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ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

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1 – About GI Tag for the Cashew Sector:

GS III

Indian Agriculture

- **Context:**

- The Goan cashew (kernel) was recently given a geographical indicator (GI) label.

- **GI Tag: What Is It?**

- Geographical Indication (GI) Tags serve as a unique designation applied to a town, state, or area.
- These tags are applied to certain goods, such as handicrafts or agricultural products, that represent the distinctiveness of that specific area or region.
- Chennai is home to the Geographical Indication Registry, which issues the tag.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 was passed by India, a WTO member nation.
- It became operative on March 1, 2003.
- The definition of Geographical Indications (GI) is "Indications that designate a good as originating in a member's territory, or in a region or locality within that territory, where a particular good's quality, reputation, or characteristic is primarily attributable to its geographic origin."
- When a product, name, or sign is granted a GI tag, it indicates that it is one-of-a-kind, has distinguishing features, and was created using traditional techniques that uphold the region's reputation.
- It also serves as a safeguard against copyright infringement of any kind.
- In India, Darjeeling tea was the first product to receive a GI label sometime in 2004 or 2005.

- **What does Goa's cashew sector stand to gain from the GI tag?**

- The GI marking would make it easier for customers to distinguish between real Goan cashews and cashews that are obtained outside of the state but are frequently sold as "Goan cashews."
- The Konkani word "kaju" or "caju" in Portuguese is where the term "Goan cashew" originated.
- Due to the flood of less expensive cashews, a number of Goan processors and manufacturers have forced to locate markets outside of the state, reduce output, or close plants since they are unable to sell all of their supply there.
- The drop in sales for traditional Goan cashew processors has also been attributed to higher minimum salaries and compliance standards compared to states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh.

- **How did cashew arrive in Goa and start to boost the local economy?**

- Originally from northeastern Brazil in Latin America, cashew was brought to Goa in the sixteenth century by the Portuguese (1570).
- When cashew was first brought to the shores of India, it was primarily recognised as a crop for reforestation and soil preservation.
- High-yielding kinds were brought in by Christian missionaries from Latin American nations, and they were widely grown in Goa.
- However, it wasn't until over a century following its introduction that cashew nuts' economic worth was recognised.
- Before Goa was granted independence in 1961, it exported processed cashew nuts valued at more than Rs 20 lakh per year. Some of these nuts were cultivated locally, while others were imported and processed into seven different units.
- Because of the cheaper import duty, attractive port dues, lower shipping and clearing costs, and lower rents, wages, and salaries, Europeans were encouraged to establish factories in Goa by the import of nuts from Portuguese East Africa.
- About 60% of Goa's industrial production by 1961 came from the cashew processing sector, the majority of which was exported.

- **Production of cashews in India:**

- With over 15% of global cashew exports, India is the world's top cashew exporter.
- India's main exports are cashew kernels and very little liquid cashewnut shell.
- India's top three importers of cashews are Japan and the Netherlands, with corresponding export shares of 13% and 9%.
- Cashew cultivation expanded throughout the Indian peninsula's coastal regions.
- States like Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Odisha, West Bengal, and certain areas of the Northeast are the primary growing regions for cashews.
- With 0.20 million tonnes (MT) produced annually in cashew nuts between 2021 and 2022, Maharashtra leads the world.

- *Source → The Hindu*

2 – USS Gerald R Ford:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**

- The USS Gerald R Ford carrier strike group was sent to the Eastern Mediterranean to support Israel following Hamas' surprise attack on the country.

- **Important characteristics:**

- The newest and most sophisticated aircraft carrier in the United States Navy is the \$18 billion nuclear-powered USS Gerald R Ford.
- The biggest warship ever constructed is the USS Gerald R. Ford.
- To put things in perspective, the USS Gerald R. Ford's deck could accommodate more than 4.5 Qutub Minars longitudinally.
- Additionally, while operating at full capacity, it moves 100,000 tonnes, or about four times the amount of steel needed to build the Howrah Bridge.
- In contrast, the INS Vikrant aircraft carrier from India weighs 45,000 tonnes when fully loaded.
- Because of its size, the carrier can accommodate up to 90 aircraft.
- A crew of more than 4,500 people is required to perform all tasks on the carrier (including those in charge of the ship, the air wing, and other support workers).
- In contrast, INS Vikrant employs about 1,650 people to manage a fleet of 36 aircraft.
- Like all aircraft carriers, the Gerald R. Ford always travels under the defensive cover of a carrier strike group (CSG), despite its aircraft and onboard defence equipment.
- The aircraft carrier, named for former US President Gerald R. Ford (in office 1974–77), went into service in 2017.

- *Source → The Hindu*

3 – Relations between India and Palestine:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**

- India hasn't made a statement in support of the Palestinians yet.

- **Why did India initially favour Palestine in its foreign policy?**

- In 1947, India abstained from voting in favour of UN Resolution 181 (II), which divided Mandatory Palestine between Palestinian Arabs and Jews.
- Instead, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru favoured a federal state where Jews and Arabs would have the greatest degree of liberty and Jerusalem would have a special status.
- This viewpoint was passed down to Nehru from Mahatma Gandhi, who opposed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine while having a great deal of sympathy for the Jewish people due to their past oppression.
- Even though India recognised Israel in 1950, formal ties were not established until 1992.
- In 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his first visit to Ramallah in the West Bank.

- **Why this position?**

- There was a substantial Muslim population in India.
- Muslims in India were generally sympathetic to the Arabs, and Indian politicians were especially receptive to their opinions after Partition.
- Leaders in India were also cautious about offending the Arab nations.
- India needed to take a similar stand to Pakistan, which was adamantly in favour of Palestine.

- **India's chance in its position:**

- It is important to consider the circumstances of the Cold War when analysing India's hesitation to open diplomatic ties with Israel until 1992.
- The P V Narasimha Rao government did not care about the repercussions with the Arab countries when it ultimately made the very audacious decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, only after the conclusion of the Cold War.
- Prime Minister Rao did not, however, renounce India's steadfast policy of supporting the Palestinian cause; he also kept up his outspoken support for the Palestinians.
- There is a perception that India's long-standing support for Palestine has not paid off in the country's best interests.
- Regarding the Kashmir dispute, Palestine has frequently provided Pakistan with unconditional backing.
- Nevertheless, India's official stance has not changed: India is in favour of a two-state solution in which Israel and Palestine coexist peacefully as neighbours.

- **Palestine and India's relationship:**

- An essential component of India's foreign policy is the country's support for the Palestinian cause.
- The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was acknowledged as the only authorised representative of the Palestinian people by India in 1974, making it the first non-Arab state to do so.

- India was among the first nations to recognise the state of Palestine in 1988.
- India established a Representative Office in Gaza in 1996; it moved to Ramallah in 2003.
- **Two-way Trade:**
 - Since Israel is the intermediary in commerce between India and Palestine, detailed trade statistics are not accessible.
 - Based on limited statistics, the yearly bilateral commerce between Palestine and India is estimated to be about US\$ 40 million.
- Indian exports: \$39 million in the US and
- Imports from India: \$83,000 USD.
- **India's exports consist of:**
 - marble, granite, and other stones; Basmati rice; coffee; cashew nuts; sugar; delicious biscuits; bags and sacks for product packaging; and so on.
 - The primary products exported by Palestine include virgin olive oil and its derivatives, dates, etc.
- *Source → The Hindu*

4 – Fact Check Unit:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**
 - In a series of petitions contesting the legitimacy of the Union Government's Fact Check Unit (FCU), the Bombay High Court postponed making a decision.
- **Regarding the FCU:**
 - The Information Technology Rules, 2021 were modified by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEiTY) with the promulgation of the 2023 IT Rules, which also gave the Ministry permission to establish a fact-checking unit.
- **What is stated in the amendment?**

- The amendment gives the Union Government the authority to control the online real money gambling sector, which includes apps for poker, rummy, and fantasy sports sites, as well as to appoint an official fact checker for misinformation and "fake news."
- The amendment significantly alters how intermediaries' responsibilities are handled.
- They now have a duty to use reasonable efforts to prevent users from hosting, displaying, uploading, changing, publishing, transmitting, storing, updating, or sharing any information that a Central government fact-checking unit deems to be fraudulent, false, or misleading with regard to any Central government business.
- Intermediaries run the danger of losing the safe harbour protection offered by Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000, if they don't follow this.
- Intermediaries are released from liability for any third-party information they host or make available under the safe harbour safeguard.

- **Who is going to verify the facts?**

- The Union Government may designate the Press Information Bureau's (PIB) fact-checking unit as its official fact-checking unit.
- For years, it has been "debunking" news items and WhatsApp forwards about Central Government ministries and programmes.

- **How will it operate?**

- Social media corporations will lose their "safe harbour" for such content if any news is reported as bogus, leaving them vulnerable to lawsuits and other legal action.
- Because social media businesses are considered as intermediaries under the Information Technology Act of 2000, they have historically enjoyed legal immunity for content submitted by users.
- They lose this status in accordance with the IT Rules, among other things, if they fail to promptly resolve customer concerns or lack a grievance officer for India.
- They will no longer enjoy safe harbour protection for posts that the government has identified as false information as a result of this modification.
- Changes to online games that cost real money.
- The amendment mandates that real money gaming services, in which users deposit funds with the prospect of winning them, obtain certification as "permissible" from a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB) made up of professionals and participants of the sector.

- **What real money games are acceptable?**

- Games that don't rely solely on chance would probably be acceptable for real money play.
- Any games that are not deemed "permissible" would be classified as "betting and gambling," which would subject them to prohibition from states that forbid such activities.

- **What distinguishes this organisation from other fact-checking organisations?**
- Currently, the body is being established to verify or refute false or deceptive news on the national government.
- It is not to be mistaken with a standard fact-checking organisation that dispels false information from the mainstream media.
- **What worries are these?**
- **Issues brought up by the modification:**
- Groups such as the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) and the Editors Guild of India were either not consulted or their opinions were not taken into consideration.
- By essentially issuing a takedown order to social media platforms and maybe other intermediaries, the fact check unit could circumvent the procedure outlined in Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000.
- The petitioners argue that the clause would allow for government-run internet censorship and give the government the authority to decide what constitutes the "truth" on the internet and to act as the judge, prosecutor, and executioner of such decisions.
- **What was said by the High Court?**
- Regardless of their good intentions, the modified Rules do not provide the required protections, as noted by the Bombay High Court.
- The Court stated that, on the surface, it appears that the Rules do not provide protection for legitimate forms of government criticism, such as parody and satire.
- The Court stated that if an amendment is determined to violate Article 14 of the Constitution by differentiating between false news about the government and other false news, the law's implications must be repealed.
- The Press Information Bureau (PIB) has been effectively fact-checking for years, therefore the Court questioned the sudden necessity for an FCU.
- The Court was taken aback by the lack of a clause in the Rules giving a disgruntled intermediary the chance to defend or explain the content that has been identified.
- The natural justice principles are broken by this.
- The Court expressed concern over the lack of redress or remedy available to users whose posts have been removed or whose accounts have been stopped by the intermediary following a flag by the FCU.
- **Source → The Hindu**

GS III

Environmental Conservation related issues

- **Context:**

- In light of the ongoing tensions between Israel and Palestine, the return of wild creatures like Dhib and Nimr is doubtful.

- **Regarding the animals:**

- The entire Arabian Peninsula is home to the Arabian wolf, Dhib (*Canis lupus arabs*), and the Arabian leopard, Nimr (*Panthera pardus nimr*).
- The two animals that have been mentioned in the peoples of the region's culture and folklore are known by their Arabic names, Dhib and Nimr.
- However, both species face severe threats in the northern portion of their range.
- Both used to be found in the deserts of the Holy Land, the Negev, which stretches from southern Israel to the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Judean desert, which is shared by Israel and the West Bank of Palestine.

- **Arabian leopard loss:**

- The historical range of the Arabian leopard has been lost, with populations severely fragmented and isolated.
- The entire northern range of the Arabian leopard, including all previous distribution zones on the Sinai Peninsula, the Negev, and the Judean Desert, is now extinct.

- **Arabian wolf loss:**

- After the Asiatic cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) became extinct and the Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*) almost went extinct over the previous several decades, the Arabian wolf is still the only apex predator in the majority of its habitat.
- The Arava Valley and Negev Desert in Israel, where wolves are well accepted and legislative protection is in place, are home to the only known stable population.

- **Source** → *The Hindu*