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General Studies-1

Geography

Monsoon to be Normal according to IMD:

- a. Quantitatively, the monsoon seasonal rainfall is likely to be 97% of the Long Period Average (LPA) with a model error of $\pm 5\%$. The LPA of the season rainfall over the country as a whole for the period 1951-2000 is 89 cm.

- b. Forecast also suggests maximum probability for normal monsoon rainfall (96-104% of LPA) and low probability for deficient rainfall during the season.

How does IMD forecast Monsoon?

India Meteorological Department (IMD) issues operational forecast for the southwest monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall for the country as a whole in two stages.

The first stage forecast is issued in April and the second stage forecast is issued in June. These forecasts are prepared using state-of-the-art Statistical Ensemble Forecasting system (SEFS) that is critically reviewed and improved regularly through in-house research activities.

Since 2012, IMD is also using the dynamical global climate forecasting system (CFS) model developed under the Monsoon Mission to generate forecasts.

Factors Considered for Monsoon Forecast:

- Sea Surface Temperature (SST) Gradient between North Atlantic and North Pacific
- Equatorial South Indian Ocean SST
- East Asia Mean Sea Level Pressure
- Northwest Europe Land Surface Air Temperature
- Equatorial Pacific Warm Water Volume



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New Methodology To Define Rainfall and Drought:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will now stop use of the term '**drought**' to describe poor rainfall recorded across parts of the country and replace it with the terms '**deficient year**' and '**large deficient year**'.

Following are the key terms that have now been standardized by the IMD:

Heat wave: Temperatures greater than 4.5 degree Celsius above what's usual for the region.

Cold wave: Temperatures less than 4.5 degree Celsius above what's usual for the region.

Severe heat wave: greater than or equal to 47 degree Celsius.

Severe cold wave: Minimum temperature is 2 degree Celsius or lower.

The new criteria classify all-India rainfall into five categories: **normal** (plus or minus 10% of the long period average) **below normal** (rainfall lower than 10% below average), **above normal** (rainfall greater than 10% above average), **deficient year** (rainfall deficit between 10 and 20% up to 40% of India's spatial area) and **large deficient year** (rainfall deficit of over 10% across more than 40% of India's area).

The rules also change criteria to classify seasonal rainfall.

Instead of the old four rainfall categories (excess, normal, deficient, and scanty), the **IMD has introduced six categories** – **large excess:** 60% and above; **excess:** between 20% and 59%; **normal:** minus 19% to plus 19%; **deficient:** minus 20% to minus 59%; **large deficient:** below 60%; and no rain: (0).



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General studies-2

International Relations:

India-OPEC

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said India would coordinate with China and other Asian countries to raise voice against the "Asian premium" being charged by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

What is Asian premium?

Asian Premium is the extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries when selling oil. The premium is determined in large part by the official selling prices (OSPs) set by Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait, which supply about 15 percent of the world's crude among them. They set differential prices against benchmarks on a monthly basis, adjusting them to account for regional variations.

About OPEC:

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is an intergovernmental organization of 14 nations as of February 2018, founded in 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela), and headquartered since 1965 in Vienna, Austria.

As of 2016, the 14 countries accounted for an estimated 44 percent of global oil production and 73 percent of the world's "proven" oil reserves, giving OPEC a major influence on global oil prices that were previously determined by American-dominated multinational oil companies.

OPEC's stated mission is "to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry.



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World Bank Provides Loan for development in North-east

A Loan Agreement with IBRD for loan of USD 48 million for the “Meghalaya Community - Led Landscapes Management Project (MCLLMP)” was signed here today with the World Bank.

The Objective of the Project is to strengthen community-led landscapes management in selected landscapes in the State of Meghalaya.

The Project consists of three components:

- (i) Strengthening Knowledge and Capacity for Natural Resource Management;
- (ii) Community-led landscape planning and implementation and
- (iii) Project Management and Governance.

How will it Help?

- Meghalaya’s natural resource such as land, water sources and forests is a source of livelihood for a majority of the population in the State.
- The Project will help manage these depleting resources, by strengthening the communities and traditional institutions.
- Restoration of degraded and highly degraded landscapes under the Project will increase water for local communities and improve the soil productivity which will in turn increase incomes and reduce poverty.

General Studies-3

Environment Related Issues:

New Plastic Waste Management(Amendment)Rules

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2018.

The amended Rules lay down that the phasing out of Multilayered Plastic (MLP) is now applicable to MLP, which are “non-recyclable, or non-energy recoverable, or with no alternate use.”

The amended Rules also prescribe a central registration system for the registration of the producer/importer/brand owner.



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The Rules also lay down that any mechanism for the registration should be automated and should take into account ease of doing business for producers, recyclers and manufacturers.

The centralised registration system will be evolved by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for the registration of the producer/importer/brand owner.

While a national registry has been prescribed for producers with presence in more than two states, a state-level registration has been prescribed for smaller producers/brand owners operating within one or two states.

Objectives of The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 :

- Increase minimum thickness of plastic carry bags from 40 to 50 microns and stipulate minimum thickness of 50 micron for plastic sheets also to facilitate collection and recycle of plastic waste,
- Expand the jurisdiction of applicability from the municipal area to rural areas, because plastic has reached rural areas also;
- To bring in the responsibilities of producers and generators, both in plastic waste management system and to introduce collect back system of plastic waste by the producers/brand owners, as per extended producers responsibility;
- To introduce collection of plastic waste management fee through pre-registration of the producers, importers of plastic carry bags/multilayered packaging and vendors selling the same for establishing the waste management system;
- To promote use of plastic waste for road construction as per Indian Road Congress guidelines or energy recovery, or waste to oil etc. for gainful utilization of waste and also address the waste disposal issue; to entrust more responsibility on waste generators, namely payment of user charge as prescribed by local authority, collection and handing over of waste by the institutional generator, event organizers.



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FIEO-GlobalLinker for MSME

The Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Suresh Prabhu launched the FIEO GlobalLinker- a digital platform for MSME exporters to digitise their businesses and join a global community of growing businesses today in New Delhi.

This initiative will help in expanding India's multi-focused export strategy and also aid in connecting art and artisans to the market.

Minister also informed that at least 300 Geographical Indications will be registered very soon, which will give a major boost to exports.

FIEO GlobalLinker is setup with a view to make the business growth of SMEs simpler, more profitable and enjoyable.

It is a growing global network currently comprising over 140,000 SME firms, who are seeking business collaboration and growth opportunities through the use of their electronic business card and digital profiles created on the platform.

FIEO is available free of cost and it offers exporters a range of features and benefits like:

- **Business Opportunities:** Exporters will be able to find clients, suppliers and advisors using the search and review facilities. Creating a free e-commerce store for direct sales and improved chain management.
- **Up-to-date Business Knowledge** through business articles, industry news and common interest groups.
- **Improved Efficiencies:** Platform provides services like company intranet, integrating email, a business calendar.



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- FIEO's Services: Application for new RCMC/endorsement/renewal/participation in FIEO's promotional programme and alerts.

FAME scheme

Why In News?

The government has decided to extend the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme by six months until 30 September 2018, or till the time the second phase of the scheme is approved by it.

About FAME Scheme:

- The FAME India Scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments i.e. 2 Wheeler, 3 Wheeler Auto, Passenger 4 Wheeler Vehicle, Light Commercial Vehicles and Buses.
- The scheme covers Hybrid & Electric technologies like Mild Hybrid, Strong Hybrid, Plug in Hybrid & Battery Electric Vehicles.
- FAME India – Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric vehicles in India – is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan. The scheme envisages Rs 795 crore support in the first two fiscals. It is being administered by the Heavy Industries Ministry.
- The scheme has 4 focus areas i.e. Technology development, Demand Creation, Pilot Projects and Charging Infrastructure