



TATHASTU
Institute of Civil Services

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



26th February, 2024



S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	WTO MC13: WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA FOR INDIA?
2.	PRELIMS POINTERS

WTO MC13 | WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA FOR INDIA?

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

TAG: GS Paper II- **Government Policies & Interventions, Human Resource**
GS Paper III- **Growth & Development, Employment IT & Computers**

Mains Practice Question:

Q. Discuss the role of vocational education in addressing the skills gap and fostering employment opportunities in the current job market. (150 words)

WHY IN NEWS?

- India remains steadfast in its pursuit of a permanent solution on public stockholding for food grains at the upcoming 13th ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Abu Dhabi.
- Despite concerns from developed nations regarding India's food security program impacting global food prices, New Delhi is resolute in its stance.
- A senior government official affirmed India's commitment to pressing for a permanent resolution on public stockholding for food grains at the WTO meeting.
- Alongside food security, India is also advocating for the protection of fishermen and addressing their concerns.
- The upcoming WTO meeting will see India actively engaging on various key issues aligned with its interests, including seeking lasting solutions to food security challenges.

FOOD SECURITY ISSUES:

- ❖ **Public Stockholding (PSH) Programme:**
 - Policy tool involving government procurement of crops like rice and wheat from farmers at Minimum Support Price (MSP).
 - Foodgrains are stored and distributed to the poor.
- ❖ **India's Position:**
 - Advocates for PSH due to its large, vulnerable population.
 - Seeks a permanent solution from MC13.
 - Food procurement, stockholding, and distribution are pivotal to India's food security strategy.
- ❖ **Minimum Support Price (MSP):**
 - Typically higher than prevailing market rates.
 - Food sold at low prices to ensure food security for over 800 million beneficiaries.
 - WTO's Agreement on Agriculture restricts government's ability to purchase food at MSP.
- ❖ **WTO Regulations:**
 - Limits food subsidy bill to 10% of production value based on 1986-88 reference price.
- ❖ **India's Solution Proposal:**
 - Calls for amendments in formula to calculate food subsidy cap.
- ❖ **Global Trade Perspective:**
 - Developed nations argue such programmes distort global trade prices of food grains.

INDIA'S STANCE ON JOINT SUPPORT INITIATIVES (JSIS):

- ❖ **India's Stance:**
 - Opposes the push for JSIs by certain nations.
 - Strongly opposes efforts led by China to propose an investment facilitation for development agreement at the WTO.
 - Maintains that such agenda falls outside the WTO's mandate.



❖ **Concerns Raised:**

- Integration of such proposals into the WTO raises systemic concerns for the organization.
- Impact on developing nations' ability to pursue their interests in the future.

❖ **Expert Opinion:**

- Experts highlight the potential systemic concerns and impacts on developing nations' interests.

❖ **Example:**

- India's opposition to the proposal by a group of countries, led by China, exemplifies its stance against such initiatives.

REFORMS NEEDED:

❖ **Agricultural Reforms:**

- Prioritizes protecting farmer livelihoods and ensuring equitable market access.
- Opposes reduction of domestic support and increase in market openness pushed by developed nations, highlighting their large subsidies to rich farmers.

❖ **WTO Reforms:**

- Advocates for inclusive reforms considering developing countries' interests.
- Opposes flexible negotiation processes, decision-making without consensus, and integration of non-trade issues into WTO without consensus.
- Supports retaining key pillars like special and differential treatment, equal voice, and dispute settlement mechanism.
- Seeks revamp of the Appellate Body for fairness, facing resistance from the USA and EU's proposal for alternate mechanisms.

❖ **Fisheries Subsidies:**

- Supports balanced approach based on common but differentiated responsibilities.
- Proposes advanced fishing nations bear more responsibility based on the 'polluter pay principle'.
- Advocates for subsidies to poor fishermen within exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and cessation of subsidies by rich countries beyond EEZs for 25 years.

❖ **Extension of Customs Duties Moratorium on E-commerce Trade:**

- Calls for termination of moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, opposed by developed nations advocating for permanent adoption of duty-free flow of digital transmission.

❖ **Barriers to Trade:**

- Maintains non-trade issues like labour and environment should not be discussed at WTO.
- Opposes trade barriers such as EU's carbon tax and deforestation regulation under guise of sustainable development.
- Rejects inclusion of women economic empowerment issues in WTO talks, pushed by developed countries.



CONCLUSION:

India's stance at the World Trade Organization (WTO) reflects a strong commitment to safeguarding its national interests while advocating for inclusive reforms and equitable treatment for developing countries. From agricultural reforms to fisheries subsidies and extension of customs duties moratorium on e-commerce trade, India consistently emphasizes the need for fair and balanced policies that prioritize the well-being of its farmers, fishermen, and other vulnerable sectors.



PRELIMS POINTERS:

26th February, 2024

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
<p>BLANETS: WORLDS AROUND BLACK HOLES</p>	<p>WHY IN NEWS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Interstellar-inspired blanets, theoretical planets near supermassive black holes, formed within massive dust discs, must orbit safely to avoid destruction.</i> <p>ABOUT BLANETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Origin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Blanets, featured in <i>Interstellar</i>, are hypothetical planets orbiting black holes instead of stars, theorized by Japanese scientists in 2019. ❖ Formation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Formed in massive dust and gas clouds near supermassive black holes, blanets undergo a process similar to planet formation around young stars. ❖ Surroundings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Black holes are surrounded by vast discs of gas and dust, creating conditions conducive to lanet formation within their vicinity. ❖ Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Blanets are expected to be much larger than Earth, around 3,000 times, and orbit supermassive black holes at a safe distance of about 100 trillion km. ❖ Galactic Presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Black holes are believed to exist at the centre of almost every galaxy, suggesting the potential presence of blanets throughout the universe. ❖ Scientific Interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Studying blanets could offer insights into planetary formation in extreme environments and expand our understanding of the cosmos. 
<p>IGNCA'S 'LANGUAGE ATLAS'</p>	<p>WHY IN NEWS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>IGNCA's proposed linguistic survey, focusing on India's diverse languages, underscores the importance of preserving linguistic diversity and promoting education in mother tongues.</i> <p>BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF LINGUISTIC SURVEY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts) is autonomous body under Union Culture Ministry. ➤ It proposed a linguistic survey with the aims to make a 'Language Atlas'. ➤ It will provide answers to the question on number of "active" languages in the country. ➤ Census of 1961 was most exhaustive and detailed regarding linguistic data. Even languages with single speakers were included. 



INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC)

STAKEHOLDERS AND COLLABORATION:

- **Detailed Project Report (DPR)** outlines stakeholders including **Ministries of Culture, Education, Tribal Affairs, etc.**
- **IGNCA** identifies **potential partners and collaborators** such as Central Institute of Indian Languages, National Museum, etc.

OFFICIAL RECOGNITION AND CENSUS DATA:

- India recognizes **22 languages officially** (Schedule 8 of Indian Constitution).
- Census data shows **97% of population** speaks one of these languages.
- Additional **99 non-scheduled languages** included in Census.
- Around **37.8 million people** identify **non-Scheduled languages as mother tongue**.
- **1.2 million** people's native languages remain unaccounted due to exclusion since **1971**.

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ **Red Sea crisis** disrupts **global supply chains**, prompting exploration of alternate routes. **IMEC offers potential solution**, needing study, financial backing, **and multi-nation cooperation to succeed**.

ABOUT THE IMEC AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

❖ IMEC Overview:

- ☛ The **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** was announced during the **G-20 summit in 2023** as an **alternative trade route**.

❖ Location:

- ☛ The corridor spans **across the Mediterranean region**, connecting **Asia and Europe** through key transit points like the **Dardanelles in Turkey**.

❖ Historical Significance:

- ☛ The corridor traces **ancient trade routes**, including those travelled by **Alexander the Great**, emphasizing its historical and strategic importance.

❖ Purpose:

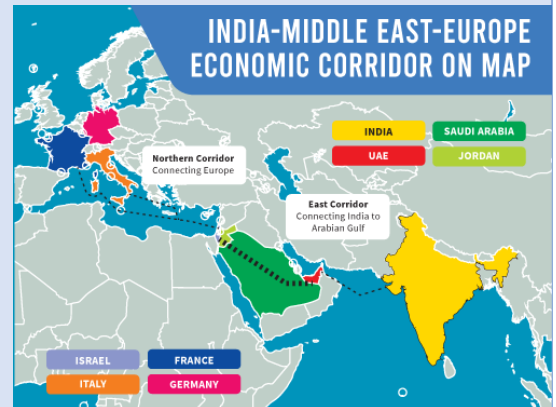
- ☛ The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) aims to **foster economic connectivity** between Europe, the Middle East, and India.

❖ Participating Countries:

- ☛ The corridor involves the European Union and seven other nations: **India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, France, Germany, and Italy**.

❖ US Involvement:

- ☛ The US views the IMEC as a means to **normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia**, promoting regional stability.



RED SEA CRISIS IMPACT

❖ Global Supply Chain Disruption:

- ☛ Red Sea crisis causes **inflated freights, vessel delays**, and product shortages.

❖ Strategic Importance:

- ☛ **Bab el-Mandab Strait** facilitates **12% of global trade**.

❖ Rerouting Effects:



"CENTER REVEALS LONG-AWAITED CONSUMPTION SURVEY DATA"

- ☛ **Shipping via Cape of Good Hope** leads to higher costs, longer voyages, and delayed shipments.
- ❖ **Impact on India:**
 - ☛ **24% of India's exports** and **14% of imports flow** through the Red Sea route.
- ❖ **Reduced Shipments:**
 - ☛ **Indian exporters hold back 25% of cargo ships** due to rising threats.

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *Centre releases crucial **consumption survey data after 11 years**, offering valuable insights into **consumption patterns for economic analysis and policymaking**.*

ABOUT THE HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE SURVEY:

- ❖ Survey conducted by **NSO aims to review GDP**, poverty levels, and CPI.
- ❖ Survey conducted between **August 2022 and July 2023** due to delays caused by COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ Survey data collected from **over 2,61,000 households across India**.

Food spending

Share of cereals and food in average monthly per capita consumption expenditure decreased in both rural and urban areas



Period	RURAL		URBAN	
	% share of cereals	% share of food	% share of cereals	% share of food
1999-00	22.23	59.4	12.39	48.06
2004-05	17.45	53.11	9.63	40.51
2009-10	13.77	56.98	8.16	44.39
2011-12	10.75	52.9	6.66	42.62
2022-23	4.91	46.38	3.64	39.17

KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY:

- ❖ **MPCE sharply rises in urban and rural homes since 2011-12; rural spend Rs 3,773, urban spend Rs 6,459.**
- ❖ Disparity between **rural and urban consumption expenditure narrows to 71.2% from 83.9% in 2011-12.**
- ❖ Report highlights **shifts in expenditure on food and non-food items**, influenced by **conveyance, consumer services, and durable goods**.
- ❖ Survey excludes imputed values of items **received free through social welfare programs, impacting MPCE estimates**.
- ❖ Disparity in MPCE between **top and bottom 5% of rural and urban populations** highlighted.
- ❖ **Sikkim records highest MPCE** among Indian **states for both rural and urban areas**.
- ❖ Imputed **value of free items distributed** by the government affects overall consumption expenditure estimates.

BADAMI CHALUKYA ERA TEMPLES DISCOVERED

WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ ***Discovery near Mudimanikyam, Telangana, unveils ties to Badami Chalukya kingdom. Temples and inscriptions from 543-750 AD highlight ancient community's religious practices, expanding historical knowledge.***

ABOUT THE TEMPLE:

- ❖ **Location:**
 - ☛ Situated on the **banks of the Krishna River near Mudimanikyam village, Telangana**.
- ❖ **Discovery:**
 - ☛ Uncovered two temples on the river bank and **five within the village**, along with an **inscription from the Badami Chalukya period**.
- ❖ **Historical Context:**
 - ☛ Temples date back to the **era of Badami Chalukyas (543-750 AD)**, expanding the historical extent of their realm.



- ☛ Highlights the thriving community's existence **worshipping Hindu gods Vishnu and Shiva.**
- ☛ Reflects **Deccan's rich cultural heritage** and the coexistence of **multiple faiths** during **ancient times.**

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

- ❖ Signifies **Deccan cosmopolitanism**, accommodating diverse **religions including Buddhism and Jainism alongside Brahmanical beliefs.**
- ❖ Adds to the narrative of **religious pluralism** and coexistence in ancient Indian history.

