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1. VARUNA 2022

Syllabus: GS III, Various Security forces and agencies

Prelims: About VARUNA

Mains: India-France defence cooperation

Context: The 20th edition of the bilateral naval exercise named VARUNA between India and France commenced in the Arabian Sea.

Importance: This exercise exemplifies the shared commitment of both countries towards maritime security and safety along with the introduction of a meticulous roadmap to tackle future challenges in the oceanic space.

About Ex VARUNA:

- This naval exercise included ships, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, fighter aircraft and helicopters of the two navies.
- This exercise witnessed its inception in 1993 and became a crucial part of the India-France strategic bilateral relationship.
- The focus areas include enhancement of operation skills in the maritime theatre, expansion of interoperability to undertake maritime security operations and demonstrating their commitment to promote peace, security and stability in the region in an integrated manner.
- The joint exercise is conducted with the primary goal of progressing the Indo-French coordination on cross-deck operations, replenishment at sea, minesweeping, anti-submarine warfare and information sharing.

Read about [India-France Relations](#) in the linked article.

2. LAMITIYE 2022

Syllabus: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

Prelims: Facts about LAMITIYE

Context: The 9th edition of India-Seychelles Joint Training Exercise LAMITIYE-2022 commenced at the Seychelles Defence Academy with a 48-hour validation exercise.

About LAMITIYE:

- It is a joint military exercise between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Academy that is conducted biennially.
- This was launched in 2001 to collaborate in the areas of mutual interests in managing the security challenges faced by both the nations in the Indian Ocean region.
- The Gorkha Rifles group (PIRKANTHI Battalion) from the Indian Army took part in the exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is to increase the capability to undertake joint operations in a semi-urban environment along with the facility of a platform for professional and cultural activities.
- It also aims at widening the scope of cooperation for peaceful co-existence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Read more about [India-Seychelles Relations](#) in the linked article.

3. Relaxation of TCS (Tax Collected at Source) Provision

Syllabus: GS III, Mobilisation of resources

Prelims: Taxation in India

Context: The Central Government has relaxed the provisions under Section 206 C(1G) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 for non-resident individuals visiting India.

Points of Essence:

- Section 206 C(1G) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 provides for the collection of tax by a seller of an overseas tour programme package for a buyer, being a person purchasing such a package at the rate of 5% of the amount of the package.
- The **CBDT** has relaxed this 5% tax collected at source under the aforementioned section of the Income Tax Act.
- This provision has created difficulty for the tour operators in the collection of tax from non-resident individuals as the individuals visiting India may not have a PAN (Permanent Account Number), and tax is collected at higher rates. Such individuals may find it challenging to claim refunds and Income Tax Returns.
- To avoid such difficulties, the central government has specified that the provision under section 206(1G) of the Act shall not apply to a buyer being an individual who is not a resident of India in terms of clause (1) and clause (1A) of section 6 of the Act and who is visiting India. Therefore, the tour operator is not required to collect tax on the sale of overseas tour packages to non-resident individuals visiting India.

Read about [Taxation in India](#) in the linked article.

4. Flex Fuel Vehicles

Syllabus: GS III, Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Prelims: Flex Fuel Vehicles

Mains: Evaluating the significance of Flex Fuel vehicles in reducing India's dependence on oil imports.

Context: Considering the objective to promote the introduction of flex fuel vehicles in India, the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Automobile and auto components of the Ministry of Heavy Industries decided to incentivise the Auto OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers).

What are Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFV)?

- These vehicles are capable of functioning on 100% petrol or 100% bio-ethanol or a combination of both.
- Bio-ethanol contains less energy per litre than petrol but the calorific value of bio-ethanol can be upgraded with advanced technology.
- They have an internal combustion engine that can operate on gasoline or a blend of gasoline and ethanol.

Why is the government promoting FFV?

- FFVs can play a potential role in reducing India's dependence on oil imports by creating fuel substitutes like ethanol, hydrogen and electricity.
- It is also in favour of India's growing commitment towards energy efficiency, security and conservation and its transition to clean energy to achieve the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2070 as declared at [COP 26](#).
- It was estimated by a report of an expert committee of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas that by blending 20% of ethanol (E 20) in the vehicles the carbon monoxide emissions were reduced by 50% in two-wheelers and 30% in four-wheelers.

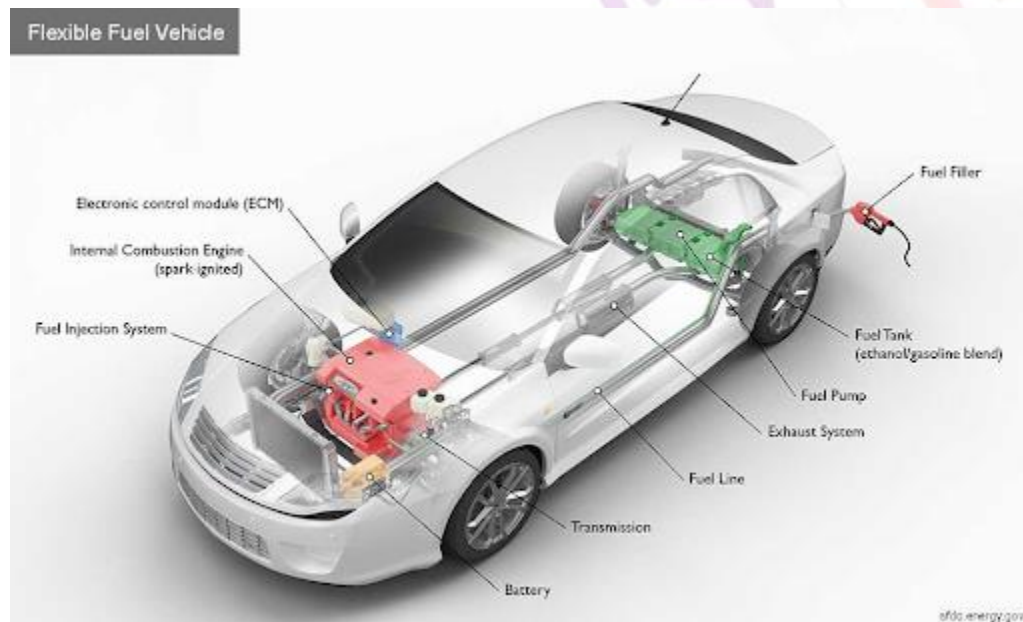


Image Source: thecofinance.com

Eligibility for Incentives:

- The auto components of Flex Fuel Engines capable of running up to Ethanol 85 have been included in the list of Advanced Automotive Technology components.
- The eligible products for incentivisation under the Production Linked Incentive ([PLI](#)) Scheme for Automobile and auto components are:

- BS6 complaint Flex Fuel Engine capable of running E85 fuel
- Heating Fuel Rail for Flex Fuel Engine
- Heating element for Flex Fuel Engine
- Heating Control Unit for Flex Fuel Engine
- Electronic Control Unit for Flex Fuel Engine
- Ethanol sensor for Flex Fuel Engine

Get detailed information about the [E100](#) project by following the link.

5. Index of eight core Industries

Syllabus: GS III, Indian Economy and issues relating to growth and development

Prelims: Index of Core Industries (ICI), IIP (Index of Industrial Production)

Context: The combined Index of Eight Core Industries increased by 5.8% according to the estimations of the Office of Economic Adviser, Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

Note:-

- The Index of Core Industries is measured by considering 2011-12 as the base year.
- Sectors like coal, crude oil, natural gas, fertilisers, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity are regarded as the eight core sectors based on their considerable contribution towards economic and industrial activities.
- These Core sectors represent the capital base of the economy.
- The eight core industries occupy a combined share of 40% of the [IIP](#).

Read more about [Index of Core Industries](#) in the linked article.