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Little Prespa Lake

Context: Little Prespa Lake, a vital water body on the Albanian-Greek border, is shrinking due to a combination of human intervention and climate change.

Geography:

- **Location:** Little Prespa Lake lies mostly in Greece, with its southern tip extending into Albania. It is a smaller counterpart to the larger Great Prespa Lake.
- **Size:** Of the 450 hectares of the lake in Albania, 430 hectares have turned into swamps or dried up.
- **Historical Causes for Degradation:** In the 1970s, Albanian communist authorities diverted the Devoll River to irrigate fields near the city of Korca, significantly reducing the lake's water levels.



Impact of lake shrinking:

- **Loss of Livelihoods:** Fishing, once a primary occupation for locals, has been severely affected. Boats are now stranded in mud, and fish populations have dwindled, leaving residents with few alternatives.
- **Shift in Landscape:** The dried-up lake has become marshy impacting the overall ecology.
- **Change in weather patterns:** Rising temperatures, increasingly mild winters, and decreased precipitation have further worsened the situation.
- **Environmental impact:** Little Prespa Lake is part of

a transboundary region known for its rich biodiversity. The loss of the lake could endanger bird species and other wildlife reliant on its water.

- Environmental experts warn that continued dry conditions could lead to the lake's complete disappearance. If the upcoming winter stays dry and summers are hot, the lake may lose all its water, leading to irreversible ecological damage.

About Prespa Lakes:

- The Prespa Lakes are the two highest tectonic lakes at an elevation of 853 meters (2,799 ft) in the Balkans. They are located at the tripoint of North Macedonia, Albania, and Greece.
- **Great Prespa Lake:** Shared between North Macedonia (176.3 km²), Albania (46.3 km²), and Greece (36.4 km²).
- **Little Prespa Lake:** Mostly in Greece, with 4.3 km² extending into Albania.
- The two lakes are separated by a 4 km long isthmus in Greece, connected by a short canal.

National Level Review Workshop on Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation

Context: A two-day National Workshop on Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation organised in Guwahati by the Department of Agriculture, Assam, and the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (DA&FW), Government of India.

What is Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation?

- Sustainable oil palm cultivation refers to the practice of growing oil palm trees in a way that minimises environmental impact while maximising economic benefits for farmers and the community.
- It involves employing environmentally friendly techniques, ensuring biodiversity conservation, and promoting social responsibility in farming practices.

Government Schemes Promoting Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation in India

- **National Mission for Edible Oils- Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)**
- **Launched:** August 2021.
- **Objective:** Increase oil palm cultivation and crude

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palm oil production to achieve self-reliance in edible oils.

- **Financial Outlay:** ₹11,040 crores, with ₹8,844 crores from the Government of India and ₹2,196 crores from state governments.

country's total production. Other states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Gujarat, and Mizoram, also have significant areas under oil palm cultivation.

New SEBI Rules to Curb F&O Frenzy

Context: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) have recently introduced six new measures to strengthen the equity index derivatives framework, also known as Futures and Options (F&O).

Context of the Changes:

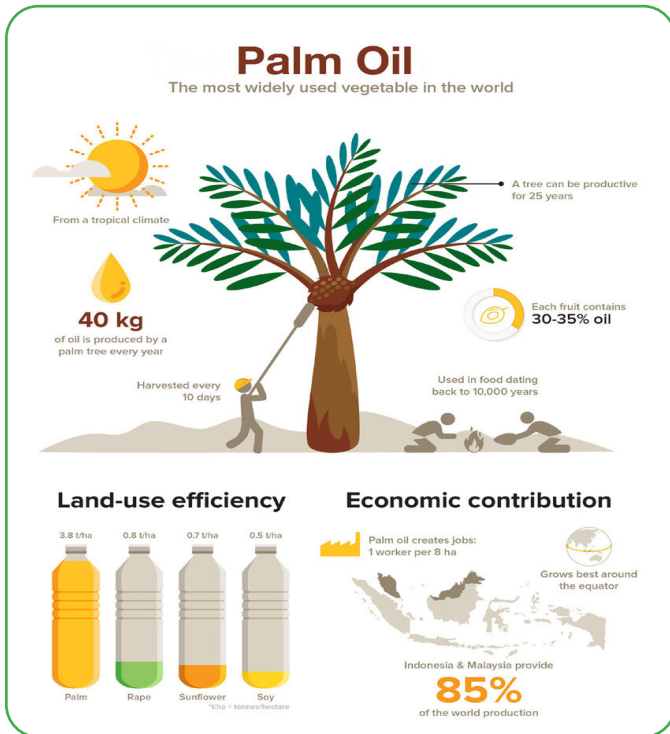
- The F&O segment has seen a substantial increase in trading activity in recent times, which has led to a majority of investors incurring losses. This alarming trend has prompted regulatory authorities to address the potential systemic risks posed by unchecked speculation.

Key Measures Introduced by SEBI:

- **Increased Contract Size:** The minimum contract size has been raised from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 15 lakh to discourage retail investors from participating in the index derivatives market.
- **Higher Margin Requirements:** SEBI has increased the margin requirements to prevent excessive leverage and speculation.
- **Upfront Collection of Option Premiums:** Brokers are now required to collect option premiums upfront from buyers to prevent undue intraday leverage.
- **Limit on Weekly Expiries:** Weekly expiries will be limited to one benchmark per exchange to reduce speculative trading.
- **Intraday Monitoring of Position Limits:** Stock exchanges will monitor position limits for equity index derivatives on an intraday basis to prevent market manipulation.
- **Removal of Calendar Spread Treatment:** The calendar spread margin benefit on expiry days has been removed to reduce speculative trading.

About Futures and Options Contracts:

- **Futures Contract:** A futures contract is a binding agreement between a buyer and a seller to buy or sell an



Focus Areas:

- Expansion of oil palm area from 3.5 lakh hectares to 10 lakh hectares by 2025-26.
- Raising crude palm oil production from 0.27 lakh tonnes to 11.20 lakh tonnes during the same period.
- Support for planting materials, intercropping, and establishing nurseries.

Soil Health Card Scheme

- **Launched:** 2015.
- **Objective:** Promote sustainable farming practices by providing farmers with information on soil health.
- **Relevance:** Helps oil palm growers understand soil requirements and implement best practices to improve productivity sustainably.

Oil Palm Production in India:

- Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala are the major oil palm-growing states, accounting for 98% of the

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asset at a predetermined price on a specified future date.

- » **Obligation:** The buyer is obligated to purchase, and the seller is obligated to sell the underlying asset at the agreed-upon price, regardless of the current market price at the expiration date.
- **Option Contract:** An option contract grants an investor the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a commodity at a specified price on a specified future date.
 - » Unlike futures, options do not impose a mandatory obligation to execute the transaction; the investor can choose whether to exercise the option.

About SEBI:

- Origin of SEBI: Established in 1988 as a non-statutory body; accorded statutory powers in 1992 with the

passing of the SEBI Act 1992 by the Indian Parliament

Organisational Structure:

- **Chairman:** Nominated by the Union Government of India
- **Members:**
 - » Two members (Officers from the Union Finance Ministry)
 - » One member from the Reserve Bank of India
 - » Five members (Nominated by the Union Government; at least three must be whole-time members)
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai
- **Regional Offices:** Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

CDSKO Becomes Affiliate Member of IMDRF

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has become an affiliate member of the International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF).

Background:

- In 2024, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSKO), part of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, applied to join the International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF) as an Affiliate Member.
- India's application was reviewed during the 26th Session of IMDRF in September 2024 in Seattle, Washington.
- This move aims to align India's medical device regulations with global standards, improve the competitiveness of its domestic industry, and enhance its international reputation.

About IMDRF:

- Established in 2011, the IMDRF is a collaborative group of global medical device regulators.
- Members include regulatory authorities from the U.S., Australia, Canada, EU, Japan, UK, Brazil, Russia, China, South Korea, Singapore, and WHO.

Benefits of Membership:

- **Strengthened Regulatory Framework:** India will be able to adopt IMDRF documents to enhance its medical device regulatory system
- **Global Collaboration:** India will participate in IMDRF Open Sessions, facilitating information exchange and collaboration with other regulators
- **Increased Competitiveness:** Indian medical device manufacturers will be able to meet regulatory requirements of IMDRF member countries, increasing their global competitiveness
- **Enhanced Public Health and Safety:** India's membership will ensure better protection of public health and safety through harmonized regulatory standards

The first Kho-Kho World Cup will be held in India in 2025

- The Kho-Kho Federation of India (KKFI) has announced that India will host the first-ever Kho-Kho World Cup in 2025, in partnership with the International Kho-Kho Federation.
- The tournament will feature 16 men's and 16 women's teams from 24 countries across 6 continents.
- To promote the sport ahead of the World Cup, KKFI plans to introduce Kho-Kho to 200 prominent schools in 10 cities

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and run a membership drive among students.

- The goal is to register 5 million players before the World Cup to boost the sport's popularity.
- KKFI also aims to include Kho-Kho in the 2032 Olympics, with this World Cup being a key step toward that goal.

ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 Begins in the UAE

- The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 recently began on October 3 in the UAE, marking the 9th edition of the tournament. The opening match was between Bangladesh and Scotland.
- Australia has dominated previous tournaments, winning 6 out of 8 titles, while England and West Indies have each won once. Bangladesh was originally set to host the event, but due to a political crisis, the ICC moved the tournament to the UAE at the last minute.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

- The National Disability Network (NDN), a coalition of organizations advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, has urged the Government of India to include persons with disabilities in the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) without any age-related restrictions.
- This call comes after the Union Cabinet recently approved health coverage under the scheme for all senior citizens aged 70 and above, regardless of their income.

About AB PM-JAY:

- Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) is India's flagship national health insurance scheme, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 23, 2018.
- The scheme provides health coverage of ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalizations.
- It aims to benefit over 12 crore poor and vulnerable families, which represent the bottom 40% of India's population.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Families included in the scheme are selected based on deprivation and occupational criteria from the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011.

Places in News: Jamaica

- The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently held delegation level talks with his Jamaican counterpart Dr. Andrew Holness
- Jamaica is an island nation situated in the Caribbean Sea, approximately 145 km south of Cuba. It is part of the Greater Antilles and is bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the south and the North Atlantic Ocean to the north.

About Jamaica:

- Jamaica island covers an area of about 10,990 square kilometers, making it the third-largest island in the Caribbean. The interior is predominantly mountainous, with significant ranges such as the Blue Mountains, where Blue Mountain Peak rises to 2,256 meters.
- **Capital:** Kingston is the capital and largest city, located on the southern coast. Other notable cities include Montego Bay, Portmore, and Spanish Town.
- **History:** Jamaica was colonized by the Spanish in 1494 and later conquered by the British in 1655.
- It gained independence in 1962 and is known for its rich cultural heritage and contributions to music, particularly reggae.
- **Languages:** The official languages are English, Jamaican Patois, and a variety of Creole languages.



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