

25 – 12 – 2021

News: Centre declares Soya Meal as an Essential Commodity up to 30th June, 2022

- In a bid to cool down the domestic prices of Soya Meal, Government has notified an Order under the Essential Commodities Act to declare ‘Soya Meal’ as an Essential Commodities up to 30th June, 2022 by amending the Schedule of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
- The decision would empower the Union Government and all States/UTs to regulate production, distribution etc. of Soya Meal and to smoothen the sale and availability of this item in the market.
- It will stop unfair market practices and enhance the availability for consumers like Poultry farm and Cattle feed manufacturers.

Essential Commodities Act of 1955

- The Essential Commodities Act was enacted in 1955 at the term of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- It has since been used by the Government to regulate the production, supply and distribution of a whole host of commodities it declares ‘essential’ in order to make them available to consumers at fair prices.

- The list of items under the Act include **drugs, fertilisers, pulses and edible oils, and petroleum and petroleum products.**
- The **Centre can include new commodities as and when the need arises,** and take them off the list once the situation improves.
- Under the Act, the **government can also fix the maximum retail price (MRP)** of any packaged product that it declares an “essential commodity”.
- If the **Centre finds that a certain commodity is in short supply** and its price is spiking, it can **notify stock-holding limits on it for a specified period.**
- The States **act on this notification to specify limits and take steps to ensure that these are adhered to.**
- **Anybody trading or dealing in a commodity, be it wholesalers, retailers or even importers are prevented from stockpiling it beyond a certain quantity.**
- A **State can, however, choose not to impose any restrictions.** But once it does, **traders have to immediately sell into the market** any stocks held beyond the mandated quantity.

News: Construction of 1,07,000 lakh houses approved in five states under PMAY(U)

- **Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has approved the construction of one lakh seven thousand houses in five states** under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).
- These states are **Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Uttarakhand.**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U)

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U) is launched by **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.**
- It seeks to provide the provision for **Housing for All by 2022**, as the Nation completes the 75 years of Independence.
- The **beneficiaries are poor people living under EWS, LIG and Middle Income Group categories of India.** The annual income cap is up to **Rs 3 lakh for EWS, Rs 3-6 lakh for LIG and Rs 6-18 lakhs for MIG.**
- The government is providing an interest subsidy of 6.5% on housing loans which can be availed by beneficiaries for 15 years from the start of loan date.
- For identification as a EWS or LIG beneficiary under the scheme, an individual loan applicant will submit self-certificate/ affidavit as proof of income.

- A beneficiary family will comprise husband, wife, unmarried sons and/or unmarried daughters.
- The beneficiary family should not own a pucca house either in his/her name or in the name of any member of his/her family in any part of India to be eligible to receive central assistance under the mission.
- States/UTs, at their discretion, may decide a cut-off date on which beneficiaries need to be resident of that urban area for being eligible to take benefits under the scheme.