

## **1. Kisan Diwas**

### **Why in News?**

- Recently, The 'Kisan Diwas' or National Farmers Day was observed across the country on 23<sup>rd</sup> December to celebrate the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India.

### **Highlights:**

- It is celebrated to promote awareness among the citizens to understand the importance of the contributions of the farmers to the Society and overall economic and social development of a Country.
- Government also aims to encourage the farmers across the country by organising various activities like debates and seminars on agriculture.
- He was born in 1902 at Noorpur in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh and was the Prime Minister of India from 28<sup>th</sup> July 1979 to 14<sup>th</sup> January 1980.
- Being a proponent of rural and agricultural development he made continuous efforts for keeping agriculture at the centre of planning for India.
- He was given the nickname 'Champion of India's Peasants' for his work towards upliftment of farmers and development of agriculture throughout the country.
- He took a leading part in formulation and finalisation of the Debt Redemption Bill 1939, in order to give relief to the peasantry from moneylenders.
- He was instrumental in bringing about the Land Holding Act, 1960 which was aimed at lowering the ceiling on land holdings to make it uniform throughout the State.
- He left Congress in 1967 and formed his independent party known as the Bharatiya Lok Dal.
- He served twice as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He became Prime Minister of India in 1979.
- He was the author of several books and pamphlets, including 'Abolition of Zamindari', 'Co-operative Farming X-rayed', 'India's Poverty and its Solution', 'Peasant Proprietorship or Land to the Workers' and 'Prevention of Division of Holdings Below a Certain Minimum'.

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## **2. Soya Meal**

### **Why in News?**

- The Government has recently notified, under the Essential Commodities Act 1955, to declare 'soya meal' as an essential commodity up to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2022.

### **Highlights:**

- This step is expected to stop any unfair practises (like hoarding, black marketing etc) in the market having the Potential to Hike the prices of soya meal.
- This will also enhance the availability of the commodity for consumers like poultry farms and cattle feed Manufacturers.
- Soybean meal is the most important protein source used to feed farm animals. It is also used for human consumption in some Countries.
- It represents nearly two-thirds of the total world output of protein feedstuffs, including all other Major Oil meals and fish meals.
- Soybean meal is the by-product of the extraction of soybean oil.

### **About Essential Commodities Act 1955:**

- The country was dependent on imports and assistance (such as wheat import from the US under PL-480) to feed the population.
- To prevent hoarding and black marketing of foodstuffs, the Essential Commodities Act was enacted in 1955.
- Essential Commodity: There is no specific definition of essential commodities in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
- Section 2(A) states that an "essential commodity" means a commodity specified in the Schedule of the Act.: The Act gives powers to the central government to add or remove a commodity in the Schedule.
- The Centre, if it is satisfied that it is necessary to do so in public interest, can notify an item as essential, in consultation with state governments.
- The ECA 1955 is used to curb inflation by allowing the Centre to enable control by state governments of trade in a wide variety of commodities.
- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, implements the Act.
- By declaring a commodity as essential, the government can control the production, supply, and distribution of that commodity, and impose a stock limit.

### **3. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Ministry for Ports, Shipping & Waterways has recently announced the new Tariff Guidelines, 2021 for the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects in Major Ports.

#### **Highlights:**

- The new guidelines have been released in consonance of Major Port Authority Act, 2021.
- Existing Scenario: The PPP concessionaires at Major Ports were constrained to operate under the stipulations of guidelines (by Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP)).
- On the other hand, private operators/PPP concessionaires at non-major ports were free to charge tariffs as per Market Conditions.
- Concessionaire can be a person or company that has the right to sell a product or to run a business in PPP projects.
- TAMP stands abolished according to the Major Port Authority Act, 2021.
- Transition to Market-linked Tariffs: Currently, major port's PPP concessionaires handle around 50% of the total traffic handled by all the major ports in India.
- The new guidelines allow the concessionaires at major ports to set tariffs as per market dynamics.
- Significance of these Guidelines:
  - The biggest benefit of transition to market linked tariff is that a level playing field will be provided to the PPP concessionaires at Major Ports to compete with private ports.
  - This is a major reform initiative as the Government moves towards deregulation of tariffs for PPP Projects at Major Ports.
  - The guidelines will usher in a new era of market economy and make Major Ports more competitive.

### **4. New Labour Codes**

#### **Why in News?**

- India is likely to implement four new labour codes on wages, social security, industrial relations, and occupational safety by the next fiscal year beginning 2022.

#### **New Labour Codes:**

- The four codes likely to be implemented in FY23 are:

- ✓ Code on Wages
- ✓ Industrial Relations Code
- ✓ Social Security Code, and
- ✓ Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code

### Objectives of the Labour Code:

- The new labor codes are aimed at facilitating ease of doing business in the country and seek to replace 29 cumbersome laws.
- The objective is to encompass over 500 million organized and unorganized sector Workers—90% of the workforce which has been outside labour laws.
- The idea is to ensure that they receive wage security, social security and health security, Gender equality in terms of remuneration, a minimum floor wage, make the lives of inter-State Migrant Workers Easier.

### What is the Current Status of the Codes?

- The central government has completed the process of finalizing the draft rules, state Governments are in the process of drafting the same.
- With labor being a concurrent subject, states are in the process of pre-publishing draft rules for these reforms.

### How many Labour Laws do Indian states have?

- The simplification of 29 labour laws into the four labour codes is expected to be a watershed moment for Labour Reforms.
- India currently has a web of multiple labour legislations, over 40 central laws and 100 state laws Involving Labour.
- The Second National Commission on Labour (2002) recommended simplification to bring about Transparency and Uniformity.

### What are the Major Goals in these codes?

- **Social Security Benefits:** With organized sector workers being approximately 10% of the Total Workforce, the new codes may ensure that social security benefits are for all.
- **Take-Home salary:** As per the proposed labour codes, total allowances such as house rent, leave, travel etc. are to be capped at 50% of the salary, while basic pay should account for the remaining 50%.
- **Four Days Work:** There could also be a permissible four-day work week of 12 hours per day.

## How will it Affect Ease of doing business?

- **Labour Productivity:** It is likely to improve with both employees and employers developing a sense of being partners in wealth creation.
- **Labour Reform:** A transparent environment in terms of workers' compensation, clear definition of employee rights and employer duties.
- **Compliance un-burdening:** Simplified labour codes making compliance easier are likely to attract investments.
- **Formalization of the Economy:** With more workers in the organized sector, leakage in terms of direct as well as indirect taxes may be plugged.

## 5. Trincomalee Oil Farms Deal

### Why in News?

- After a year of Negotiations, Sri Lanka will ink the deal with India to jointly develop the Trincomalee oil tank farms — a coveted project that has remained controversial for decades.

### Trincomalee Oil Field:

- The facility, built by the British around World War II as a refueling station, has 99 storage tanks that look like giant wells.
- They have a capacity of 12,000 kiloliter's each.
- Eighty-four of those are in the 800-acre Upper Tank Farm (UTF). For a good part of a century now, these tanks have remained unused, shrouded in a forest.
- The Lower Tank Farm (LTF) has 16 tanks, spread across 50 acres.

### Historical Background:

- Trincomalee harbor is the second deepest natural harbor in the world.
- The British who were in control of the island decided to make this as their primary logistics station in the east after World War I.
- It is also a lesser-known but important logistic station during World War II.
- British started the oil storage project in 1924 and completed in late 1930s.
- After that it was abandoned by the British in 1948 when Sri Lanka gained independence.
- In 2002, the development of this tank farm was revived by an Indian company Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).

### History of India's Interest in Trincomalee:

- The development of the Trincomalee Oil Tank farm has been a recurring talking point in Indo-Lanka Relations since 1987.
- It was First mentioned in the Indo- Lanka Accord signed by PM Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene.
- Despite that, Nothing really took off until 2003, when Indian Oil Corporation set up Lanka IOC, its Sri Lankan subsidiary.
- The Agreement remained dormant for years, until the Sirisena- Wickremesinghe administration tried revisiting it through the 2017 MoU.

### Significance of Trincomalee:

- **Demography:** Trincomalee is home to 3.7 lakh Muslim, Tamil and Sinhala people and Trincomalee, in Sri Lanka's post-war years.
- **Tourism:** It has emerged as a favorite destination for surfers from around the world, Gradually transforming with plush resorts and restaurants dotting its coast.
- **Important sea route:** Trincomalee remains in spotlight as a potential transit point for international trade routes, particularly drawing India which has known strategic interests there.
- **Balancing China:** From India's geostrategic viewpoint, Trincomalee is an important counterbalance to the southern Hambantota Port backed substantially by China.

### Hurdles to the Project:

- **Public Resistance:** India-backed projects in Sri Lanka tend to draw way more public resistance from nationalists among the majority Sinhalese constituency than projects with Chinese or American involvement.
- **Anti-India Sentiments:** Observers in Sri Lanka attribute this to the "baggage" that Indian diplomacy carries, years after its intervention during different stages of Sri Lanka's civil war.