

### FROM OCT, SUBSIDISED FERTILISERS TO BE SOLD UNDER BRAND 'BHARAT'

#### In News:

- The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers has decided to implement **One Nation One Fertiliser** under the fertiliser subsidy scheme named “Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna” (PMBJP).
- As a result, from October, all subsidised fertilisers will be sold across the country under a single brand name — ‘Bharat’.

#### One Nation One Fertiliser Scheme

- Under the scheme, all fertiliser companies, State Trading Entities and Fertiliser Marketing Entities will be required to use a single “Bharat” brand for fertilisers and logo under the Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna (PMBJP).
  - PMBJP is the Centre’s fertiliser subsidy scheme.
- The single brand name for UREA, DAP, MOP and NPKS etc. would be BHARAT UREA, BHARAT DAP, BHARAT MOP and BHARAT NPK respectively.
- Also, a logo indicating Fertiliser subsidy scheme namely Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna will be used on said fertiliser bags.
  - Under the scheme, companies are allowed to display their name, brand, logo and other relevant product information only on one-third space of their bags.
  - On the remaining two-thirds space, the “Bharat” brand and Pradhanmantri Bharatiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana (PMBJP) logo will have to be shown.
- The scheme is aimed at bringing about uniformity in fertiliser brands across the country under the single brand name of ‘Bharat’.

#### Rationale behind this scheme

- **Government bears the burden of subsidy and it wants to send that message to farmers**
  - The maximum retail price of urea is currently fixed by the government, which compensates companies for the higher cost of manufacturing or imports incurred by them.
  - The MRPs of non-urea fertilisers are, on paper, decontrolled.

- But companies cannot avail of subsidy if they sell at MRPs higher than that informally indicated by the government.
- In other words, there are some 26 fertilisers (inclusive of urea), on which government bears subsidy and also effectively decides the MRP.
  - The fertiliser subsidy bill of the government is huge and only second to the food subsidy in terms of expenditure.
- It is expected to be over Rs. 2 lakh crore in 2022-23.
  - Hence, the government possibly felt that farmers should know the financial burden it incurs in providing fertilisers at a cheaper rate.
- **To reduce transport subsidies**
  - The government also pays manufacturers freight subsidies- or the cost of ferrying their products to the end-user.
  - The government decides where manufacturers can sell their products under the Fertiliser (Movement) Control Order, 1973.
  - However, due to the freight subsidy provided, manufacturers don't hesitate to sell across longer distances.
  - Hence, another argument for the launch of single-brand fertilisers is to reduce transport subsidies, estimated to be over ₹6,000 crore per year.
- **To curtail brand-wise demand for fertilisers in specific areas**
  - Using freight subsidy, manufacturers were involved in the criss-cross movement of fertilisers for longer distances.
  - A company producing fertiliser in UP was selling it to farmers in Maharashtra and vice versa.
  - This created brand-wise demand for fertilisers in specific areas leading to shortage of fertilisers in other areas.
  - At the same time, local manufacturers also suffered.
  - Hence, it was felt that if manufacturers stop selling urea distinctively under individual brands, there would be no need for Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) to move fertilisers across states.
- This will ensure uniform availability of fertilizers while reducing the transport subsidy bill.

## Criticism

- **Reduced role of manufacturers**
    - The scheme will disincentivise fertiliser companies from undertaking marketing and brand promotion activities.
    - They will now be reduced to contract manufacturers and importers for the government.
      - Any company's strength ultimately is its brands and farmer trust built over decades.
  - **Quality and efficiency might suffer**
    - Critics argue that completely commoditising fertilisers could impact their quality.
    - It might discourage manufacturers from bringing newer and more efficient products into the market as there will be less scope for building brand identity.
  - **Atmanirbharta in fertilizer sector might be affected**
    - The government has expressed targets to become "Atmanirbhar" or self-sufficient in fertilisers, which are currently imported in large proportions.
    - This might take a hit under the new scheme.
  - **Increased role of government**
    - Currently, in case of any bag or batch of fertilisers not meeting the required standards, the blame is put on the company.
    - But now, that may be passed on fully to the government.
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## SHAH: NIA TO HAVE OFFICES IN ALL STATES BEFORE '24 LS POLLS

### In News:

- Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Raipur branch office of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).
- At the occasion, he said that the Central government wanted NIA to become a federal crime investigation agency with offices in all states before the 2024 General Election.

### Background:

- Over the past several years, India has been the victim of large-scale terrorism sponsored from across the borders.
- A large number of such attacks are found to have complex inter-state and international linkages, and possible connection with other activities like the smuggling of arms and drugs, circulation of fake Indian currency, etc.
- Hence, a need was felt for setting up of an Agency at the Central level for investigation of offences related to terrorism and certain other Acts, which have national ramifications.
- Several experts and Committees, including the Administrative Reforms commission in its Report, had made recommendations for establishing such an Agency.

### **National Investigation Agency (NIA):**

- Accordingly, the NIA Act was enacted in 2008 and the National Investigation Agency was born.
- The Act gives the NIA powers to –
  - Take **Suo motu** cognisance of terror activities in any part of India and register a case,
  - Enter any state without permission from the state government, and
  - Investigate and arrest people.
- At present NIA is functioning as the **Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency** in India.
- **Jurisdiction** – Provisions of the NIA Act extend to the whole of India and also applies to Indian citizens outside the country.
- **Headquarters** – New Delhi
- **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Home Affairs

### **Functions of NIA:**

- In-depth professional investigation of scheduled offences using the latest scientific methods of investigation and setting up such standards as to ensure that all cases entrusted to the NIA are detected.
- Ensuring effective and speedy trial.
- Assist all States and other investigating agencies in investigation of terrorist cases.
- Build a data base on all terrorist related information and share the data base available with the States and other agencies.

## NIA (Amendment) Act, 2019:

- The 2019 NIA Amendment Act expanded the type of offences that the investigative body could investigate and prosecute.
- The agency can now investigate offences related to human trafficking, counterfeit currency, manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, cyber-terrorism, and offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.
- The amendment also enables the Central government to designate sessions courts as special courts for NIA trials.
- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment (UAPA), also passed in 2019, allows an NIA officer to conduct raids, and seize properties that are suspected to be linked to terrorist activities.
  - The NIA does not have to take permission of the Director General of Police of a state.
  - The investigating officer only requires sanction from the Director General of NIA.

## News Summary:

- Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Raipur branch office of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).
- At the occasion, the Union Home Minister said the NIA is working towards building ties with its foreign counterparts for better coordination in terror investigations.
- He said that the NIA will have branches in every state by May 2024 and the government has taken several steps in the past three years to make it an almost federal crime investigation agency.
- Left-wing extremism has shrunk from 120 districts to only 46 in the country.
- The cases taken up by NIA have a conviction rate of 94% now.

## POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR SUPREME COURT JUDGES

The Centre amended the Supreme Court Judges Rules the second time in a week to provide chauffeurs and domestic help for retired Chief Justices of India and Supreme Court judges for their entire lifetime.

**Exit benefits** | The government has announced a slew of extra retirement benefits for Chief Justices of India and Supreme Court judges

 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Domestic help and chauffeur for lifetime for retired CJIs and SC judges</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal security guard for 5 years for retired CJI and 3 years for SC judges</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lifetime secretarial assistant for retired CJI</li></ul>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Courtesies at airport lounges as per protocol to retired CJIs and SC judges</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monthly phone/Internet bill reimbursement up to ₹4,200</li></ul>	

## About:

- Retired CJIs would also get secretarial assistants. The staff would be paid the salary and allowances of regular employees of the Supreme Court.
- The first series of amendments in the Rules on August 23 had allowed retired Chief Justices of India and Supreme Court judges chauffeurs, secretarial assistants and security cover only for a year. There was no mention of “domestic help”, who would be an employee in the level of junior court assistant.
- The benefit of 24-hour security cover has been extended to five years for retired Chief Justices and three years for retired judges of the Supreme Court. The judiciary had recently raised concerns about attacks on judges.
- Besides, former CJIs and retired judges of the top court can get their monthly mobile phone and Internet bills reimbursed to the extent of ₹4,200.
- A retired CJI is also entitled to a rent-free Type VII accommodation, other than the designated official residence, in New Delhi for six months immediately after retirement.
- The notification issued by the Law Ministry however said these post-retirement benefits would be available only if the retirees were not getting similar facilities from any High Court or government body.

## GORKHAS IN INDIAN ARMY

**Nepal has postponed the recruitment rallies which were to be held in that country to recruit Gorkha soldiers for the Indian Army under the Agnipath scheme.**



## About:

- The decision to postpone these rallies has been taken by the Nepalese government as it is of the opinion that this new form of entry into the Indian military is not covered under the Tripartite Agreement signed between Nepal, Indian and UK governments in 1947, soon after Indian independence.

- As per the terms of this agreement four regiments of Gorkha soldiers – 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th – were transferred to the British Army while the rest – 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th and 9th – remained with the Indian Army.
- A new Gorkha Regiment, the 11th Gorkha Rifles, was raised by India soon after Independence.
- The agreement also provides for the terms and conditions of the Nepal-domiciled Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army and for their post-retirement benefits and pensions.

## DEFINITION OF FORESTS

The Union Ministry of Environment has objected to the transfer of thousands of hectares of land without following due process by Chhattisgarh from its Forest to the Revenue Department for setting up industries and for building road, rail, and other infrastructure.



### **About:**

- While the Chhattisgarh government has described these areas as non-forest land that were earlier given “by mistake” to the Forest Department, the Environment Ministry has warned that the land in question is “undemarcated protected forests”, which cannot be used for non-forest purposes without clearance under the Forest Conservation (FC) Act, 1980.
- Broadly, state Forest Departments have jurisdiction over two types of forests notified under the Indian Forest (IF) Act, 1927: Reserve Forests (RF), where no rights are allowed unless specified; and Protected Forests (PF), where no rights are barred unless specified. Certain forests, such as village or nagarpalika forests, are managed by state Revenue Departments.
- The FC Act, 1980, applies to all kinds of forests, whether under the control of the Forest or the Revenue Department, and it requires statutory clearance before forests can be used for any non-forest purpose such as industry, mining, or construction. In 1976, forests were included in List III (Concurrent List) under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

## PHASING OUT PETROLEUM-POWERED VEHICLES

California has approved a ban on the sale of new petroleum-powered vehicles by 2035 — a landmark policy intervention that could have an impact throughout most other American states, and in countries outside of the US.



### About:

- The rule would kick in with a 35 per cent limit on new passenger vehicle sales to be “zero emission” (or Battery Electric Vehicles) by 2026, which then goes up to 68 percent by 2030, and 100 per cent in 2035.
- California, besides being the biggest US state, is one of the largest markets for car sales in the world. So, California’s position on new car sales is extremely important.

### What is India’s stance?

- India has a target of meeting at least 65 per cent of all new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030.
- Progress has been patchy though, with 6.38 lakh EVs registered in India since 2012 – less than 1 per cent of the total vehicle count.
- What is encouraging is that over 15 states have issued or adopted EV policies so far.

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## SWACHH SAGAR, SURAKSHIT SAGAR CAMPAIGN

**Union Minister of Environment participated in Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar Campaign at Puducherry.**



### About:

- "Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar/Clean Coast, Safe Sea" Campaign, is a 75-day citizen-led initiative, aimed at improving the coastal and ocean health via community action.
- The campaign began on July 5, 2022, and will culminate on 17th September 2022 - International Coastal Clean-up Day.
- The three strategic underlying objective of the Campaign is to alter and save the environment through behaviour change. The campaign's three overarching goals are:
  - Consume Responsibly,





# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- Separate waste at home, and
  - Dispose of waste responsibly.
  - The campaign is spearheaded by Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) in partnership of Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Indian Coast Guard, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), other central ministries/organisation and other social organizations and educational institutions.
  - The coastal clean-up campaign is being taken at 75 beaches along the coast line of with average 75 volunteers for every kilometre of coastline.
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