

EU's palm oil restrictions

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In news– The European Union(EU) has recently decided to phase-out the import of unsustainable palm oil by 2030 as part of Renewable Energy Directive II(introduced in 2018) .

Key updates-

- Indonesia and Malaysia, the world's two largest palm oil producers, have moved to the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the EU over its decision.
- The EU has been sending mixed signals on the controversial issue. EU has made clear that oil production is a leading cause of deforestation and pollution, so cannot comply with renewable energy targets.
- It further said that palm oil diesel releases up to three times as many emissions compared to traditional petroleum-based fuel.
- **In 2021, EU lawmakers adopted draft rules for the ReFuelEU initiative**, which would mean 85% of all used aviation fuel would have to be “sustainable” by 2050.
- This initiative **aims to boost the supply and demand for sustainable aviation fuels in the EU.**
- This in turn **will reduce aviation's environmental footprint and enable it to help achieve the EU's climate targets.**

Palm oil production in the world-

- **Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the mesocarp** (reddish pulp) of the fruit of the oil palms.
- The oil is used in food manufacturing, in beauty products, and as biofuel.
- **Oil palm crops grow in humid tropical conditions**, which can be found 8 – 10 degrees north and south of the equator.

- Palm oil is naturally reddish in color because of a high beta-carotene content. It is not to be confused with palm kernel oil derived from the kernel of the same fruit or coconut oil derived from the kernel of the coconut palm.
- The oil palm produces bunches containing many fruits with the fleshy mesocarp enclosing a kernel that is covered by a very hard shell.
- The palm oil journey begins in producing countries where oil palms are planted. These trees start producing fruits only 2-3 years after planting.
- **Originally found in West Africa, the oil palm tree is now cultivated across Asia**, Africa and Latin America.
- **Indonesia and Malaysia are by far the largest palm oil producing nations**. Together they account for 85-90 percent of the total production of this vegetable oil.
- **Other important producing countries are** Colombia, Nigeria and Thailand.