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The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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The Union government partially lifted the sugar export ban, allowing the export of one million tonnes in the 2024-25 season.

- This move aims to ensure price stability, benefit farmers and workers, and boost liquidity for sugar mills by addressing surplus stocks.

Govt. lifts ban partially, gives nod for export of million tonnes of sugar

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/COIMBATORE

The Union government on Monday lifted the ban on sugar exports partially, allowing industries to export one million tonnes in the 2024-25 season ending in September.

Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi said the move would ensure price stability, benefit five crore farmer families and five lakh workers, and strengthen the sugar sector.

The export ban came into effect in October 2023 to regulate domestic prices.

The Food Ministry said the decision will ensure timely payments to farmers.

The move is expected to boost liquidity for sugar mills and balance sugar availability and prices for farmers. The Food Ministry's order allows the millers to export all grades of sugar within allocated quantities. They can export sugar either directly or through traders until September 30.

The export ban came into effect in October 2023 to regulate domestic prices. GETTY IMAGES

The Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association welcomed the decision, saying it will address the issue of surplus sugar stocks.

This timely decision will significantly aid sugar mills by enhancing financial liquidity, the ISMA said in a statement.

Potential Benefits:

- **Price Stability:** The decision aims to stabilize domestic sugar prices by allowing controlled exports, preventing prices from plummeting due to surplus stocks.
- **Support for Farmers:** By enabling exports, sugar mills will have better liquidity, ensuring timely payments to the five crore farmer families involved in sugarcane production.
- **Boost to Sugar Mills:** The export allowance helps sugar mills by clearing surplus stock, improving cash flow, and enhancing their financial position.
- **Employment Boost:** The move is expected to benefit approximately five lakh workers in the sugar industry, contributing to job security.
- **Enhances India's Sugar Sector:** This decision strengthens the sugar sector by improving overall market stability and ensuring its growth potential.

Challenges:

- **Risk of Domestic Shortages:** Exporting sugar could potentially create a shortage in the domestic market if not monitored carefully, which may lead to price hikes.
- **International Market Dynamics:** The global sugar market's volatility could affect the benefits of export, especially if demand fluctuates or international prices fall.
- **Logistical and Regulatory Hurdles:** Coordinating exports through traders and ensuring compliance with export quotas can create operational challenges.

Conclusion:

- The move to allow sugar exports is a balanced approach to support the sugar industry, farmers, and workers – but requires careful monitoring to avoid negative consequences on domestic availability and prices.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : Examine the potential benefits and challenges of the Union government's decision to lift the ban on sugar exports partially. How might this move impact India's sugar industry and farmers? **(150 Words /10 marks)**

Page 05 : GS 2 : Indian Polity

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla expressed concern over the decline in the number of sittings and the decorum of legislatures during the 85th All India Presiding Officers Conference in Patna.

- He urged political parties to establish an internal code of conduct for legislators to maintain dignity, strengthen Parliament, and encourage meaningful discussions.

Birla urges parties to devise internal code for members

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA/DELHI

Expressing concern over the decline in number of sittings and decorum of legislatures, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday urged the political parties to devise an internal code of conduct for members' behaviour in the House.

He was speaking at the inaugural function of the 85th All India Presiding Officers Conference in Patna.

Legislatures, Mr. Birla said, were a platform for debates and the legislators were expected to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people. People's representatives should follow constitutional propriety and must respect parliamentary traditions while expressing their viewpoint, he added.

"It is our collective responsibility to strengthen the Parliament and other


Om Birla

institutions; then only people will get maximum benefit. The House should be saved from the repeated adjournments and there should be meaningful discussion. All members should maintain the dignity of the House," he said.

Role of House panels

Mr. Birla said the role of parliamentary standing committees should be increased as they worked like a mini-Parliament and had huge responsibility.

The Speaker added that empowering the committees would put pressure on the government and a better outcome would be visible.

The event was organised in the Bihar Assembly after a gap of 43 years.

The Lok Sabha Speaker said it was the duty of the presiding officers to run the House keeping the constitutional values and work towards setting a good example for strengthening the democratic institution.

The conference was attended by Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh, Bihar Assembly Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav and presiding officers of State legislative bodies from across the country.

During the two-day conference, the presiding officers will brainstorm on the "75th Anniversary of Constitution: Contribution of Parliament and State legislative bodies in strengthening constitutional values.

Need for Internal Code of Conduct:

- Ensures orderly proceedings and upholds the decorum of the House, maintaining a professional environment for legislative work.
- Prevents disruptive behavior and encourages meaningful debates, thus improving the quality of discussions.
- Strengthens democratic values by ensuring that elected representatives respect constitutional and parliamentary traditions.

Benefits:

- A well-implemented code of conduct promotes constructive dialogue and reduces conflicts during sessions.
- It provides clarity on acceptable behavior, thereby preventing unruly incidents and frequent adjournments.
- The House remains focused on legislative work, improving the efficiency and productivity of sessions.
- Encourages legislators to fulfill their duties responsibly and respect the roles and opinions of other members.

- A code of conduct can lead to enhanced cooperation across party lines, fostering a more collaborative approach to governance.

Challenges:

- Political parties may face difficulty in implementing due to differing political ideologies and agendas.
- Resistance from members who might view the code as limiting their freedom of expression or political strategy.
- Ensuring compliance with the code across a diverse group of legislators from various backgrounds and states.
- Overcoming entrenched partisan behavior and the reluctance to adopt reforms.

Way Forward:

- Political parties must engage in constructive dialogue to devise a code of conduct that aligns with democratic principles and respects constitutional values.
- Empowering presiding officers to enforce the code and ensuring accountability.
- Promoting training and awareness programs for legislators about the importance of maintaining decorum.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : Examine the need for an internal code of conduct for legislators in the Indian Parliament. What are the potential benefits and challenges of implementing such a code, and how can it strengthen democratic functioning? **(250 Words /15 marks)**

The Anthropological Survey of India's study has categorized 268 denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes, recommending the inclusion of 179 in SC, ST, and OBC lists.

Study categorises 268 tribes, moots inclusion of 179 communities on SC, ST, and OBC lists

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

In one of the largest ethnographic studies of its kind, the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) and Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) across the country have, for the first time, comprehensively categorised 268 denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes that previous commissions believed had never been classified.

The three-year-long study commissioned by a NITI Aayog panel has recommended the inclusion of 179 of these communities on Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (Central) lists of 26 States and Union Territories. At least 85 of them are being recommended as fresh additions to these lists.

Among the fresh additions, 46 communities have been recommended for OBC status, 29 for SC status, and 10 for ST status. The greatest number of fresh additions were recommended for Uttar Pradesh (19), followed by Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan at eight each.

Inclusive approach: People waiting for caste certificates in Sangareddy district, Telangana. FILE PHOTO

Apart from the fresh additions, the study recommended correcting the categorisation of nine communities, and found that many of the 268 communities had already been categorised, albeit partially, either in State lists or mentioned in Central lists but only of some States.

Top officials of the Social Justice Ministry told *The Hindu* that the report was "pending" with the NITI Aayog panel, which was "scrutinising" the AnSI and TRIs' findings. But the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs revealed in a Parliament reply last year that the Social Justice Ministry had received this report in August 2023.

Groups not traceable

The study also concluded that 63 communities (more than 20%) studied were "not traceable" anymore.

Multiple researchers associated with the study explained that 'not traceable' was a classification for communities that had likely assimilated into larger communities, changed their names, or migrated to other States/Union Territories.

This report's recommendations to add entries to the SC, ST, OBC lists, which will consequently swell their populations, comes as uncertainty grows over the next Census and whether caste will be enumerated in it, with the clamour for increasing quota percentages to match with latest proportions only growing in the absence of a population count.

Significantly, modalities for inclusion and exclusion set down by the Government of India mandate that any such proposal must originate with the State/Union Territory governments, only after which can approvals be sought from the Office of the Registrar General of India and the National Commissions for SC, ST, or OBC respectively, before the government can think of bringing legislation for it.

While the Social Justice Ministry waits for the "finalised" report from the NITI Aayog panel, sources told *The Hindu* that voices have now emerged within the Development and Welfare Board for DNT, NT, SNT communities (DWBDNC) that are calling into question the premise of classifying DNTs, NTs and SNTs as SC, ST, and OBC.

Their argument is that being a DNT, NT or SNT, adds a layer of discrimination to their lives, because of which the only fair classification would be to create a quota category just for these communities – either a separate vertical or a sub-quota for them within each category.

The ethnographic study was started by the Anthropological Survey of India in February 2020, according to replies to Right to Information Act requests.

The study was commissioned by a special panel constituted by the Prime Minister's Office in February 2019.

Analysis of the news:

- The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) and Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) conducted a three-year-long ethnographic study.

- The study categorized 268 denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes that were previously unclassified, including tribes like Banjara, Gonds, Kanjar, Dhangar, Saharia, and Rajputs.
- Of these, 46 communities are recommended for OBC status, including Banjara and Gonds, 29 for SC status, including Saharias and Dhangars, and 10 for ST status, including Gonds and Kanjar.
- Uttar Pradesh had the highest number of fresh additions, with 19 communities recommended for inclusion, such as Saharias, Dhangars, and Kanjar.
- 63 communities were classified as "not traceable," indicating possible assimilation or migration.
- The study's findings are under scrutiny by the NITI Aayog panel.
- The report may impact the debate over caste-based quotas and the inclusion of these communities in the next Census.

Page 13 : Prelims Fact

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) has decided to raise interest rates.The rate hike will likely increase short-term borrowing costs to 0.5%, from the current 0.25%.

Why did the bank of Japan decide to increase the rates?

- The Bank of Japan (BoJ) decided to increase rates to control inflation.
- Inflation has exceeded the BoJ's 2% target for nearly three years.
- The weak yen has kept import costs high, contributing to rising inflation.
- Broadening wage gains in Japan are helping sustain economic growth.
- This move is also to ensure Japan stays on track to hit its inflation target sustainably.
- The rate increase will help balance the economy, avoiding overheating or stagnation.

BoJ set to raise rates to highest in 17 years

Costly step: This would lift short-term borrowing costs to levels unseen since 2008 global financial crisis. REUTERS

Reuters
TOKYO

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) is expected to raise interest rates on Friday barring any market shocks when U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office, a move that would lift short-term borrowing costs to levels unseen since the 2008 global financial crisis. A tightening in policy would underscore the central bank's resolve to steadily push up interest rates, now at 0.25%, to near 1% – a level analysts see as neither cooling nor overheating Japan's economy.

At the two-day meeting ending on Friday, the BOJ is likely to raise its short-term policy rate to 0.5% unless Mr. Trump's inaugural speech and executive orders upend financial markets, sources have told *Reuters*.

In a quarterly outlook report, the board is also expected to raise its price forecasts on growing prospects that broadening wage gains will keep Japan on track to sustainably hit the bank's 2% inflation target. A hike by the BOJ would be the first since July last year when the move, coupled with weak U.S. jobs data, shocked traders and triggered a rout in global markets in early August.

Treading with caution

Keen to avoid a recurrence, the BOJ has carefully prepared markets with clear signals by Governor Kazuo Ueda and his deputy last week that a rate hike was on the cards. The remarks caused the yen to rebound as markets priced in a roughly 80% chance of a rate increase on Friday.

There were also hints of near-term action last month. While the BoJ held off raising rates at the December 18-19 meeting, hawkish board member Naoki Tamura proposed pushing up rates. Some of his colleagues also saw conditions fall into place for an imminent rate hike, minutes of the meeting showed.

With a policy tightening this week seen as a near certainty, market attention is shifting to Mr. Ueda's post-meeting briefing for clues on the timing and pace of subsequent increases.

As inflation has exceeded the BoJ's 2% target for nearly three years and the weak yen has kept import costs elevated, Mr. Ueda is likely to stress policymakers' resolve to continue raising interest rates. But there is a good reason to tread cautiously. While the International Monetary Fund raised its forecast for global growth in 2025, Mr. Trump's policies risk destabilising markets and stoking uncertainty about the outlook for Japan's export-reliant economy.

Domestic political uncertainty could heighten, too, as Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's minority coalition may struggle to pass Budget through Parliament and win an upper house election scheduled in July.

The economic damage caused by past ill-fated rate hikes also haunt BOJ policymakers. The BoJ ended quantitative easing in 2006 and pushed short-term rates to 0.5% in 2007, moves that triggered a storm of political criticism as delaying an end to deflation.

The BoJ cut rates from 0.5% to 0.3% in October 2008, then to 0.1% in December of that year, as the global financial crisis pushed Japan into recession. Since then, various unconventional steps have kept borrowing costs stuck near zero.

In News : WEF Annual Meeting

The WEF Annual Meeting is currently taking place in Davos, Switzerland, from January 20 to 24, 2025.

Analysis of the news:

Purpose and Initiation of the WEF

- The World Economic Forum was founded by German professor Klaus Schwab in 1971, originally as the European Management Forum.
- Schwab, a professor of business policy, introduced the concept of "stakeholder capitalism," advocating for businesses to create long-term value by considering the interests of all stakeholders, not just shareholders.
- This vision evolved the WEF into a platform for global leaders to come together and address economic and social challenges.

WEF's Evolution and Activities

- Initially focused on improving European management practices, the WEF shifted its scope after significant global events in 1973, such as the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the Arab-Israeli War.
- By 1975, the Forum expanded its membership to include the world's leading 1,000 companies.
- Over the years, it has become a prominent venue for tackling critical global issues, including AI, geopolitical risks, and climate change, and features over 500 sessions where thousands of participants, including business leaders, politicians, and experts, collaborate on solutions.

Funding and Location of the WEF

- The WEF is largely financed by global corporations with annual revenues exceeding $5 billion.
- The choice of Davos, a serene Swiss town, as the meeting location is inspired by its calm and focused atmosphere, which helps foster effective discussions.
- This setting has also witnessed landmark moments in international diplomacy, such as the first meetings between North and South Korea and key interactions during the South African political transition.

Historical Significance and Diplomatic Impact

- Throughout its history, the WEF has been a venue for groundbreaking diplomatic engagements.
- It played a key role in South African reconciliation, including the first joint appearance of Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1992.
- Additionally, the WEF has been instrumental in the establishment of the G20, which was first discussed at the 1998 meeting, and continues to influence global policy decisions through initiatives like the Global Competitiveness Report and the Global Gender Gap Report.

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Daily News Analysis

Page : 08 Editorial Analysis

UGC's draft regulation has serious constitutional issues

P.D.T. Achary

is former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

The draft regulation by the University Grants Commission (UGC) on the selection and appointment of vice chancellors of universities has evoked protests by non-Bharatiya Janata Party-headed State governments. Their main objection against this regulation is that it constitutes a violation of the federal principles enshrined in the Constitution of India. The State governments concerned have demanded its withdrawal.

The UGC has sought to amend Regulation 2010 that relates to the selection and appointment of vice chancellors by widening the area of selection. Under the existing regulations, a vice chancellor can be selected only from among academicians who have a minimum experience of 10 years as professor. Through this amendment, the UGC declares that professionals with 10-plus years of experience in industry, public administration or public policy, shall also be considered.

The draft regulation raises serious constitutional issues which need to be examined by separating the political context of protest and a possible political reaction from the UGC or the party in power.

The objective of the UGC Act

The University Grants Commission Act, 1956 was enacted by Parliament to make provision for "the co-ordination and determination of standards in Universities and for that purpose, to establish the University Grants Commission". The Act, therefore, mandates the UGC to take all steps as it thinks fit for the promotion and the coordination of university education, and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities. For performing these functions the UGC can allocate funds to the universities essentially for the maintenance and development of the universities, recommend measures necessary for the improvement of university education, advise the Union or State governments on the allocation of grants to universities for any general or specific purpose, collect information on all matters relating to university education in India and other countries and make them available to any university, regulation of fees.....

Section 26 of the UGC Act empowers the UGC to make regulations for implementing the mandate of the Act. But it is made clear in this section that these regulations need to be consistent with the Act and the rules made there under. The most important among these regulations relate to defining the qualifications required of a person to be appointed to the teaching staff in a university, the minimum standards of instructions for the grant of any degree by a university, and regulating the maintenance of standards and the coordination of work or facilities in universities.

The problem arises when the UGC begins to regulate an area which is not a part of the parent Act — namely the selection and the appointment of university vice chancellors

It is not the job of the UGC

The crucial point that needs to be considered here is whether the regulation made by the UGC in respect of the selection, qualification and appointment of vice chancellor is consistent with the provisions of the UGC Act. As a matter of fact, the Act does not contain any provisions relating to the selection and the appointment of vice chancellors. The fundamental objective of the Act is to determine standards in universities and the promotion and the coordination of university education. To lay down the standards of teaching and to prescribe the qualifications of teaching staff whose job is to give instructions, is the main function of the UGC – which it does by making periodic regulations. But the problem arises when this statutory body begins to regulate an area which is not a part of the parent Act. Rules, and regulations are technically called subordinate legislation. The subordinate legislation can be made only in consonance with the provisions in the Act. If the regulation goes outside the scope of the Act, it will be *ultra vires* the Act, and hence invalid.

A close reading of the Act would show that it was not meant to prescribe the qualifications or mode of selection of vice chancellors. All universities, whether under the Union or the States, are established under a statute made by the respective legislature. Therefore, it is the legislature which prescribes the qualifications, mode of selection, and conditions of service of vice chancellors. It is not the job of the UGC. The selection and the appointment of vice chancellors cannot be considered to be an exercise connected with maintaining the standards of education or promotion and coordination of university education. The Bombay High Court in *Suresh Patilkhede vs The Chancellor Universities of Maharashtra and Others* (2011) corroborates this view in the following words "we are of the view that qualifications and method of appointment of Pro-Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of the University cannot be treated as satisfying the 'direct impact' test [on the standards of education]". Therefore, it is safe to assume that under Section 26 of the UGC Act, the UGC has no mandate to make any regulation in respect of the selection and the appointment of vice chancellors.

An interesting constitutional question which arises in the context of the UGC's regulations is whether a regulation can over-ride an Act passed by a State legislature. This question came up in the context of the termination of the appointment of some vice chancellors in the past. The Bombay High Court in the Suresh Patilkhede case (*supra*) took the view that "Regulation 7.3.0 of UGC Regulations, 2010 being a subordinate legislation under an Act of Parliament cannot override plenary legislation enacted by the State Legislature...." However, the Supreme Court of India, in *Kalyani Mathivanan vs K.V. Jeyaraj and Ors* (*AIR 2015 SCI875 para 22*) overruled it by holding "we hold that the U.G.C. Regulations through a subordinate legislation has binding effect on the Universities to which it applies...." The reason given by the Court for reaching this conclusion is that "it is only when both the Houses of the Parliament approve the regulation, the same can be given effect". It may be clarified here that Parliament does not formally approve any rule or regulation laid in the House. It can only amend a rule which has already come into effect before it is so laid; if Parliament amends the rule, it will, thereafter, be effective in the amended form. With due respect to their lordships, the observation of the Court does not correctly reflect the parliamentary procedure relating to the laying down of rules and regulations in the Houses of Parliament.

The question whether the UGC regulations override a State law can be answered only in terms of Article 254 of the Constitution which deals with repugnancy. Under this Article, if a State law is repugnant to the central law, the State law, to the extent of repugnancy, be void. But is a regulation made by the UGC, a central law within the meaning of Article 254? Clause (2) of this Article says that if the law made by the legislature of a state has been reserved for the consideration of the President and has received his ascent, it shall prevail in the State. In this clause the word 'law' simply means the Bill passed by the legislature and sent to the President. It does not include the rules and regulations which are framed only after ascent is received. So, what overrides a State law is a Bill passed by both Houses of Parliament and assented to by the President, and certainly not the subordinate legislation.

A key ruling

In any case, the Court made a significant ruling on the question of mandatory application of Regulation 7.3.0 of the UGC relating to the selection and appointment of vice chancellors in the Kalyani Mathivanan case (*supra*) it says: "However, the finding of the Bombay High Court that Regulation 7.3.0 has to be treated as recommendatory in nature is upheld in so far as it relates to Universities and Colleges under the State Legislation." This ruling may perhaps help resolve the present controversy.

GS Paper 02 : Governance

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Discuss the constitutional and federal implications of the University Grants Commission's draft regulation on the appointment of vice chancellors in Indian universities. **(150 Words /10 marks)**

Context :

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has proposed a draft regulation on the selection and appointment of vice chancellors (VCs) of universities.
- Non-BJP-led State governments oppose the regulation, claiming it violates the federal principles of the Constitution.

Proposed Amendment by UGC

- The amendment seeks to revise Regulation 2010 regarding VC appointments by broadening the eligibility criteria.
- Previously, only academicians with a minimum of 10 years of experience as professors were eligible.
- The new proposal includes professionals with 10 or more years of experience in industry, public administration, or public policy.

Objective of the UGC Act, 1956

- The UGC Act was enacted to coordinate and determine standards in universities.The UGC promotes university education and maintains standards of teaching, research, and examinations.
- The Act allows the UGC to: Allocate funds for the maintenance and development of universities.
- Recommend measures for improving education.Advise governments on grants to universities.Collect and share information related to university education.

Role and Limits of UGC

- Section 26 of the UGC Act allows the UGC to make regulations, but these must align with the Act's objectives.
- The Act does not cover the selection or appointment of VCs, as these are determined by laws passed by respective legislatures.

- The selection and appointment of VCs do not directly impact the maintenance of educational standards, as confirmed by the Bombay High Court in Suresh Patilkhede vs The Chancellor Universities of Maharashtra and Others (2011).
- Therefore, the UGC's regulation on VC appointments may exceed its authority and could be declared invalid.

Regulations vs. State Laws

- A significant constitutional question arises: Can UGC regulations override State laws?
- The Bombay High Court ruled that UGC regulations cannot override State laws since they are subordinate legislation.
- However, the Supreme Court in Kalyani Mathivanan vs K.V. Jeyaraj and Ors (2015) held that UGC regulations have binding authority over universities.
- The Supreme Court stated that parliamentary approval is necessary for regulations to be effective, but this interpretation of parliamentary procedure has been questioned.

Resolution Through Constitutional Provisions

- Article 254 of the Constitution addresses conflicts between State and central laws.
- Only central laws (passed by Parliament and assented to by the President) can override State laws.
- UGC regulations, as subordinate legislation, do not qualify as central laws under this Article.

Conclusion

- The UGC's draft regulation exceeds its mandate under the UGC Act, raising constitutional concerns.
- It highlights the need for a balanced approach respecting federal principles and State autonomy.