecular motors in our bodies are **muscle contractions, mitosis cell division etc**.

MILITARY EXERCISES

- **AL NAJAH-IV**: It is a joint military exercise between the **Indian Army and Royal Army of Oman**.
- **Ex VINBAX**: It is a bilateral army exercise between **India and Vietnam**.

INVASIVE SPECIES IN NEWS

VILAYATI KIKAR: Delhi is implementing ecological restoration of its central ridge that involves **replacing invasive species Vilayati Kikar (Prosopis juliflora) with indigenous species**.

A **native of South and Central America**, it was introduced in India by Britishers to meet the **fuel and wood requirement** of the rural poor as well as to restore degraded lands.

It has **weed like properties**-growth in arid conditions, killing any competition, and water table depletion.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE
Central ridge is spread **over 864 hectares**
423 hectares to be restored over 5 years
COST ₹12.6 crore

THE PROJECT
➤ The 'invasive' vilayati kikar and lantana to be replaced by native species
First phase of restoration: Between SP Marg and Vande Mataram Marg

HOW IT WILL BE DONE

- Native tree species to be planted around vilayati kikar
- Canopy openings to be created to allow sunlight to reach the forest floor
- Creepers to be used on vilayati kikar to naturally 'strangulate' it
- The dead tree will then be removed, once native species around it grow to a certain height

Map labels: Vande Mataram Marg, CENTRAL RIDGE, Rashtrapati Bhawan, SP Marg

AMERICAN BULLFROG AND BROWN TREE SNAKE: As per a recent study, these species cost the world an **estimated \$16 billion** between 1986 and 2020, by causing problems ranging from crop damage to power outages.



ORUNUDOI SCHEME

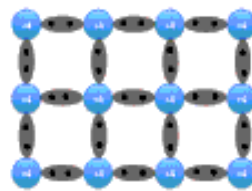
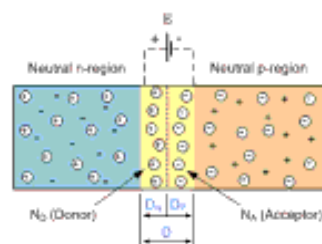
- Some 22 lakh beneficiaries of the Orunodoi scheme in Assam will get ₹18 extra for August to buy a National Flag or two.
- Launched in December 2020 by the Assam Government, Orunodoi scheme is one of the most popular schemes of the state.
- Under the scheme, a monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 is transferred to women members of marginalized families of Assam.

- On account of being a DBT, or a Direct Benefit Transfer scheme, the money is credited directly to the bank account of the woman head of a family because they are “primary caretakers of the household.”
- The scheme gives “a choice to the poor and needy households on how they want to spend their money.”

GUJARAT SEMICONDUCTOR POLICY 2022-2027

- **Gujarat is the first state in India to release a dedicated semiconductor policy.**
- The government has also proposed to develop a special ‘Semicon City’ as a part of the Dholera Special Investment region.
- Under the Gujarat Semiconductor Policy 2022-27, Gujarat Government will **provide heavy subsidies on power, water and land tariffs for entrepreneurs** who are interested in investing in semiconductors or display fabrication manufacturing in Gujarat.
- A semiconductor is a substance that has **specific electrical properties that enable it to serve as a foundation for computers and other electronic devices.** It is typically a solid chemical element or compound that conducts electricity under certain conditions but not others.

What is a Semiconductor?



 Electrical 4 U