

# Topics - MINDS MAPS included (Daily current affairs )-- 25th October 2024



- **Dhamra River**
- **ISRO's Satellite Monitoring of Cyclone Dana**
- **Trachoma: A Global Health Challenge**
- **Drug Pricing**
- **GLOBAL POTASH SUPPLY**
- **San Pedro Cholula , Mexico's Volcanic Activity**
- **Mains**



**By saurabh Pandey**



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## ***Disturbed waters***



**Bracing for impact:** Fishermen securing their boats after the Dhamra river swelled on Thursday as Cyclone Dana made landfall close to Bhitarkanika and Dhamara along the Odisha coast after midnight. PTI (REPORT: PAGE 6)



## Topic → Dhamra River



### Overview of Dhamra River

Location: Odisha, India

Length: Approximately 40 km

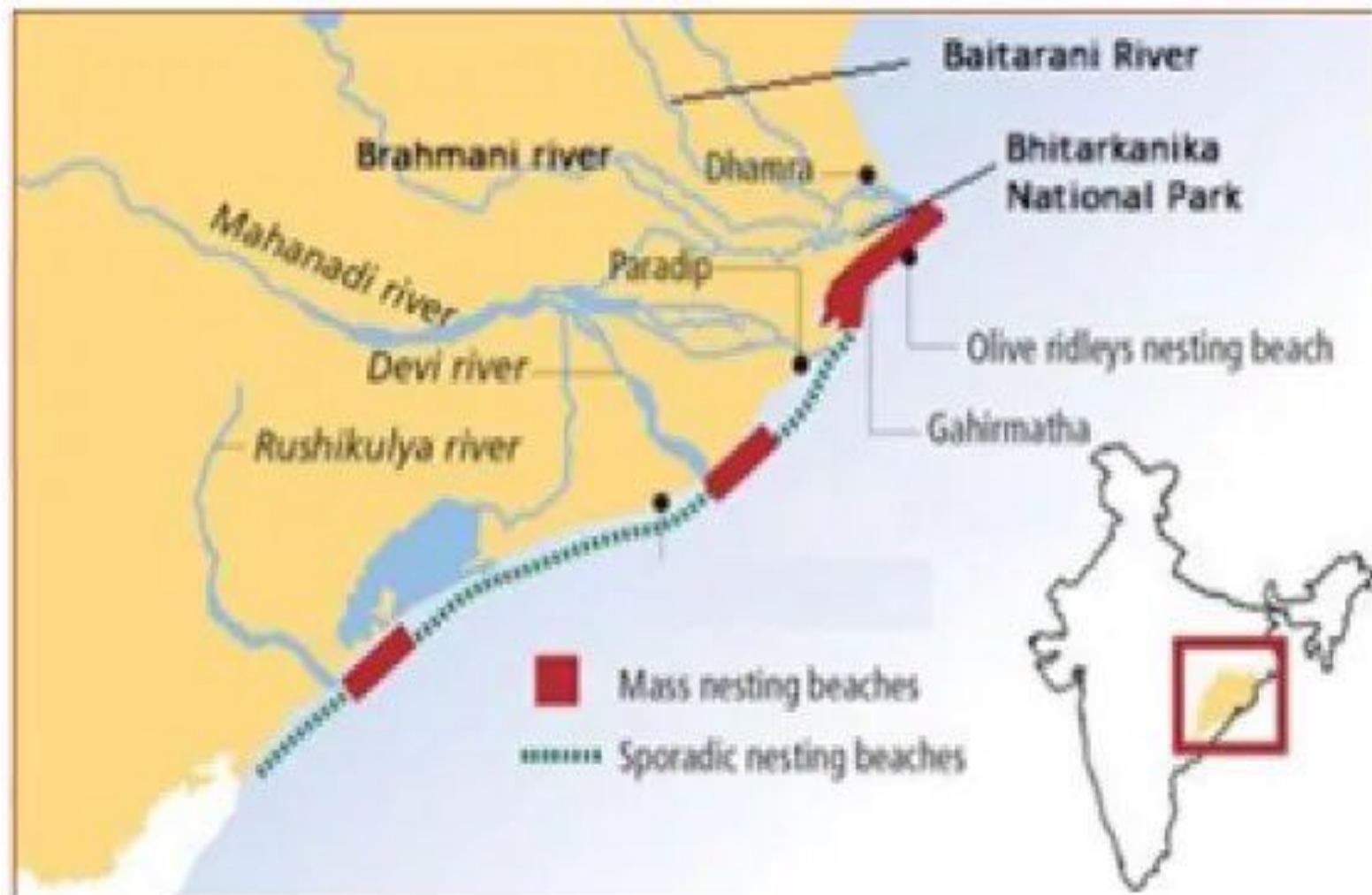
Importance: Supports local ecosystems and economy

### Dhamra River Features:

Port Development: Dhamra Port expansion plans by Adani Ports.

Biodiversity: Home to Olive Ridley turtles and numerous fish species.

Environmental Concerns: Impact of climate change and pollution.



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- **Bhitarkanika Mangroves** is a mangrove wetland in Odisha, India, covering an area of 650 km (400 mi) in the Brahmani River and Baitarani River deltas.





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# Satellites tracking Cyclone Dana since October 20: ISRO

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**The Hindu Bureau**

BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday said its polar orbiting satellite EOS-06 and geostationary satellite INSAT-3DR had been tracking the Cyclone Dana since October 20.

"Cyclonic storm Dana is fast approaching the coastal districts of Odisha and West Bengal. ISRO polar orbiting satellite EOS-06 and geostationary satellite INSAT-3DR are regularly providing valuable information on the cyclone status. ISRO polar orbiting satellite EOS-06



ISRO rocket carrying EOS-06 satellite in 2022.

Scatterometer sensor provides the status of ocean winds and their circulation well before the formation of the cyclone," the space agency said.

It stated that the satellite inputs help in better monitoring and mitigation of the cyclone threat to India.

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# Topic → ISRO's Satellite Monitoring of Cyclone Dana


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## Overview




 ISRO is actively monitoring Cyclone Dana using its satellites EOS-06 and INSAT-3DR.

 The cyclone is approaching the coastal districts of Odisha and West Bengal.

 The EOS-06 satellite features a scatterometer sensor that tracks ocean winds and circulation prior to cyclone formation.

 The data provided by the satellites is crucial for assessing the cyclone's status and potential impact.

 ISRO's satellite inputs enhance monitoring and mitigation efforts against cyclone threats in India.

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The use of advanced satellite technology aids in disaster preparedness and response.



Timely information from ISRO supports local authorities in managing cyclone-related risks.

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EOS-06 and INSAT-3DR are pivotal in providing real-time data. The scatterometer sensor on EOS-06 is essential for tracking oceanic conditions.

Data aids in disaster preparedness and risk management.

## What is scatterometer ??

→ A **scatterometer** or **diffusionmeter** is a scientific instrument to measure the return of a beam of light or radar waves **scattered** by diffusion in a medium such as air.

→ Diffusionmeters using visible light are found in airports or along roads to measure horizontal **visibility**. Radar scatterometers use radio or microwaves to determine the **normalized radar cross section** of a surface.

→ They are often mounted on **weather satellites** to find wind speed and direction, and are used in industries to analyze the roughness of surfaces

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## ASCAT Scatterometer Coverage



# Trachoma eliminated as a public health problem in India; what next?

The achievement marked a significant public health victory for the country and has profound economic implications. Trachoma's impact, through blindness and visual impairment, results in an estimated economic loss of \$2.9 to 5.3 billion annually due to reduced productivity. India successfully reduced prevalence to 0.7%

C. Aravinda

October 12, 2024, an incident at Trichy Airport involving an aircraft malfunction kept the pilots' efforts to safely land the plane, preventing potential disaster, captured the public's imagination. Their actions were tangible, immediate, and visible, making it easy for people to appreciate the significance of their work. This event dominated headlines, occupied significant airtime and social media space, while just days earlier, another important achievement unfolded rather quietly: on October 8, India's health system achieved a quiet but equally important victory in eliminating trachoma as a public health problem – a success far less visible but just as impactful.

Public health works face the paradox where the nature of their work makes failures highly tangible and visible, leading to headlines, while their successes remain intangible, often going unnoticed despite their significant impact. Acknowledging these achievements is essential, as they reflect the dedication and perseverance of countless individuals working behind the scenes to prevent blindness and improve lives. The achievement marked a significant public health victory and has profound economic implications.

Trachoma's impact, through blindness and visual impairment, results in an estimated economic loss of \$2.9 to 5.3 billion annually due to reduced productivity.

Trachoma, a chronic infectious eye disease, affects regions with poor hygiene and sanitation. The disease primarily affects young children and women in areas with limited clean water and sanitation access. *Chlamydia trachomatis*, the bacterium responsible for trachoma, has serotypes A, B, Ba, and C, which cause eye infections. These infections lead to symptoms such as eye irritation, discharge, swollen eyelids, sensitivity to light, and, in severe cases, blurred vision. If left untreated, repeated infections can cause scarring of the inner eyelid and, eventually, blindness.

Trachoma is transmitted through contact with eye secretions from an infected person's fingers, contaminated towels or clothes, or flies (*Musca sorbens*) touching the infected secretions, often exacerbated by poor hygiene and overcrowded living conditions.

Trachoma is one of 20 diseases the World Health Organization (WHO) has classified as neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and seeks to eliminate by 2030.



Trachoma affects regions with poor hygiene and sanitation. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NTDs disproportionately affect impoverished communities, and controlling them is a key target under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Target 3.3).

While many developed nations have long eliminated trachoma, countries like India have struggled due to socio-economic and environmental challenges.

India's success in significantly reducing trachoma prevalence is largely attributed to the WHO's SAFE strategy, which has been pivotal in global trachoma elimination efforts. The SAFE acronym stands for surgery to correct trichiasis (misdirected eyelashes), antibiotics to treat and control the infection, facial cleanliness to reduce transmission, and environmental improvements such as access to clean water and sanitation.

## WHO's Criteria

The WHO defines trachoma as eliminated as a health problem when prevalence of trachomatous trichiasis falls below 0.2% in people aged 15 years and above. The prevalence of active trachoma in children aged 1-9 years is less than 5% in endemic countries. It also includes a health system capable of managing new cases. Reaching these thresholds is a significant milestone, but it does not equate to the total eradication of the disease.

In 2015, trachoma accounted for 4% of all blindness cases in India. Remarkably, by 2008, this figure declined to just 0.008% of all blindness.

Even with India's commendable achievement of a 0.7% prevalence, sporadic cases can still exist.

The elimination target means that the disease's burden has been significantly reduced but not eradicated. This

**Trachoma is transmitted through contact with eye secretions from an infected person's fingers, contaminated towels or clothes, or flies touching secretions exacerbated by poor hygiene**

distinction is crucial in epidemiology, where reaching elimination is a major milestone.

India has conducted three major trachoma prevalence surveys, the most recent from 2014 to 2017.

Historically, trachoma was highly endemic, especially in northern states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The national surveys conducted in the 20th century demonstrated alarming rates of infection, but successive public health measures have drastically reduced the burden.

However, this achievement does not mean India is free from trachoma. The term "elimination as a public health problem" signifies that trachoma is no longer a significant threat, but sporadic cases may still exist.

This is an important distinction. While India has achieved the elimination of trachoma as a "public health problem," this does not mean that the disease and transmission have been eliminated. There is often confusion between the two terms: elimination as a public health problem and eradication of disease.

The former refers to reducing disease prevalence to such low levels that it no longer poses a significant public health threat. In contrast, the latter implies very negligible to zero transmission of the disease, as seen in India's polio, measles,

and guinea worm infection levels.

## Epidemiological challenges

From an epidemiological standpoint, achieving the elimination threshold is like an associate member country of the ICC, being granted test status – it's a milestone, but maintaining this status requires continuous effort and excellence. Similarly, India has reached an impressive point in the fight against trachoma, but to sustain it, efforts must be ongoing.

Developed countries achieved trachoma elimination much earlier in the 1950s. The road to completely eradicating trachoma is long due to lack of vaccines. With no long-lasting protective immunity and the presence of active trachoma cases, the focus must remain on interrupting the transmission cycle of the disease through sustained improvements in sanitation, access to clean water, and continued health education.

India's progress has been remarkable, but it is essential to continue the battle with the same vigor.

The WHO's decision not to set an eradication target for trachoma (unlike yaws and guinea worm) reflects the complex epidemiological challenges. Surveillance systems must be vigilant to catch cases early and prevent resurgence.

The National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI) needs to regularly conduct surveys, at least once a decade, across all districts to detect any new cases and prevent the resurgence of the disease to maintain India's status as free from trachoma as a public health threat.

It's time public health workers receive the acknowledgement they've earned for protecting the nation's health, and we should keep striving to tackle future challenges with the same determination. Eliminating trachoma as a public health problem is a significant achievement for India, and the journey continues.

Through surveillance, adherence to the SAFE strategy, and initiatives like Swachh Bharat, we can ensure that trachoma remains a disease of the past.

We should keep up the momentum.

The government must be committed to this goal, ensuring that India's children can grow up in a world free from trachoma. This validation should serve as a reminder that, with continued collective effort, we can also target and eliminate other diseases like kala-azar and tuberculosis. The success against trachoma shows that even in tough conditions, coordinated efforts can bring about change.

(Dr. C. Aravinda is an academic and a public health physician. aravindajr10@hotmail.com)

## THE GIST

The WHO classifies trachoma as one of 20 neglected tropical diseases, which it seeks to eliminate by 2030. While developed nations have eliminated trachoma, countries like India have struggled

India's success in reducing trachoma prevalence is largely attributed to the SAFE strategy, which stands for surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness, and environmental improvements such as access to clean water and sanitation

Elimination of trachoma as a 'public health problem,' does not mean the disease and transmission have been eliminated. Negligible to zero transmission, as seen in India's polio, measles, and guinea worm infection levels, has not been achieved



## –Topic→ Trachoma: A Global Health Challenge

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### Economic Impact

💰 Economic Loss: Trachoma leads to an estimated economic loss of \$2.9 to \$5.3 billion annually due to reduced productivity.

👶 Primary Impact: Young children and women in areas with poor hygiene and limited access to clean water are most affected.

🦠 Bacterium: Chlamydia trachomatis, specifically serotypes A, B, Ba, and C, causes trachoma-related eye infections

### Transmission

🦟 Spread: Through contact with infected eye secretions, contaminated items, or flies.

Exacerbated by: Poor hygiene and overcrowding.

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# Why did the Central govt. sanction a 50% hike in prices of commonly used drugs?



**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**

## **The story so far:**

On October 14, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority of India (NPPA) increased the ceiling prices of eight drugs, comprising medication for common diseases including asthma, tuberculosis, bipolar disorder, and glaucoma, among others. Prices have been increased by 50%.

## **Extraordinary circumstances:**

The Central Government passed the order, citing “extraordinary circumstances” and “public interest.” The NPPA comes under the department of pharmaceuticals under the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, and a government release stated that it increased prices in greater public interest.

“The NPPA’s mandate is to ensure availability of essential drugs at affordable prices and ensure affordability without jeopardising access.

Essential drugs must remain available, and their price regulation should not lead to a situation where these drugs become unavailable,” it said.

The NPPA added that it has been receiving applications from manufacturers for upward revision of prices, citing increased cost of active pharmaceutical ingredients; increase in the cost of production;



The government cited “extraordinary circumstances.” GETTY IMAGES

and a change in the exchange rate, making production and marketing of the drugs unviable. Companies also applied for discontinuation of some formulations on account of their unviability.

## **The mechanism:**

The NPPA, constituted in 1997, regulates ceiling prices of drugs and has the power to fix costs under what is known as a ‘Drug Price Control Order’ (DPCO) issued by the government under the Essential Commodities Act.

The Central Government said the decision to hike the cost of drugs comes after deliberations in a meeting on October 8.

It invoked extraordinary powers under Para 19 of the DPCO, 2013. The NPPA approved an increase in ceiling prices of eleven scheduled formulations of eight drugs by 50% of their current ceiling prices, in the larger public interest.

“Most of these drugs are low-cost and generally used as first line treatment crucial to the public health programmes of the country,” it said.

Formulations for which ceiling prices have been revised include: atropine injection 0.6mg/ml; streptomycin powder for injection 750mg and 1000mg; salbutamol tablet 2mg and 4mg and respirator solution 5mg/ml; pilocarpine 2% drops; cefadroxil tablet 500mg, desferrioxamine 500mg for injection; and lithium tablets 300mg.

Such extraordinary powers have been invoked by the NPPA in 2019 and in 2021. Prices of 21 and 9 formulations respectively were increased by 50%.

Section 19 of the DPCO allows the government to revise the ceiling cost. This can be done in extraordinary circumstances.

Section 19 states: “Notwithstanding anything contained in this order, the Government may, in case of extraordinary circumstances, if it considers it necessary to do so in public interest, fix the ceiling price or retail price of any drug for such period, as it may deem fit and where the ceiling price or retail price of the drug is already fixed and notified, the government may allow an increase or decrease in the ceiling price or the retail price, as the case may be, irrespective of annual wholesale price index for that

year.”

## **Annual revision:**

Every financial year starting April 1, the NPPA increases ceiling prices of drugs based on Wholesale Price Index (WPI) of the preceding year.

Pricing of drugs in India is strictly controlled by the Central government. Action is taken against companies found selling at higher prices. During 2023-24, ₹72.73 crore was recovered from defaulting companies.

Additionally, according to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1945 and Rules, manufacturers of drugs are required to comply with conditions of the manufacturing licence and the requirements of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

According to Drugs Rules, 1945, manufacturing, testing, labelling, packaging, storage, and distribution are required to be carried out in compliance with the conditions of license including the GMP prescribed under Schedule M of the Drugs Rules, 1945.

([Bindu.p@thehindu.co.in](mailto:Bindu.p@thehindu.co.in))

## **For feedback and suggestions**

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## Topic→Drug Pricing Update: Essential Drugs Price Hike

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### Overview of Price Increase

 Price Increase: On October 14, the NPPA raised the ceiling prices of eight essential drugs by 50%.

 Public Interest: The Central Government justified the price hike citing "extraordinary circumstances" and the need for public interest.

### Factors Influencing the Decision

 Cost Factors: Manufacturers requested price increases due to rising costs of active pharmaceutical ingredients, production, and unfavorable exchange rates.

 Regulatory Authority: The NPPA, established in 1997, regulates drug prices under the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) and operates under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

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## Recent Deliberations and Historical Context



Recent Deliberations: The decision followed discussions in a meeting held on October 8, invoking extraordinary powers under the DPCO.



Drugs Affected: The price revision affects key medications for conditions like asthma, tuberculosis, and bipolar disorder, including atropine and lithium tablets.



Historical Context: Similar extraordinary powers were used in 2019 and 2021 to increase prices of other formulations by 50%.


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# The Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) in India



## Overview

 Regulation: The DPCO regulates drug prices in India under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

 Goals: Prevent unreasonable pricing, ensure access to essential medicines, and protect public finances from high healthcare costs.


 Components: Includes a list of price-controlled drugs, procedures for setting prices, implementation methods, and penalties for violations.


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## — Implementation and Enforcement

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 Authority: The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is responsible for implementing the DPCO, including fixing and revising drug prices.

 Enforcement: The NPPA enforces prices, recovers overcharges, and monitors prices of decontrolled drugs.

 Oversight: The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers oversees DPCO implementation to balance consumer and producer interests.

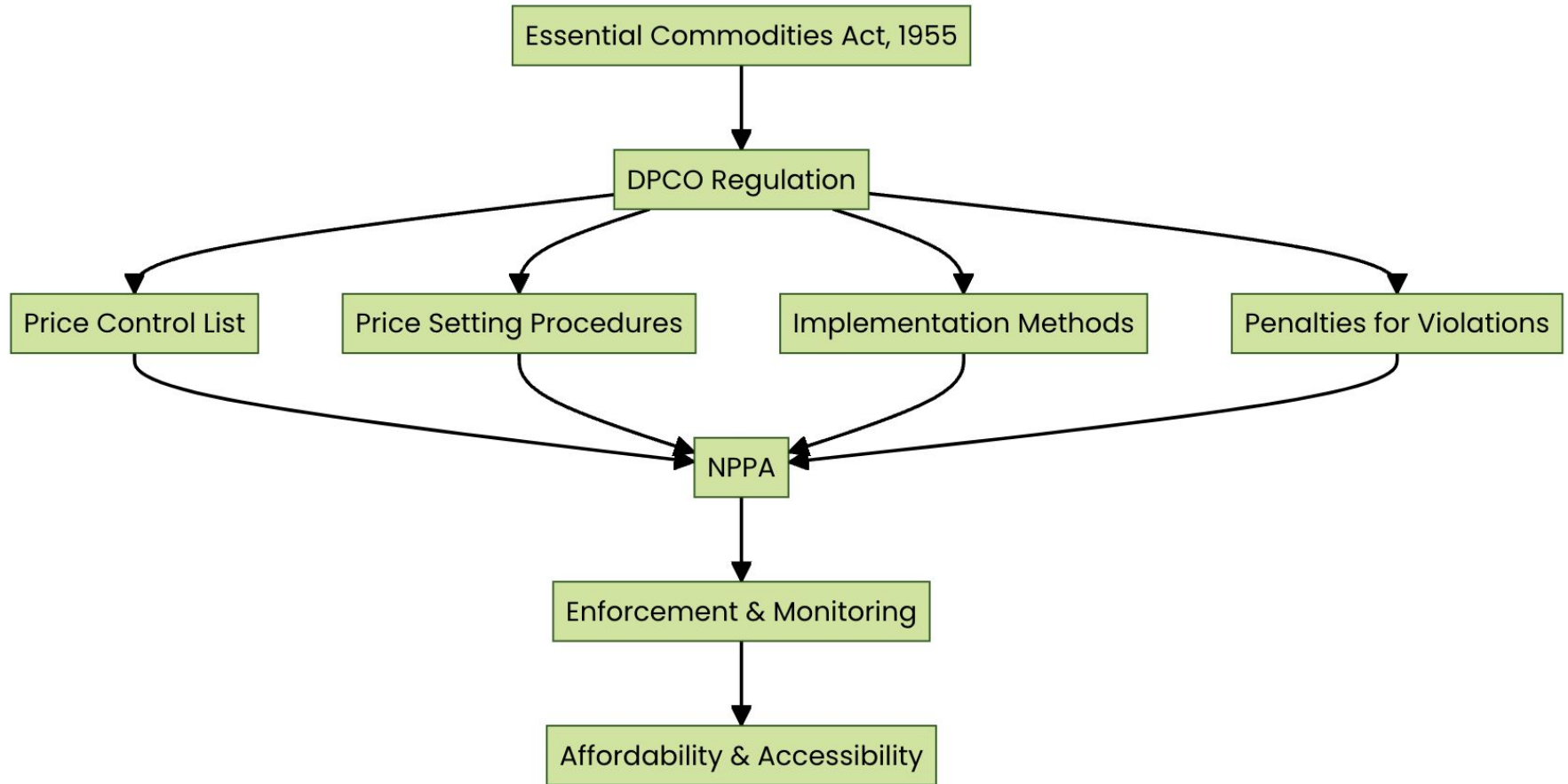
### Objectives

 Affordability and Accessibility: The DPCO aims to enhance the affordability and accessibility of essential medicines for the public.

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## DPCO Implementation Flow:





**Summary:** The DPCO regulates drug prices in India to ensure affordability and accessibility while protecting consumers' financial interests.


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## NPPA and Recent Developments




 Establishment: The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was founded in 1997 to oversee drug prices in India, operating under the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO).

 Recent Meeting: On October 8, a significant decision was made to increase drug prices, utilizing extraordinary powers as per Para 19 of the DPCO, 2013.

 Price Increase: The NPPA sanctioned a 50% increase in ceiling prices for eleven formulations of eight drugs, highlighting their importance for public health.


 Historical Context: Similar extraordinary price hikes were recorded in 2019 and 2021, impacting 21 and 9 formulations respectively.


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 Legal Framework: Section 19 of the DPCO permits the government to adjust drug prices under extraordinary circumstances to serve the public interest.

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 Regulatory Compliance: In the fiscal year 2023-24, a total of ₹72.73 crore was recovered from companies that breached pricing regulations.

 Manufacturing Standards: Adherence to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1945, and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) is compulsory for drug manufacturers.

Summary: The NPPA has invoked extraordinary powers to raise the ceiling prices of certain essential drugs by 50%, underscoring the importance of public health and stringent regulatory compliance.

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# Potash supply nears pre-war levels, pushing producers to cut output



## Reuters

Global potash supply is returning to levels seen before the invasion of Ukraine, as Russia and Belarus sidestep Western sanctions by increasing shipments to Asia and South America, pressuring producers to cut output and avoid oversupply.

Potash production is expected to reach 73 million metric tons this year, with Russian exports at 12-13 million tons and those from Belarus at around 10 million tons, Julia Campbell, head of the potash pricing service at commodity agency Argus, said.

Potash prices have started to normalise following a period of volatility follow-



**No rules:** Russia and Belarus have sidestepped Western sanctions by increasing potash shipments abroad. REUTERS

ing Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

"Russian exports dropped sharply after the war in Ukraine began due to financial and logistical challenges. But these problems have since eased,"

Ms. Campbell said.

Increased exports from Canada, Jordan and Laos have also boosted global supply and brought down prices, adding to the fears of possible oversupply, with a slight improvement

in demand expected only in 2025.

During their half-year earnings reporting, major potash producers such as Germany's K+S sounded optimistic about growing demand and stabilizing prices. However, analysts have since warned the abundant global supply would put a cap on pricing, dampening the firms' earnings prospects.


"I don't think there's likely to be any sort of premium pricing or any real pricing benefit as a result of the global supply shift and the global trade shift. We saw that mostly in 2022 and into 2023 when prices were still moderating," Morningstar analyst Seth Goldstein told Reuters.

## Topic→ GLOBAL POTASH SUPPLY


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 Global potash supply is rebounding to pre-Ukraine invasion levels as Russia and Belarus increase shipments to Asia and South America.

 Potash production is projected to hit 73 million metric tons this year, with Russian exports at 12-13 million tons and Belarusian exports around 10 million tons.

 Potash prices are normalizing after a volatile period post-Ukraine invasion, easing financial and logistical challenges for Russian exports.

 Increased exports from Canada, Jordan, and Laos are contributing to global supply growth, raising concerns about potential oversupply.

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— Demand for potash is expected to improve slightly by 2025, but analysts warn that abundant supply will limit price increases.



Major potash producers like Germany's K+S are optimistic about demand and price stabilization, despite warnings from analysts about earnings prospects.



Analysts indicate that the global supply shift will likely prevent premium pricing, contrasting with the price volatility seen in 2022 and early 2023.

Summary: Global potash supply is recovering, with increased exports from Russia, Belarus, and other countries leading to normalized prices and concerns about oversupply

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# —Potash Application in Industry

## Overview

Potash is primarily used in the production of fertilizers.  
It improves crop yield and quality.  
Essential for the agricultural sector.

## Key Applications

### Fertilizers 🥕

Major use in NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium) fertilizers.  
Enhances plant growth and nutrient absorption.

### Industrial Uses 🏭

Used in glass production.  
Acts as a flux in ceramics.  
Employed in food processing as a preservative.

### Animal Feed 🐮

Source of potassium for livestock.  
Supports animal health and production.



## Market Trends

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### Growth Projections

Expected market size to surpass USD 90 billion by 2032.

CAGR of around 5.10% from 2024 to 2033.

### Global Supply

Canada is a leading producer.

Key partnerships with suppliers in Saskatchewan.

## Challenges

### Market Volatility

Fluctuating prices due to global demand and supply chain issues.

### Environmental Concerns

Mining and processing impacts on ecosystems.

Need for sustainable practices in potash extraction.

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## Future Outlook

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### Innovation in Fertilizers

Development of slow-release and specialty fertilizers.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Focus on eco-friendly mining techniques.

Increased use of potash in organic farming.



## Boom and bloom



**In contrast:** Marigold flowers are pictured from San Pedro Cholula, Puebla State, Mexico, on Wednesday while the Popocatepetl volcano spews a column of ash and smoke in the background. REUTERS

# Geography Special → San Pedro Cholula, Puebla State, Mexico



## Overview

Location: San Pedro Cholula is a city in the Puebla State of Mexico.

Cultural Significance: Known for its rich history, ancient archaeological sites, and vibrant traditions.



## Overview of Mexico's Volcanic Activity



Location in the Pacific Ring of Fire: Mexico is situated in a seismically active region known for frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.



Plate Tectonics: The dynamic movement and interaction of lithospheric plates contribute to the formation of the Pacific Ring of Fire.



Cocos Plate: The subduction of the Cocos Plate beneath the North American Plate results in the formation of the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt.



Popocatépetl Volcano: A highly active volcano in Mexico, with 15 eruptions recorded since 1519, located on the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt.

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Chichinautzin Monogenetic Field (YCMF): This volcanic field poses potential eruption risks to the southern part of Mexico City.



Volcanic Ash Hazards: Volcanic ash can significantly impact aviation by reducing visibility and damaging jet engines.



Eruption Risks: Active volcanoes in Mexico present ongoing risks to populated areas.

Summary: Mexico's position in the Pacific Ring of Fire exposes it to significant volcanic activity, with active volcanoes like Popocatépetl and the Chichinautzin Monogenetic Field posing substantial risks.

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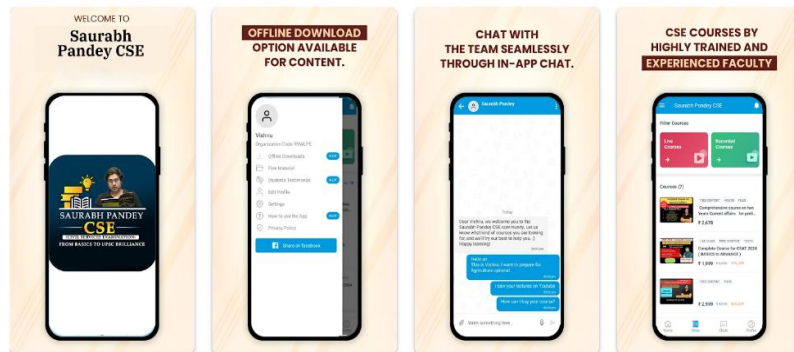
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**Q What role Border management can play in protection of social values ??**

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