



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 26-03-2024

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Gulaal gota

Syllabus: GS-1; Art and Culture

Context

- *Some parts of Rajasthan's Jaipur, an old tradition will play out where colours will be thrown through a unique medium called the "Gulaal Gota", dating back around 400 years.*

What is a Gulaal Gota?

- *A Gulaal Gota is a **small ball made of lac, filled with dry gulaal.***
- *Weighing around 20 grams when filled with gulaal, these balls are thrown at people on Holi, getting smashed to bits on impact.*
- *Local artisans say that making Gulaal Gotas involves first boiling the lac in water to make it flexible.*
- *Lac is a **resinous substance that is secreted by certain insects.** It is also used to make bangles.*
- *After shaping the lac, colour is added to it.*
- *At first red, yellow, and green are added as other colours can be obtained through their combinations.*
- *After the processing is done, artisans heat the lac.*
- *It is then blown into a spherical shape with the help of a blower called "**phunkni**".*
- *Then, gulaal is filled in the balls before they are sealed with lac.*



Where does the raw material for Gulaal Gota come from?

- *Lac is brought from **Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.***
- *The female scale insect is one of the sources of lac.*

- To produce 1 kg of lac resin, around 300,000 insects are killed.
- The lac insects also yield resin, lac dye and lac wax.

How did Gulaal Gotas become a tradition in Jaipur?

- Gulaal Gotas are made by **Muslim lac makers, called Manihaars, only in Jaipur.**
- Manihaars' ancestors were shepherds and horse traders who arrived from Afghanistan.
- They settled in Bagru, a town located close to Jaipur, and learnt lac-making from Hindu lac makers or Lakhere.
- The city of Jaipur was established in 1727.
- **Its founder Sawai Jai Singh II, an admirer of art, dedicated a lane at the Tripoliya Bazaar to the Manihaar community, naming it "Manihaaron ka Raasta".**
- This is where lac bangles, jewellery, and Gulaal Gota are mostly sold, to date.

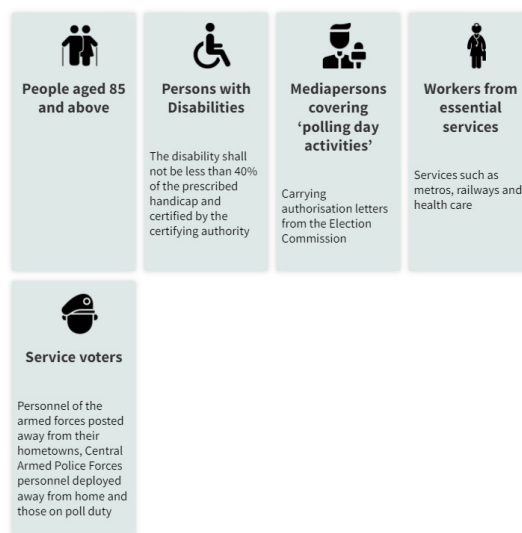
Who may vote from home in LS elections?

Syllabus: GS-2; Elections

Context

- The article here deals all about the vote-from-home facility in the Lok Sabha elections

Who is eligible?



How to avail the vote-from-home facility?

- Key to the process is **Form 12D**, which is a letter informing the **Assistant Returning Officer (ARO)** that the person may not be in a position to go to the polling station to vote.

Steps to avail the vote-for-home facility



- During the visit, the polling team is expected to follow protocol under the **Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961**.
- Each team of poll officers is required to (a) issue postal ballot to each of the Absentee Voters assigned to it, (b) brief the elector about the procedure to be followed for voting through postal ballot, (c) make sure that the elector votes without anyone influencing his/her choice, and ensuring the secrecy of voting, all activities at the address of the elector concerned, according to a November 2022 communique for the Vote-from-home facility.
- People with blindness or physical infirmity are allowed to nominate a companion and take their assistance while home voting.
- The person can act as a companion of only one elector, is required to give a declaration in a form prescribed by the ECI, and **“keep the vote secret.”**

What else has the EC done for inclusive elections?

- The government is also experimenting with **remote voting for domestic migrants**, according to a December 2022 press release.
- The **Multi Constituency Remote Electronic Voting Machine (RVM)** would allow people who migrate within the country for employment and opportunity (almost 450 million, as per the latest 2011 census) to vote for their home constituencies from remote locations.
- Internal migrants face a string of challenges due to the transient nature of their life and livelihood. Many are reluctant to get themselves enrolled multiple times, unwilling to get names deleted from electoral roll of home constituencies and facing an emotional disconnect with the places they migrate to.
- If implemented, "it can lead to a social transformation for the migrants and connect with their roots," the government said.

Operation Indravati

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations

Context

- Recently, India launched 'Operation Indravati' to evacuate its citizens from the **turmoil-stricken Haiti to the neighboring Dominican Republic.**



What is Operation Indravati?

- *Amid the tension in Haiti, Operation Indravati was launched by India to swiftly evacuate Indians to Dominican Republic.*
- *External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took to his X handle where he conveyed that the Indian Government successfully evacuated 12 Indians to Dominican Republic. **India does not have an embassy in Haiti.***
- *The EAM said that of the 75-90 Indians in Haiti, 60 registered with the embassy in Dominican Republic have requested a return "if need be".*

Haiti in Chaos due to Gang Violence

- *Haiti has been grappling with a state of emergency triggered by recent violent attacks.*
- **Haiti, a Caribbean country, has plunged into chaos due to gang warfare.**
- *The US has airlifted non-essential staff from its embassy and the country has declared a state of emergency.*
- *On March 12 2024, Prime Minister Ariel Henry, stranded outside the country, resigned.*
- *This comes after gangs attacked airports, police stations and prisons. Thousands of jail inmates have fled too.*
- **Jimmy Cherizier, popular as 'Babekyou' or 'Barbecue', is a 47-year-old rifle-toting former police officer and the leader of the notorious 'G9 and Family' gang and is now the most powerful man in Haiti.**
- *The ongoing chaos has prompted widespread displacement, with tens of thousands forced to flee their homes, adding to the already significant number of internally displaced persons due to gang violence.*
- *Gang control in Haiti's capital has reached 80%, according to the UN, with fighting ongoing in the remaining areas.*

ETF

Syllabus: GS-3; Money Market

Context

- *Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has directed **mutual fund houses to stop accepting any more inflows in schemes that invest in overseas exchange-traded funds (ETFs), starting April 1, 2024.***
- *SEBI has issued these directions as inflows in these overseas ETFs have come close to the mandated investment limit of \$1 billion in foreign ETFs.*

Why is SEBI's direction to MFs ?

- *The capital market regulator has asked **asset management companies (AMCs)** not to accept funds in mutual fund plans that invest in overseas exchange-traded funds (ETFs) as the upper limit of \$1 billion for these investments is close to being breached.*
- *The mutual fund industry has already reached 95 per cent or (\$ 950 million) of the \$1 billion limit. This is the reason why SEBI has asked mutual funds to temporarily stop accepting money in overseas ETFs.*

What is an exchange traded fund?

- *An ETF, or **exchange traded fund**, is a marketable security that tracks an index, a commodity, bonds, or a basket of assets like an index fund.*
- *Unlike regular mutual funds, an ETF trades like a common stock on a stock exchange.*
- *The traded price of an ETF changes throughout the day like any other stock, as it is bought and sold on the stock exchange.*
- *The trading value of an ETF is based on the net asset value of the underlying stocks that an ETF represents.*
- *ETFs typically have **higher daily liquidity** and lower fees than mutual fund schemes, making them an attractive alternative for individual investors.*
- *ETFs are considered to be more tax efficient compared to other mutual fund schemes.*
- *There are mainly five types of ETFs – **equity ETF, bonds ETF, commodity ETF, international ETF and sectoral/thematic ETF.***

Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM) Programme

Syllabus: GS-3: Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture Practice.

Context:

- **Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM) Programme**

About FARM Programme

- *FARM is a \$379 million initiative aimed at **decreasing agrochemical usage and promoting sustainable alternatives in food production.***
- *It emphasizes **reshaping financial incentives to discourage harmful inputs and promote the adoption of low and non-chemical alternatives.***

- **FARM advocates for government regulations** to phase out persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in agrochemicals and agri-plastics, alongside adopting better management standards.
- It **enhances banking, insurance, and investment criteria** to boost the availability of effective pest control, production alternatives, and sustainable produce trade.
- Member countries encompass **India, Ecuador, Kenya, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Uruguay, and Vietnam.**
- **Implementing agencies include** UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), ADB (Asian Development Bank), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), and UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), with in-country execution by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization).
- The program is slated to **operate for five years.**

Significance of FARM Initiative

- Aims to **tackle the detrimental impact of nearly 4 billion tons of pesticides and 12 billion kg of agricultural plastics annually on health and the environment.**
- Prioritizes **reducing the use of highly hazardous pesticides and managing agricultural plastics to avert the release of toxic POPs, contaminating air, water, and food.**
- Addresses the current absence of incentives for farmers to adopt better practices, owing to the lower cost of harmful chemicals compared to sustainable alternatives.

What are POPs?

- In 1995, the Governing Council of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** urged global action on POPs, defining them as "chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate through the food web, and pose a risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment".

Uniqueness of POPs:

- **POPs are lipophilic**, meaning they accumulate in the **fatty tissue of living animals and humans.**
- Concentrations in fatty tissue can increase by up to **70,000 times higher than background levels.**

- *Concentrations of POPs tend to **escalate up the food chain**, resulting in higher levels in animals at the top such as fish, predatory birds, mammals, and humans.*

About the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

- *Headquartered in **Washington, D.C.**, the GEF was founded during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.*
- *It functions as the financial mechanism for five international environmental conventions, namely the **Minamata Convention on Mercury, Stockholm Convention on POPs**, UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).*
- *The **World Bank acts as the trustee for the GEF**, which boasts a membership of over 180 countries, including India.*