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1. REGULATION & RATIONALISATION OF MAXIMUM RETAIL PRICES OF MEDICINES

- India's drug-price regulation is primarily governed by the **Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013**.
- The **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** regulates prices of medicines covered under the price-control framework.
- The objective is to ensure **affordable medicines while maintaining their availability**.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)

- Established in **1997**.
- Functions under the **Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers**.
- Regulates and monitors prices of medicines.
- Fixes/revises prices of medicines covered under DPCO.

DPCO, 2013

- Provides the framework for price regulation of medicines.
- Price control is linked to medicines included in **Schedule I**, which is based on the **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**.

KEY POINTS

- For **scheduled formulations**, NPPA fixes the **ceiling price**.
- Manufacturers may sell scheduled medicines **below the notified ceiling price**.
- For **non-scheduled formulations**, manufacturers cannot increase MRP by more than **10% over the preceding 12 months**.
- Medicine packaging must display the applicable **MRP**.
- Consumers cannot be charged more than the legally permissible price.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Improves affordability of essential medicines.
- Protects consumers from excessive pricing.
- Supports **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.
- Helps reduce the financial burden of healthcare.
- Encourages greater access to generic medicines.

OTHER AFFORDABILITY MEASURES

- ***Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP):*** Provides quality generic medicines at substantially lower prices.
- ***AMRIT pharmacies:*** Provide medicines and medical consumables at discounted prices.
- Public-health programmes also support access to essential medicines.

CHALLENGES

- Balancing medicine affordability with pharmaceutical industry's production costs.
- Ensuring price control does not cause shortages.
- Monitoring a large number of formulations and manufacturers.
- Maintaining availability of essential medicines.

WAY FORWARD

- Strengthen digital monitoring of medicine prices and availability.
- Promote domestic production of APIs and essential medicines.
- Improve transparency in pharmaceutical pricing.
- Strengthen generic-medicine awareness.
- Ensure price regulation is accompanied by adequate supply.

PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

Remember

- **NPPA → Drug price regulator**

- **DPCO, 2013 → Price-control framework**
- **NLEM → Essential medicines**
- **Scheduled formulations → Ceiling price**
- **Non-scheduled formulations → Maximum 10% annual MRP increase**

NPPA

- Established: **1997**
- Department: **Department of Pharmaceuticals**
- Ministry: **Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers**

PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding pharmaceutical price regulation in India:

1. NPPA fixes ceiling prices of scheduled formulations under DPCO, 2013.
2. Manufacturers can sell scheduled formulations below the notified ceiling price.
3. The MRP of non-scheduled formulations cannot be increased by more than 10% over the preceding 12 months.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

2. CONTAINER MANUFACTURING ASSISTANCE SCHEME: BUILDING INDIA'S MARITIME FUTURE

- The scheme aims to establish a **globally competitive domestic container manufacturing industry**.
- It seeks to reduce India's dependence on imported containers and strengthen supply-chain resilience.
- The initiative supports **Atmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India and maritime-sector development**.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Why Container Manufacturing Matters

I. Containers are essential for **international cargo movement** and multimodal logistics.
II. They allow seamless movement of goods between:
   A. Ships
   B. Railways
   C. Roads
III. Adequate container availability is important for efficient exports and imports.

India's Challenge

- India's container requirements have historically depended significantly on **imports**.
- Limited domestic manufacturing capacity can create supply-chain vulnerabilities and increase logistics costs.

KEY FEATURES

- Provides assistance to encourage **domestic production of shipping containers**.
- Encourages investment in modern manufacturing facilities.
- Aims to develop a complete **container manufacturing ecosystem**, including components and ancillary industries.
- Supports technological capability and quality standards needed for global markets.
- Intended to improve India's position in the international maritime supply chain.

SIGNIFICANCE

Atmanirbhar Bharat

- Reduces dependence on imported containers.
- Promotes indigenous manufacturing capability.

Logistics Efficiency

- Better container availability can support smoother cargo movement.
- Can strengthen India's multimodal transport network.

Employment & Industry

- Generates manufacturing employment.
- Creates opportunities for **MSMEs and ancillary industries** such as steel fabrication, engineering and component manufacturing.

Maritime Competitiveness

- Supports India's ambition to become a **global maritime and logistics hub**.

CHALLENGES

- Competing with established global container manufacturers.
- Ensuring competitive production costs and quality.
- Developing domestic supply chains for specialised components.
- Maintaining adequate demand and capacity utilisation.

WAY FORWARD

- Encourage technology partnerships and R&D.
- Integrate container manufacturing with port and logistics planning.
- Develop skilled manpower for advanced manufacturing.
- Promote environmentally efficient and recyclable container technologies.
- Build a strong domestic component ecosystem.

PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

Containerisation

- Enables **intermodal transportation** without repeatedly handling the cargo itself.
- Reduces cargo damage, handling time and logistics costs.
- Standard containers commonly include **20-foot and 40-foot units**.

Maritime Sector

- Sea transport carries a major share of India's international merchandise trade.
- Container availability is therefore directly linked with **trade and supply-chain resilience**.

PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme:

1. It seeks to promote domestic manufacturing of shipping containers.
2. It can reduce India's dependence on imported containers.
3. Containerisation facilitates multimodal transportation of goods.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

3. MSME DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

- The Bill proposes **higher investment and turnover thresholds** for classification of MSMEs.
- The revised limits are intended to allow growing enterprises to remain within the MSME framework for longer.
- It aims to encourage **business expansion, investment, formalisation and competitiveness**.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

MSMED Act, 2006

I. Provides the legal framework for the **promotion, development and enhancement of MSMEs**.

II. MSMEs are important for:

   A. Employment generation.

   B. Manufacturing.

   C. Exports.

   D. Entrepreneurship.

   E. Regional development.

Current Classification Framework

- MSME classification is based on a **composite criterion of investment and annual turnover**.

KEY PROPOSED CHANGES

Revised Classification Limits

I. **Micro enterprise**

   A. Investment: up to **₹2.5 crore**

   B. Turnover: up to **₹10 crore**

II. **Small enterprise**

   A. Investment: up to **₹25 crore**

   B. Turnover: up to **₹100 crore**

III. **Medium enterprise**

   A. Investment: up to **₹125 crore**

   B. Turnover: up to **₹500 crore**

Why Higher Limits?

- Prevents rapidly growing enterprises from losing MSME status prematurely.
- Gives businesses greater room to **scale up investment and turnover**.
- Can improve access to MSME-related government support.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Encourages **scaling-up of enterprises**.
- Promotes investment and technological upgradation.
- Strengthens India's manufacturing ecosystem.
- Supports employment generation and exports.
- Improves competitiveness of Indian enterprises.

CHALLENGES

- Larger number of enterprises may seek MSME benefits.
- Requires effective monitoring of investment and turnover.
- Smaller enterprises may continue to face difficulties in credit, technology and market access.

WAY FORWARD

- Improve access to affordable institutional credit.
- Strengthen digitalisation and technology adoption.
- Ensure timely payments to MSMEs.
- Expand export and market-linkage support.
- Promote skilling and entrepreneurship.

PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

Proposed MSME Limits

Remember:

Micro → ₹2.5 cr investment + ₹10 cr turnover

Small → ₹25 cr investment + ₹100 cr turnover

Medium → ₹125 cr investment + ₹500 cr turnover

Important

MSME classification uses **both investment and turnover**.

PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the MSME Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026:

1. It seeks to amend the MSMED Act, 2006.
2. It proposes higher investment and turnover limits for MSME classification.
3. MSME classification is based on both investment and annual turnover.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

4. CULTIVATION OF KALA NAMAK RICE

- **Kala Namak** is an indigenous, aromatic rice variety traditionally cultivated in the **Terai region of Uttar Pradesh**.
- It is particularly associated with **Siddharthnagar and adjoining districts**.
- It has a **GI tag**, providing legal protection and strengthening its branding and market potential.
- Its promotion supports **crop diversification, agricultural biodiversity and farmer incomes**.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Kala Namak Rice

- A traditional **aromatic rice variety** of the Uttar Pradesh Terai.
- Known for its distinctive **fragrance, taste and grain characteristics**.
- It is considered an important part of the region's **agricultural and cultural heritage**.

GI Recognition

- GI status links the product's reputation and characteristics with its geographical origin.
- It can help prevent misuse of the name and promote authentic regional production.

KEY POINTS

- Promoted as a **specialty agricultural product**.
- Cultivation is concentrated mainly in **eastern Uttar Pradesh**.
- Supports preservation of traditional rice varieties.
- Offers scope for **value addition, branding and wider markets**.
- Can contribute to diversification away from conventional rice varieties.

SIGNIFICANCE

Agricultural

- Conserves **traditional crop genetic diversity**.
- Encourages region-specific agriculture.
- Supports crop diversification.

Economic

- Premium branding can improve farmers' market opportunities.
- Processing, packaging and GI-based marketing can increase value addition.
- Potential for wider domestic and export markets.

Cultural

- Preserves traditional agricultural knowledge and food heritage.

CHALLENGES

- Lower productivity compared with some modern high-yielding varieties.
- Need for quality seed and improved cultivation practices.
- Limited processing and organised marketing infrastructure.
- Maintaining genetic purity while expanding production.

WAY FORWARD

- Promote improved varieties while retaining traditional characteristics.
- Strengthen farmer training and quality seed availability.
- Develop processing, packaging and branding infrastructure.

- Expand GI-based marketing and export linkages.
- Integrate Kala Namak into **One District One Product (ODOP)** and other value-chain initiatives where appropriate.

PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

Remember

- **Kala Namak → Aromatic rice**
- **Major region → Eastern Uttar Pradesh/Terai**
- **Important district → Siddharthnagar**
- **GI status → Yes**
- **Importance → Biodiversity + farmer income + cultural heritage**

GI Tag

- Governed in India by the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
- Protects products whose qualities, reputation or characteristics are essentially associated with a particular geographical origin.

PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Kala Namak rice:

1. It is a traditional aromatic rice variety associated with Uttar Pradesh.
2. It has been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
3. Its promotion can contribute to agricultural biodiversity and crop diversification.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

5. INDIA–LIBERIA: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT & PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

- The interaction focused on **women's empowerment, gender equality and women's participation in governance**.
- India shared its experiences in **women and child welfare, nutrition and empowerment**.
- The engagement strengthens **India–Liberia cooperation** and South–South knowledge sharing.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Women's Legislative Caucus of Liberia

- A parliamentary platform bringing together women legislators.
- Works to advance issues affecting **women and girls**.
- Promotes women's participation in **legislation, leadership and decision-making**.

India–Liberia Relations

I. India and Liberia maintain diplomatic and development cooperation.
II. Cooperation includes areas such as:
   A. Capacity building.
   B. Education and healthcare.
   C. Trade and investment.
   D. Human-resource development.

KEY POINTS

I. Discussions covered **women-led development and gender equality**.

II. India highlighted its experiences in:
   A. Women's welfare and empowerment.
   B. Maternal and child health.
   C. Nutrition.
   D. Skill development.

III. Parliamentary exchanges can facilitate sharing of **best practices in inclusive governance**.

SIGNIFICANCE

Women-Led Development

- Supports India's approach of moving from women-centric welfare towards **women-led development**.

South–South Cooperation

- Enables India and Liberia to exchange development experiences and institutional practices.

Political Empowerment

- Greater participation of women in legislatures can strengthen representation of women's interests in policymaking.

India–Africa Engagement

- Adds a people-centric dimension to India's wider engagement with **Africa**.

CHALLENGES

- Persistent gender gaps in political representation and economic participation.
- Barriers to women's access to education, healthcare and employment.
- Need to translate legislative representation into effective policy outcomes.

WAY FORWARD

- Expand parliamentary exchanges and capacity-building programmes.
- Share best practices in women and child development.
- Strengthen cooperation in **education, healthcare, nutrition and skills**.
- Promote greater participation of women in decision-making institutions.

PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

LIBERIA

- **Capital:** Monrovia
- **Region:** West Africa
- **Coast:** Atlantic Ocean
- **Neighbours:** Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire
- **Regional organisation:** ECOWAS
- **Continental organisation:** African Union

ITEC

- **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme**.
- India's flagship programme for **capacity building and technical cooperation** with developing countries.

PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Liberia:

1. Liberia is located in West Africa.
2. Liberia has a coastline along the Atlantic Ocean.
3. Liberia is a member of the African Union.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)