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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

Table of Contents

1. Interpol
2. Kiru Hydel Project
3. Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Scheme
4. Comptroller and Auditor General
5. Albania
6. Pigeonpea
7. BrahMos Missile
8. Giant Softshell Turtle
9. Avdiivka
10. Fair and Remunerative Price

THE HINDU Page 12

INTERPOL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Security)



Are Interpol's notices being politically exploited?

How do Blue corner notices differ from red corner notices in terms of timing and purpose? What steps has Interpol taken to address criticism and enhance oversight of its notice system?

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

The International Criminal Police Organization, more commonly known as Interpol, comprising 194 member countries, plays a crucial role as an information-sharing network to enable national police forces to combat transnational crimes. Concerns have been raised about the misuse of Interpol's notice system, especially the issuance of blue corner notices, which are less scrutinised than their red corner notices. Critics argue that countries often exploit existing protocols to target political refugees and dissidents. While efforts have been made to address this, questions remain about striking a balance between facilitating police cooperation and preventing misuse of this powerful tool.

What is a "blue corner" notice?

There are seven types of notices issued by Interpol – Red Notice, Yellow Notice, Blue Notice, Black Notice, Green Notice, Orange Notice, and Purple Notice.

A blue corner notice also known as an "enquiry notice" allows police forces in member states to share critical crime-related information such as obtaining a person's criminal record, and location and, having his or her identity verified among others. For instance, in January 2020, Interpol issued a blue corner notice to help locate fugitive self-styled godman Nithyananda.

How does it differ from a "red corner" notice?

A red corner notice is issued by a member state to arrest a wanted criminal through extradition or any other similar lawful action. Such notices are issued against persons wanted by national jurisdictions for prosecution or to serve a sentence based on an arrest warrant or a court decision. The country issuing the request need not be the home country of the fugitive, Interpol acts even on the request of a country where the alleged crime has been committed.

While blue corner notices are issued prior to the filing of criminal charges, red corner notices generally follow criminal convictions. The concerned individual can be stopped and arrested while travelling through a member state. There will also be other detrimental consequences such as the closure of bank accounts. However, Interpol cannot compel law enforcement authorities in any country to arrest the subject of a red corner notice as the exercise of such powers is entirely discretionary.

In 2018, a red corner notice was issued against fugitive billionaire Nirav Modi in relation to the Punjab National Bank scam. However, in October 2022, Interpol rejected a second request by India to issue such a notice against Gurpatwant

Context: Recently, concerns have surfaced regarding the misuse of Interpol's notice system, notably the issuance of less scrutinized blue corner notices, raising questions about political motives in targeting refugees and dissidents.

International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)

- **About:** It is the world's largest international police organization.
- **Headquarters**: Lyon, France
- **Network of nations**: A network comprising 192 member nations and headquartered in Lyon, France.
- **Objective**: to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place.
- **Working mechanism**: The Interpol basically connects police across the world even if these individual member nations do not have diplomatic relations.
  - The Interpol **facilitates information exchange**, knowledge sharing and research between nations.
  - This is done by **issuing colour-coded 'notices' in four languages** - English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.
  - The Interpol **doesn't have law enforcement powers** such as arrest.
- **India's status:** India has been a member since 1956.
  - **National Central Bureau:** India maintains a National Central Bureau which serves as the national platform for cooperation between domestic law enforcement units and the international police community.
  - **Contact point**: The NCB is the designated contact point for the Interpol.
  - **Collaboration**: India has collaborated with the Interpol in tackling a myriad of organised crimes.

Different Types of Interpol Notices

- **Red Notice**: Issued to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition.
- **Yellow Notice**: Issued to help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.
- **Blue Notice**: Issued to collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.
- This does not guarantee extradition or arrest of the person.
- **Black Notice**: A request to seek information on unidentified bodies in member nations.
- **Green Notice**: Issued to provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.
- **Orange Notice**: Issued to provide warnings about warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.
- **Purple Notice**: Issued to provide warnings about warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.

KIRU HYDEL PROJECT
(Syllabus GS Paper 1 – Geography)

Kiru Hydel Project, focus of allegations against Satya Pal Malik

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 22

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Thursday raided 30 places across the country, including three linked to former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik in Delhi, Gurugram, and Bhagpat in Uttar Pradesh.

RAIDS ON EX-GUV

The agency is investigating alleged corruption in the award of a contract for the Kiru Hydel Project, in J&K's Kishtwar district.

What is the project?

It is being constructed between the existing Kirthai II (upstream) and Kwar (downstream) hydel power projects, at an estimated cost of Rs 4,287 crore. It will be developed near the convergence point of river Chenab and the Singad and Bela streams, near the Patharnakki and Kiru villages in Kishtwar district. The deadline for initiating commercial operations is July 2025.

It will have a 123-m tall dam from the Chenab's river bed level. Its reservoir will have a storage capacity of 41.5 million m³ of water. The project will have one 700 m-long, horse-shoe-shaped diversion tunnel for the release of excess water. An underground powerhouse located at the left bank of the river will have four turbines, with a capacity of 156 MW each, raising the total capacity to 624 MW.

Apart from helping address the energy demand across northern India and the state's rural areas, it could aid small-scale and cottage industries.



The project is located in J&K's Kishtwar district. *kiru.cvppindia.com*

Who is developing the project?

The Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited (CVPPPL) is a joint venture of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation, the Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation and the Power Trading Corporation. Both the NHPC and JKSPDC have a stake of 49% each and the remaining 2% is with the PTC.

The Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change awarded the scoping clearance for the project in September 2008 and revalidated it for an installed capacity of 624MW in September 2015. It got environmental clearance from the ministry in June 2016 and received approval from the State Administrative Council (SAC) in January 2019. The foundation stone was laid the next month, with completion expected by 2023.

A construction company named Patel Engineering was awarded civil works worth more than Rs 2,200 crore for the construction of a diversion tunnel, concrete dam, pressure shafts, cofferdams, tailrace tunnels, and a powerhouse in 2019.

Hydromechanical work related was awarded to PES Engineers and electromechanical work worth more than Rs 600 crore was awarded to Andritz Hydro. Together, they cover the design, manufacturing, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of turbines, generators, etc.

Some of the work, such as pilot excavation for a few of the pressure shafts, is completed, while riverbed excavation and dam concreting in the riverbed are in progress.

What are the corruption allegations?

The award of civil works to Patel Engineering Ltd has been called into question. On its website, PEL calls itself a major infrastructure and construction company that was founded in 1949. Its areas of operation include dams, tunnels, bridges, refineries, real estate, and more.

The CBI has booked then CVPPPL chairman and IAS officer Naveen Choudhary, MD MS Babu, and Directors M K Mittal and Arun Mishra, along with Patel Engineering. The FIR says an investigation had been conducted by the J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Power Department.

The FIR alleges that guidelines for e-tendering in the awarding of civil works were not followed. Allegations of substandard work and failure to provide jobs to local youth have also been made against the hydel project.

LONGER VERSION ON indianexpress.com/explained

Context: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raided 30 places across the coun- try, including three linked to former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik in Delhi, Gurugram, and Bhagpat in Uttar Pradesh.

Kiru Hydel Project

- **About:** The Kiru Hydel Power Project is situated between the existing Kirthai II and Kwar hydel power projects.
- **Budget**: Rs 4,287 crore.
- **Geographical Location**: Positioned near the convergence of the Chenab River and Singad and Bela streams.
- **Developed by**: Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited (CVPPPL) is a joint venture of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation, the Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation and the Power Trading Corporation.
- **Timeline**: The project aims to initiate commercial operations by July 2025.
- **Features**
  - It features a 123-meter tall dam above the Chenab's river bed level.
  - The reservoir will have a storage capacity of 41.5 million m³ of water.
  - Incorporates a 700-meter-long, horse-shoe-shaped diversion tunnel for excess water release.
  - An underground powerhouse, situated at the left bank of the river, will house four turbines, each with a capacity of 156 MW, totaling 624 MW.
- **Potential Impact:** Expected to contribute to meeting energy demands in northern India and rural areas of the state.

PIB Feb 21

RASHTRIYA UDYAMITA VIKAS SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Govt Scheme)

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates the Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana under Skill India Mission, empowering PM Svanidhi Beneficiaries

Context: Recently, the union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship inaugurated the Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana, in Sambalpur, Odisha.

Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana

- **About**: Specifically designed for beneficiaries of the PM SVANidhi scheme, this project emphasizes the government's dedication to fostering entrepreneurs nationwide.
- **Aim**: The primary goal is to equip individuals with comprehensive entrepreneurship training, emphasizing the creation of job providers rather than job seekers.
- **Focus:** The initiative concentrates on reskilling and upskilling employees to boost their competitiveness and adaptability in the face of disruptive technology.
- **Training**: Over a span of 22 weeks, participants will undergo comprehensive entrepreneurship training, blending theoretical knowledge with practical exposure through experiential learning.
- **Varied Training Modes**: Training sessions will be conducted through offline, online, and hybrid modes, offering flexibility and accessibility to participants. Upon completion, certificates will be awarded, enhancing the course's credibility and value.
- **Launched virtually**: Across 9 cities including Bhopal, Kanpur, Indore, Varanasi, Bharatpur, Shillong, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Guwahati.

Skill India Mission

- **Launched**: On July 15, 2015
- **Implemented by**: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
- It is a **comprehensive program** to train and develop industrial, entrepreneurial skills among Indians.
- **Aim**: To train a minimum of 300 million skilled people by the year. 2022
- **Initiatives under the Skill India Mission**
  - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**
  - **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**
  - **National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) & SANKALP**

DTE Feb 22

Comptroller and Auditor General of India

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

CAG flags MoEFCC projects costing Rs 4.47 crore for procedural lapses

Context: A Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) of India report has highlighted two projects that failed to materialise due to lapses in following procedures by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

- **Constitutional Body**: The **Constitution of India (Article 148) provides for an independent office** of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).
- **Appointment**: The CAG is **appointed by the President of India** by a warrant under his hand and seal.
  - He is **not eligible for further office**, either under the Government of India or of any state, after he ceases to hold his office.
- **Term of office**: The CAG holds office for a **period of six years or up to the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier.
  - He can resign any time from his office by addressing the **resignation letter to the president.**
- **Removal**: He can be removed by the president **on the basis of a resolution passed to that effect by both the Houses of Parliament with special majority,** either on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
  - He can be removed by the president **on the same grounds and in the same manner as a judge of the Supreme Court.**
- **Duties of CAG**: His duty is to **uphold the Constitution of India and laws of Parliament** in the field of financial administration.
  - He **audits the accounts related to all expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India**, Consolidated Fund of each state and UT having a legislative assembly.
  - He **audits all expenditure from the Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India** as well as the Contingency Fund and Public Account of each state.
  - He **audits all trading, manufacturing, profit and loss accounts**, balance sheets and other subsidiary accounts kept by any department of the Central Government and the state governments.
  - He **audits the receipts and expenditure of all bodies and authorities** substantially financed from the Central or State revenues; government companies; other corporations and bodies, when so required by related laws.
  - He **ascertains and certifies the net proceeds of any tax or duty** and his certificate is final on the matter.
- **Audit reports**: He **submits 3 audit reports to the President**: audit report on appropriation accounts, audit report on finance accounts and audit report on public undertakings.
  - He **submits his audit reports relating to the accounts of the Centre and State to the President and Governor**,who shall, in turn, place them before both the houses of Parliament and the state legislature respectively.
  - **No minister can represent the CAG in Parliament (both Houses)** and no minister can be called upon to take any responsibility for any actions done by him.

THE HINDU Page 15

ALBANIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Geography)

India to open diplomatic mission in Albanian capital

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Albania's Foreign Minister Igli Hasani said on Thursday that Albania is planning to open an Embassy in New Delhi while India will soon have a diplomatic mission in Tirana.

Mr. Hasani, who is visiting India to participate in the annual Raisina Dialogue, presented his country as an important location on the 'corridor' that connects Europe with the Asia and urged closer trade ties between the two countries.

"I am glad to know the plans of the Indian government to open a representation in Tirana and we are also planning to open an Embassy very soon in New Delhi," Mr. Hasani said in a statement to the media.

Mr. Hasani's visit to Delhi coincided with the visit of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis who is on a state visit to India. He said the India Middle East Economic Corridor should be pursued despite the ongoing conflict in Gaza. With around 500 km of coastline, Albania is a northern neighbour of Greece and is evidently trying to get onto the connectivity projects bridging India and the European continent.

"Albania is at the crossroads between the European Union and East. Albania is a part of many corridors that link India with the European Union. With Albania becoming one of the fastest growing European economies, we are rapidly moving to foster stronger economic ties with India," said Mr. Hasani.

He mentioned that in 2023, more than 10 million tourists visited Albania, adding, "It is of utmost importance that this momentum between Albania and India is not only preserved but also enhanced."

Albania is at present represented by noted architect Dikshu Kukreja who was appointed as the Honorary Consul General of Albania last year.

Mr. Kukreja said the Albanian language is linked to Sanskrit and the two sides have "many cultural linguistic, and historical ties."



Albania's Foreign Minister Igli Hasani attends a panel discussion at the Raisina Dialogue 2024, in New Delhi, on Thursday. PTI



Context: Albania's Foreign Minister recently announced plans for Albania to open an Embassy in New Delhi, reciprocated by India's soon-to-be-established diplomatic mission in Tirana.

Albania

- **About**: It is a country in Southeast Europe
- **Location**: Albania is situated in Southeast Europe, nestled within the Balkans and bordered by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas of the Mediterranean.
- **Bordering Nations**: It shares land borders with Montenegro to the northwest, Kosovo to the northeast, North Macedonia to the east, and Greece to the south.
- **Diverse Landscapes**: Albania spans an area of 28,748 km2 (11,100 sq mi) and boasts diverse climatic, geological, hydrological, and morphological conditions.
- **Varied Terrain**: The country's terrain includes rugged snow-capped mountains such as the Albanian Alps, Korab, Skanderbeg, Pindus, and Ceraunian Mountains, as well as fertile lowland plains that extend along the Adriatic and Ionian coastlines.
- **Capital**: Tirana.
- **Major Rivers**: Drin, Seman, Shkumbin, and Vjose.
- **Mountain**: Mount Korab

DTE Feb 22

PIGEONPEA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Agriculture)

New protocol can reduce breeding cycle of pigeonpea by 3-5 years, important for nutritional security in drylands

Context: According to the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) a new fast-breeding protocol is likely to make it easier for scientists to develop better quality varieties of the pigeonpea crop at a faster rate.

Pigeonpea

- **About:** It is an important legume crop and protein-rich food primarily consumed as dal in India.
- **Scientific name**: Cajanus cajan
- **Geographic Distribution**: Predominantly cultivated in semi-arid regions of India, known as arhar or tur.
- **Major Producing States**: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand.
- **Climatic Conditions:**
  - **Rain**: Requires 600-650mm annual rainfall with moist conditions for initial weeks and dry conditions during flowering.
  - **Temperature**: Suitable range is 26°C to 30°C in the rainy season and 17°C to 22°C post-rainy.
  - **Soil**: Suitable for all types, especially sandy loam or loam soil.
- **Environmental Factors**: Sensitive to low radiation during pod development, flowering during monsoon or cloudy weather leads to poor pod formation.
- **Agricultural Practices:** Commonly intercropped with various crops, estimated 80-90% in India.
- **Diseases**: Major diseases include Wilt, Sterility mosaic disease, Phytophthora blight, Alternaria blight, and Powdery mildew.
- **Health Benefits**: Low glycemic index, rich in thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-6, folate, vitamin A, calcium, zinc, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus.

New Protocol of ICRISAT

- **Reduced Breeding Cycle**
  - **Traditional Duration**: Developing a new pigeon pea variety typically takes around 13 years.
  - **Accelerated Timeline**: The new protocol reduces the breeding cycle to 2-4 years.
  - **Factors Influencing Duration**: The longer duration of pigeon pea crops is attributed to its short-day nature, photosensitivity, and seasonal specificity.
- **Ideal Conditions for Speed Breeding**
  - **Optimal Photoperiod**: A photoperiod of 13 h: 8 h: 13 h at vegetative: flowering: pod filling stages is recommended.
  - **Light Spectrum Importance**: Broad spectrum light and far-red wavelength light are crucial for early crop establishment and flowering onset.
  - **Challenges of Natural Conditions:** Under natural conditions, pigeon pea takes about four months to flower if sown in June, resulting in unwanted biomass accumulation.

Impact on Pulse Production

- **Enhanced Self-Reliance**: The new protocol will enhance self-reliance in pulse production, especially benefiting countries like India, Myanmar, Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique.
- **Past Successes**: ICRISAT has previously achieved success in speed breeding of other crops such as wheat, barley, rice, cowpea, soybean, and amaranth, indicating the potential for widespread impact.

BRAHMOS MISSILE
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Next-gen BrahMos for Indian Navy, Rs 19K cr purchase cleared

Context: Indian naval warships will be able to strike enemy targets at a greater distance with the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) giving its approval for procurement of next-generation BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles.

BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missiles

- **About**: A joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India (DRDO) and the NPOM of Russia.
  - BrahMos is named for the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva (Russia).
- **Range**: 290 km
- **Fastest cruise missile in the world**: A top speed of Mach 2.8 (nearly three times the speed of sound).
- **Two-stage missile system**: Solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in second.
- **Multiplatform missile:** Can be launched from land, air, and sea and multi capability missile with pinpoint accuracy that works in both day and night irrespective of the weather conditions.
- **Operates on the "Fire and Forgets" principle:** It does not require further guidance after launch.



BBC

Feb 22

GIANT SOFTSHELL TURTLE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Rare turtle discovered by Portsmouth conservationists in India



Chandragiri River

- **About:** The Chandragiri River, also known as Payaswini or Perumpuzha River, holds the distinction of being the longest river in Kasaragod district, Kerala, India.
- **Origin**: The Chandragiri River originates in the Talakaveri Wildlife Sanctuary situated in the Western Ghats of Kodagu district, Karnataka, where its journey through diverse landscapes begins, enriching the surrounding areas with its flow.

Context: A team of conservationists, uncovered the nesting site of Cantor's giant softshell turtle on banks of the Chandragiri River in Kerala.

Cantor's Giant Softshell Turtle

- **About:** It is the first breeding site discovered in India.
- **Scientific name:** Pelochelys cantorii
- **Also referred to**: As the Asian giant softshell turtle.
- **Native**: Rivers of South and Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and India.
- **Habitat**: It mainly inhabits inland, slow-moving freshwater rivers, lakes, streams, and estuaries but also extends to coastal areas.
- **Features**: The species is exceptionally large, reaching over 1 meter in length and weighing more than 100 kilograms. It has a broad head with eyes close to the tip of the snout, giving it a frog-like appearance.
- **Threats**: The species faces threats such as harvesting by local people for meat, accidental killing, persecution from fishermen when caught in fishing gear, and the destruction of freshwater and coastal habitats.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN**: Critically Endangered (CR)
  - **CITES**: Appendix II
  - **Wildlife Protection Act,1972**: Schedule 1

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 15

AVDIIVKA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

RUSSIA CAPTURES AVDIIVKA: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR UKRAINE, EUROPE

YASHEE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

As the second anniversary of its invasion of Ukraine draws closer, Russia has registered a big victory, capturing the town of Avdiivka. This is its most significant battleground gain after the city of Bakhmut in May last year.

Ukrainian soldiers had held on to Avdiivka for four months, but had to evacuate last Saturday as they were outnumbered and outgunned, even as Russia bombed the city to rubble.

Why Avdiivka mattered

Located on the frontlines in the east of Ukraine, Avdiivka had been a major centre of resistance, blocking further Russian advance. It has seen war since 2014, when Russia staged a 'military intervention' in eastern Ukraine, and was thus heavily fortified. Capturing this well-defended city opens an easier path for Russia to the rest of Ukraine.

Also, Avdiivka is close to the city of Donetsk, which Russia has occupied. Capturing Avdiivka, thus, gives a double advantage to the Russians — more Ukrainian cities are within its reach now, and Donetsk is safer from Ukrainian attempts to retake it.

The victory is also important for how it will affect the morale of Ukrainian soldiers, in a war that has been grinding on for two years now with mounting losses.

Key weakness highlighted

The Avdiivka campaign has highlighted that Ukraine is running out of the kind of arms and ammunition it needs to keep the Russian military at bay.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy raised this issue at a global security conference in Munich last week. As reported by *Reuters*, he praised his troops for "exhausting" Russian forces in Avdiivka, and suggested the withdrawal was partly caused by a lack of weapons. "Now, (the military) will replenish, they will wait for the relevant weapons, of which there simply weren't enough, simply aren't enough," he said.



A Ukrainian soldier prepares to operate a drone near Avdiivka on February 20. *Reuters*

US President Joe Biden too has pointed out that Ukraine lacks the necessary firepower.

What led to arms shortage

A key reason is that Republicans in the US House of Representatives are holding up a $95-billion foreign aid package, which includes $60 billion for Ukraine. In return for passing the package, the Republicans want stricter immigration rules at the US-Mexico border. Some hardliners, like Marjorie Taylor Greene, want the US to stop financing someone else's war, and push Ukraine towards negotiations instead.

With flows from the US stuck, the rest of Europe has been unable to plug the shortfall for Ukraine.

Alarm bells in Europe

For decades, European countries have not spent much on defence, banking heavily on the US for security in the face of no serious threats. Now, as the Russia threat looms larger, many European nations are facing up to the fact that they need to allocate a larger portion of their GDP towards defence, and can't depend entirely on the US.

Biden has remained steadfast in his assurance of support to Ukraine, but lawmakers have tied his hands. His challenger Donald Trump has said outright he won't help those who are not spending enough on security.

LONGER VERSION ON
indianexpress.com/explained

Context: As the second anniversary of its invasion of Ukraine draws closer, Russia has registered a big victory, capturing the town of Avdiivka.

Avdiivka

- **About:** It is a city in Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine.
- **Strategic Location**: Avdiivka's position on the frontlines in eastern Ukraine made it a crucial center of resistance against Russian advancement.
- **Heavily Fortified Defense**: Since 2014, Avdiivka had been fortified extensively, making it a formidable barrier against Russian forces and blocking further incursion into Ukraine.
- **Gateway for Russian Advance**: Capturing Avdiivka provides Russia with an easier path to penetrate deeper into Ukrainian territory, as noted by The New York Times.
- **Proximity to Donetsk**: Avdiivka's proximity to Donetsk, a city already occupied by Russia, offers a dual advantage by extending Russian reach into more Ukrainian cities and securing Donetsk from Ukrainian attempts to reclaim it.
- **Impact on Ukrainian Morale**: The victory in Avdiivka is significant for its potential impact on the morale of Ukrainian soldiers, who have been enduring the grind of war with increasing losses over the past two years.



Industrial Significance of Avdiivka

- **Coke Plant Dominance**: Avdiivka is distinguished for hosting a significant coke plant, recognized as one of Europe's largest, contributing substantially to the region's industrial landscape.
- **Economic Dependency**: The economy of Avdiivka is deeply intertwined with the mining and metallurgical sectors, encompassing coal extraction and steel manufacturing, which serve as pivotal contributors to its economic vitality.

ECONOMIC TIMES

Feb 22

FAIR AND REMUNERATIVE PRICE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Cabinet approves hike in sugarcane FRP by Rs 25 to Rs 340 per quintal for 2024-25 season

Context: Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved ₹340/quintal as the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for sugar season 2024-25 at sugar recovery rate of 10.25%.

Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)

- **About:** FRP was introduced by the government in 2009 by an amendment to the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966. FRP is the minimum price that Sugar mills are legally bound to pay the farmers for the cane that they buy from them. Mills have the option to pay the FRP in instalments by entering into a contract with farmers.
- **Based on**: The FRP is based on the **Rangarajan Committee report** on reorganising the sugarcane industry.
- **Replaced**: The Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) on the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) consultation.
- **Timely Payment Assurance**: The FRP system ensured timely payment to farmers, regardless of the profit or loss incurred by sugar mills, with a mandate for payment within 14 days of sugarcane delivery.
- **Grading based on Recovery Rate**: The FRP system implemented grading based on sugar recovery rates from sugarcane, offering a premium for higher recovery and deductions for lower recovery, with a standard recovery rate of 10.25 percent and corresponding premium and deduction rates.
- **Process**: Central Government announces Fair and Remunerative Prices which are determined on the recommendation of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** and announced by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).**
    - The CCEA is chaired by the Prime Minister.
    - **CACP** is a department within the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**. It is an **advisory committee**, and the Government is **not bound** to accept its suggestions.

Factors considered in determination of FRP:

- Cost of production of sugarcane.
- Return to growers from alternative crops & general trend of prices of agricultural commodities.
- Availability of sugar to consumers at a fair price.
- Price at which sugar produced from sugarcane is sold by sugar producers.
- Recovery of sugar from sugarcane.
- Realization made from sale of by-products viz. molasses, bagasse, press mud.
- Reasonable margins for the growers of sugarcane on account of risk and profits.

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