FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

FORTUNE IAS ACADEMY

"Achieve your Dreams with Fortune"

> Queer Rights

> Green Credits Programme

> Maoist Menace

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FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you guage your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

I N D E X

TOWARDS INCLUSION : PROGRESS IN QUEER RIGHTS

"Social exclusion, identity seclusion, and isolation from the social mainstream are still the stark realities faced by individuals today and it is only when each and every individual is liberated from the shackles of such bondage and is able to work towards full development of his/her personality that we can call ourselves a truly free society,"

-Former Chief Justice Dipak Misra

Syllabus: GS II - Protection and betterment of the vulnerable sections

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections or the society leads to problems or overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case* **(2018)**

Q) *Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process. Discuss* **(2019)**

SHORT TAKES

➢ **Sex:** It is assigned at birth and refers to the biological designation of an individual as male or female, based on physical characteristics including **chromosomes, hormone levels, and external and internal anatomy.**

➢ **Gender:** It refers to the **socially constructed roles**, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and men or girls and women.

➢ **Queer:** It is a **broad term** encompassing sexual orientations and gender identities **outside the heterosexual norm.** It includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, and asexual individuals.

➢ **Transgender:** It is an **umbrella term** for persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth

➢ **Section 377: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code**, previously criminalised consensual same-sex intercourse. However, in the judgement of **Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court in 2018 led to its **abolition.** Presently, Section 377 applies to cases involving non-consensual carnal intercourse with adults, all instances of carnal intercourse with minors, and acts of bestiality.

WHY IN NEWS?

The Central Government has formed **a multi-department six-member committee**, led by the Cabinet Secretary, to address issues faced by Queer community as per the Supreme Court's directive in "**Supriyo v Union of India.**"

INTRODUCTION

The fight for queer rights spans continents and cultures, reflecting both progress and persistent challenges. From legal victories recognizing diverse gender and sexual identities to ongoing struggles against discrimination and marginalisation, the global landscape of queer rights is dynamic and complex.

MEANING

LGBTQIA+ is an acronym that brings together many different gender and sexual identities that often face marginalisation across society. The acronym stands for **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual**, and the **+ holds space for the expanding** and new understanding of different parts of the very diverse gender and sexual identities. Essentially, if someone identifies as **queer**, it typically means they are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

IMPORTANT JUDGEMENTS

- **Naz Foundation v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009)** : The Delhi High Court ruling first **decriminalised homosexuality.**

- **Suresh Kumar Koushal vs. Naz Foundation (2013):** A 2 judge Supreme Court bench in 2013 overturned the Delhi High Court case Naz Foundation v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi and **reinstated Section 377** of the Indian Penal Code.

- **National Legal Services Authority vs Union of India (2014):** The Supreme Court of India **recognized transgender individuals as the 'third gender'**, affirming their fundamental rights under the Constitution and granting them the right to self-identify their gender as male, female, or third gender.

- **Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018):** The SC **overturned its 2013 judgement** that upheld Section 377 of the IPC, under which gay sex was categorised as an "unnatural offence".

- **Supriya Chakraborty vs Union of India (2023)**: The five-judge bench upheld the validity of the Special Marriage Act, 1954, and held that the **right to marry is not a fundamental right for queer persons.**

SITUATION IN INDIA

- **Homosexuality:** Homosexuality is **legal** in India after the Supreme Court overturned Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in the **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India case**, decriminalizing consensual sexual acts between adults.

- **Cohabitation:** Unregistered cohabitation is **permitted** in India, affirmed by the Supreme Court in the case of **Supriya Chakraborty v. Union of India.** The court ruled that LGBTQ+ individuals have the **right to choose a partner, cohabit, and enjoy physical and mental intimacy** without fear of threat or coercion, with the state obligated to safeguard these rights.

- **Marriage rights:** On October 17, 2023, in **Supriya v Union of India**, a 5-judge bench of the Supreme Court had **refused to grant legal recognition for same-sex marriages** observing that it was a matter for the Parliament to decide.

- **Adoption rights:** In 2022, **CARA(Central Adoption Resource Authority) Regulations** mandated a **two-year stable marital relationship for adoption** eligibility, rendering **queer couples ineligible**, further exacerbated by a circular banning adoption for individuals in live-in relationships.

- **Military Recruitment:** Currently, the Armed Forces **do not accept** transgender individuals or those identifying as homosexuals. In 2017, the Indian Navy discharged Sabi Giri, formerly Manish Kumar Giri, after undergoing sex reassignment surgery at a private facility.

- **Blood donation:** India has **prohibited blood donations from transgender individuals**, citing Clause 51 of the **Guidelines on Blood Donor Selection and Referral(2017)** by the National Blood Transfusion Council and the National AIDS Control Organization.

THE TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) ACT 2019

- **Rights**

  » **Against discrimination:** The Act **prohibits discrimination against transgender** individuals,including denial of service or unfair treatment in education, employment, healthcare, and housing.

  » **Penalties:** Penalties under the Act include **imprisonment ranging from six months to two years** for offences against transgender individuals.Begging will no longer be penalised.

  » **Residence:** The Act enforces a **minor's right of residence**, mandating transgender individuals below 18 years to reside with their natal family.

- **Criticisms**

  » **Burdensome Process:** The Act mandates a complex process for **legal gender recognition**, including a Transgender Certificate and, after surgical transition, a revised certificate by the District Magistrate, **contradicting the right of "self-declaration"** upheld by the NALSA judgement.

> » **Unequal Punishment:**The Act stipulates lesser punishment, ranging from six months to two years imprisonment, for abusing transgender individuals. In contrast, the **same crime against a cisgender woman carries a punishment of life imprisonment or even the death penalty.**
>
> » **Lack of clarity:** The Act lacks clarity on welfare benefits and civil rights for transgender individuals, failing to align with the NALSA judgement's call for affirmative action in education, healthcare, employment, marriage, adoption etc.
>
> ☼ **Judicial Support:** Rights include being **recognized as family for ration cards, setting up joint bank accounts, jail visitation, being deemed "next of kin" by medical practitioners, and accessing the deceased partner's body for final rites.**

CHALLENGES

● **Discrimination:**Queer individuals may face denial of housing, employment, education or healthcare services based on their identity, leading to **economic instability, academic issues and health disparities.**

● **Bureaucratic red tapism:** Transgender individuals often encounter **bureaucratic hurdles** when seeking identity certificates, facing intrusive questioning and refusals from District Magistrates, hindering their access to essential documentation.

● **Mild penalties:** The current penalty for discrimination against transgender individuals in India, ranging from **six months to two years imprisonment**, is the same regardless of the severity of the offence. This fails to address the prevalence of unreported and under-reported cases of violence, including murders and rapes.

● **Ayushmann Transgender Health Card:** Coming under the **National Institute Of Social Defence (NISD)**, aimed to offer up to **Rs 1 lakh for Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)**, but remains unrealized due to lack of financial support for its implementation.

STUDY ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF TRANSGENDERS IN INDIA

The total population of transgenders according to the 2011 Census is 4.8 lakh; only 30,000 are registered with the Election Commission. However, estimates suggest there are 50 to 60 lakh transgenders in India, but most keep it a secret to avoid discrimination

99% have suffered social rejection on more than one occasion, including from their family

96% of transgenders are denied jobs and are forced to take low paying or undignified work for livelihood like badhais, sex work and begging

89% of transgenders said there are no jobs for even qualified ones

50% to 60% of transgenders have never attended schools, and those who did faced discrimination

57% of transgenders are keen on getting sex-alignment surgery but don't have money for it

18% of transgenders are physically abused, 62% are verbally abused in school. 15% are harassed by students as well as teachers

of transgenders do not own any property

Only of transgenders live with parents. 53% live under guru-chela system, where gurus provide shelter in lieu of cut in incomes

SAMPLE DATA OF DELHI AND UTTAR PRADESH ANALYSED BY RESEARCHERS

➤ 29% of transgenders here have never attended school. Only 5.33% have a graduation degree

➤ Only 6% of transgenders are employed in private sector or NGOs

➤ Most of them work in

informal sector – i.e. 24% for badhais, singing, blessings, 5% as sex-workers, 10% as beggars, 13% selling fruits, vegetables etc while 5% are engaged in miscellaneous work

➤ Monthly income of only

1% of transgenders is above Rs 25,000; majority – 26.35% earn between Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000

➤ Only 15% of transgenders have Voter ID, 17% have Aadhaar issued in the category of 'transgender'

● **Lack of Sero-surveillance Centres:** Only **Kerala has established 'HIV Sero-Surveillance centres'** under The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act to combat HIV transmission among transgender individuals, with no similar initiatives by central or state governments elsewhere.

● **Complex Discussions** : Engaging with diverse stakeholders, including the queer community, religious representatives, governments, and legal experts, to navigate the complexities of reconciling religious personal laws with the marriage rights of queer individuals is intricate and time-consuming.

● **Scarcity of job opportunities:** This perpetuates economic insecurity and hampers social mobility, exacerbating inequalities and hindering community development. They often resort to informal work like begging and sex work despite the criminalization of such activities.

> » **Example:** A study conducted by the National Human Rights Commission revealed that in 2017, **only 6 percent of transgender people were formally employed.**

● **Lack of Legislation:** Queer rights legislation often falls short of addressing the real experiences of queer individuals, highlighting a gap between policy and reality.

> » **Example:** Despite a Pew Research survey conducted between June 2022 and September 2023 revealing **53% of adults supporting same-sex marriage legalization, this sentiment isn't reflected in legislation.**

WAY FORWARD

✶ **Sensitisation:** The government should prioritise **normalising the existence of the transgender community** through widespread sensitization programs and educating the public about transgender issues and promoting a message of non-discrimination.

✶ **Shelter Homes:** Increased resources and funding are essential to establish additional shelter homes for the transgender community, providing them with safe spaces to rebuild their lives and regain dignity.

» **Example: Garima Greh** which is a shelter home for Transgender Persons works in collaboration **with Lakshya Trust** And aims to provide shelter, food, medical care, and recreational facilities for transgender individuals.

✶ **Political discourse:** This is highlighted by proposals for legal recognition of queer rights in election manifestos, signalling a shift towards inclusivity in governance agendas.

» **Example:** This year's **election manifestos** show promising steps forward in LGBTQIA+ rights, with mentions of laws recognizing same-sex partnerships and protection for these relationships.

✶ **Legislative measures:** Closing this divide requires legislative efforts to better reflect and meet the diverse needs of the queer community.

» **Example: The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act**, passed in 2019, legally recognizes transgender individuals as a third gender and upholds their **right to self-identification.** It prohibits discrimination in education, employment, and healthcare services, ensuring fair treatment for transgender persons.

✶ **Enhance Efficiency**: Efficient procedures optimise workflows, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and ensuring timely outcomes, leading to improved service delivery and stakeholder satisfaction.

» **Example:** The **National Portal for Transgender Persons** enables digital application for certificates and identity cards nationwide, eliminating the need for physical visits. Applicants can track their application status, submit grievances, and authorities can monitor and expedite processing.

✶ **Accessible Education:** Education empowers queer individuals with knowledge, skills, and resources to advocate for their rights, access opportunities, and challenge systemic barriers.

» **Example:Maharashtra** has passed a **Government Resolution**, ensuring **free higher education for transgender students in public universities and affiliated colleges**, covering diploma and technical courses.

✶ **Employment:** Expanding employment opportunities involves creating inclusive workplaces, fostering diversity, and implementing policies that combat discrimination, thereby promoting economic empowerment and social equality for all.

» **Example:** The **Chhattisgarh Police** have recruited around **13 transgender persons as constables.**

» **Example:** Inclusion of **trangender category in various state PSCs**

✶ **Horizontal Reservation:** Activists advocate for **horizontal reservation**, ensuring separate reservation within each category, to address the employment needs of the transgender community. Disabled persons are guaranteed horizontal reservation in all the general and reserved (vertical) alike, by the Central government.

» **Example:** After *Sangama v State of Karnataka*, Karnataka became the first and only state to offer **one per cent horizontal reservation to transgender persons in 2021.**

✶ **Stringent Penalties:** Stringent penalties against discrimination promote accountability and deterrence, safeguarding LGBTQIA+ individuals from prejudice and ensuring their equal treatment.

✶ **Improving healthcare:** It involves training healthcare providers, implementing non-discriminatory policies, and offering specialised services tailored to the needs of queer people.

» **Example**:The **Kerala government** introduces a "**Queer-friendly hospital initiative**" to ensure equitable healthcare services across the state. Initially launched in four districts, the initiative aims to eliminate discrimination, with plans to expand statewide.

» **Example**: The **Mitr clinic in Telangana**, initiated by **'Safe Zindagi'**, collaborates with **'Programme ACCELERATE'** and the National AIDS Control Organisation to raise **HIV-AIDS awareness** and provide healthcare services.

» **Example**: The **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)** Delhi has announced that it would set up a dedicated **Centre of Excellence for transgender healthcare** on the campus.

RECENT GLOBAL EXAMPLES: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

<u>Positive</u>

- ✅ **Thailand:** Thailand's **lower house passed a same-sex marriage bill,** awaiting approval from the upper house, which would make Thailand the first in Southeast Asia and second in Asia (after Taiwan) to recognize same-sex relationships.

- ✅ **Germany:** Germany's **parliament passed a groundbreaking law** in April 2024, enabling transgender and **non-binary individuals to change their legal documents to match their gender identity through a simplified administrative process** based on self-identification.

- ✅ **Mauritius:** The Supreme Court of Mauritius has overturned the provision in the Criminal Code **criminalising consensual sex between men, citing it as a discriminatory colonial relic.**

Thailand is set to legalize same-sex civil partnerships

<u>Negative</u>

- 🔻 **USA:** US laws **restrict access to gender-affirming care** and bar transgender youth from **participating in school sports** or **using bathrooms** aligning with their gender identity. Additionally, laws **banning books and prohibiting classroom instruction on sexual orientation** or gender identity are of concern.

- 🔻 **Uganda**: Uganda's Constitutional Court upheld the radical provisions of the **2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act.** The ruling, including the death penalty in some cases, reflects a stance of hate and discrimination, undermining fundamental rights.

- 🔻 **Belarus:** Belarus **redefines pornography to include same-sex relationships and transgender individuals, equating them with necrophilia and pedophilia**, escalating discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.

- 🔻 **Russia**: Russian courts issue extremism convictions under a 2023 ruling l**abelling the "international LGBT movement" as extremist**, with penalties for displaying the rainbow flag, exemplified by recent cases of detention, fines, and administrative penalties.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made in advancing queer rights globally, the journey towards full equality remains ongoing. It is imperative for governments, institutions, and societies to continue advocating for **inclusive policies, fostering understanding and acceptance, and amplifying the voices of marginalised communities**. By prioritising education, legislative reform, and community empowerment, we can pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the impact of laws on marriage equality and adoption rights on LGBTQIA+ communities, highlighting the challenges they face. Suggest measures to address these challenges. **(10 marks)(150 words)**

ANDAMAN NICOBAR COMMAND

Syllabus: GS III -   : Defence Technology; Security forces & agencies

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *How is the S-400 air defence system technically superior to any other system presently available in the world?* **(2021)**

Q) *In 2012, the longitudinal marking of the high-risk areas for piracy was moved from 65° East to 78° east in the Arabian Sea by the International Maritime organisation. What impact does this have on India's maritime security concerns?* **(2014)**

SHORT TAKES

India's Look East Policy: It is a strategic initiative aimed at cultivating extensive economic and security cooperation with countries in Southeast Asia. Launched in the early 1990s, it marked a significant **shift in India's foreign policy perspective.**

India's Act East Policy: Announced in November , 2014 is the upgrade of the **Look East Policy.**

➤ The Act East Policy emphasises engagement with **ASEAN nations,** integration into their economies, collaboration with East Asian countries, and fostering **security cooperation.**

Quad: Formally known as the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD)**, is a strategic security dialogue between four nations:

- **Australia**
- **India**
- **Japan**
- **United States of America**

➤ It's not a formal military alliance, but rather a forum for these countries to discuss security challenges in the **Indo-Pacific region and cooperate** on areas of common interest. This can include maritime security, disaster relief, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific.

INTRODUCTION

The **Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)**, which was established on October 1, 2001, is India's **unified military command,** combining the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard under the leadership of the Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar (CINCAN). It is tasked with defending and securing the strategically vital Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

FEATURES OF ANDAMAN NICOBAR COMMAND

Tri-Service Command:

⚡ The ANC is the **first and only integrated tri-service command in India** that brings together the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force under a single unified command structure, allowing for better coordination and faster decision-making.

Military Assets:

⚡ The ANC has a variety of military assets at its disposal, including:

» **Army Infantry Brigade** with armoured columns

» **Navy warships**, including **missile corvettes**, **amphibious warfare ships**, **offshore patrol vehicles**, and **landing craft vessels**

» **Air Force bases** with fighter jets, maritime patrol aircraft, and transport planes.

IMPORTANCE

Countering China's Growing Presence:

➡ **China's Military Activity:**

» A significant threat could arise from a concentration of **Chinese naval forces** at the eastern chokepoints of the Indo-Pacific.

 ◦ These crucial passageways include the **Malacca Strait** (located between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula), the **Sunda Strait** (situated between Java and Sumatra), the **Lombok Strait** (between Bali and Lombok), and the **Ombai-Wetar Strait** (near East Timor).

» China has been also increasing its military presence in the Indian Ocean region, including **building a military base in Djibouti** and establishing a strategically located facility in **Myanmar's Coco Islands**, just 55 km north of the Andamans.

Securing Trade Routes:

➡ **Strategic Location:**

» The Andaman and Nicobar Islands lie astride **vital shipping lanes**, including the **Malacca Strait**, through which a significant portion of India's trade passes.

 ◦ Example: According to the World Bank, in 2021, the total value of **merchandise trade that transited the Malacca Strait was estimated at $5.3 trillion.** Upgrading the ANC strengthens India's ability to safeguard these routes.

» **Sabang** in **Indonesia** is 90 nautical miles southeast of Indira Point (on Great Nicobar island), and Coco Island (Myanmar) is **barely 18 nautical miles from the northernmost tip of the Andamans.**

» **Project Kra Canal** connecting the **Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea**, its mouth would be about 350 nautical miles east of Port Blair.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):

➡ The Islands give India substantial ocean space under the **United Nations Conference on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS)** in terms of exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

➡ The waters around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands encompass a vast **EEZ rich in natural resources, including fish, minerals, and potential oil reserves**. Upgrading the ANC bolsters India's ability to protect these resources.

» Example: Island gives India an exclusive **economic zone of 300,000 square kilometres** with the potential for undersea hydrocarbon and mineral resources.

Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance:

➡ Both India and Southeast Asian nations are **prone to natural disasters.**

➡ The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are **located in a seismically active zone** and are **prone to cyclones and tsunamis.**

» Example: The **2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami** caused widespread devastation in the Andamans. **Upgrading infrastructure** allows for faster and more effective response to such events in the future.

➡ The ANC can be a vital resource for rapid response and humanitarian assistance in the region, strengthening partnerships which builds goodwill with Southeast Asian countries, a key **Look East Policy Objective.**

Regional Security Cooperation:

➡ **Maintaining Stability:** A well-equipped ANC can participate more effectively in regional security dialogues and joint exercises with friendly nations, promoting stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean.

» India has conducted several **joint military exercises with Thailand**, including: **Maitree Exercise, Siam Bharat, Ex-Ayutthaya, and COBRA GOLD (Observer Plus).**

» India has also conducted joint military exercises **with Indonesia**, including: **Garuda Shakti, IND-INDO CORPAT, and Samudra Shakti.**
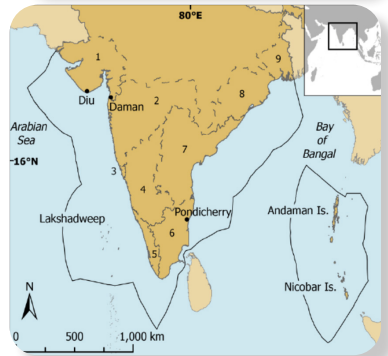
CHALLENGES FACED

Infrastructure Constraints:

🔴 The current infrastructure in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, including airfields, jetties, and storage facilities, needs significant upgrades to accommodate larger deployments of troops, warships, and advanced weaponry.

» A **2021 report by the NITI Aayog** highlighted the **limited runway capacity at Port Blair Airport,** a crucial element for the ANC.

Resource Allocation:

🔴 **Competing Priorities:**

» India has a vast coastline and multiple borders to secure.

» Balancing resource allocation between the ANC and other military needs can be challenging.

Manpower Requirements:

🔴 Unique Environment: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have **challenging terrain and harsh climatic conditions.**

🔴 Attracting and retaining qualified personnel for long-term deployments can be difficult.

» A 2020 study by the **Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA)** noted the challenges in retaining personnel in the island territories due to **logistical difficulties and the lack of social amenities.**

Integration and Interoperability:

🔴 Three Services, One Command: Successfully integrating the Army, Navy, and Air Force under a unified command structure requires overcoming **bureaucratic hurdles** and establishing clear lines of communication.

Ecological Sensitivity:

🔴 The Andaman and Nicobar Islands boast rich biodiversity and fragile ecosystems. **Balancing military development with environmental protection is crucial.**

> » Example: The islands are home to several indigenous tribes such as **Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese, and Shompens.**

> » Also it is the home to many Critically endangered species such as **Andaman shrew (Crocidura andamanensis), Jenkin's shrew (Crocidura jenkinsi), and Nicobar shrew (Crocidura nicobarica)**

OTHER THREATS

Piracy:

♣ While less common than in the past, piracy remains a concern in Southeast Asian waters. The remoteness of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands makes them a potential target for pirate activity.

> » Example: In **2011, a Thai cargo ship was hijacked by pirates** off the coast of Aceh, Indonesia, highlighting the ongoing threat in the region.

Illegal Fishing:

♣ **Unregulated fishing by foreign vessels** depletes fish stocks in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the Andamans, impacting local livelihoods and marine ecosystems.

> » Example: A 2020 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that illegal, **unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing accounts for up to 30% of global fish catches.**

Non-State Actors:

♣ **Terrorist organisations** and other non-state actors pose a potential threat to security in the region.

♣ The Andamans could be targeted due to their symbolic importance or to disrupt regional stability.

Cyber Threats:

♣ The increasing reliance on technology makes the ANC **vulnerable to cyberattacks** that could disrupt communication and critical infrastructure.

WAY FORWARD

Enhanced Infrastructure:

✳ **Upgrading Airfields and Ports:**

> » The islands span 420 nautical miles (777 km) from north to south, requiring surveillance and patrol by aircraft and surface vessels.

> » The area **needs separate airfields** with long runways capable of accommodating Boeing 737-sized aircraft.

> » Deepen harbours to allow access for larger warships and submarines.

>> i. Example: **Doubling the runway capacity at Port Blair Airport** could allow for simultaneous deployment of fighter jets and long-range maritime patrol aircraft, enhancing response capabilities.

> » The **construction of the transshipment port at Galathea Bay on Great Nicobar Island** needs to be accelerated.

> » Maritime services for international and Indian shipping, such as repair facilities and logistics support, must be developed.

✳ **Fuel Storage Facilities:**

> » **Ports and fuel storages** must be built in both the northern and southern groups of the islands for ships' operational turnaround without the need to return to Port Blair.

Improved Logistics and Communication:

» Invest in better communication infrastructure, including **fibre optic cables**, and establish robust logistical networks to ensure faster and more efficient movement of troops, equipment, and supplies.

    i. Example: A **2023 study** by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** estimated that **improved logistics infrastructure in the Andamans could reduce transportation costs by 20%.**

Maintaining of Maritime Domain Awareness:

» To obviate the possibility of intrusions by state and non-state entities, ANC will need to maintain three-dimensional maritime domain awareness

    i. It can be done through networked assets, including **radars, aircraft, satellites and unmanned vehicles.**

Resource Optimization and Prioritization:

Strategic Resource Allocation:

» Allocate resources based on a threat assessment, prioritising capabilities crucial for the ANC's mission in the Indian Ocean region.

    i. Example: Invest in **advanced anti-submarine warfare (ASW)** capabilities considering China's growing submarine presence in the region.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) Model:

» Explore partnerships with private companies to develop essential infrastructure and logistics networks in the Andamans, leveraging private sector expertise and resources.

Manpower Development and Retention:

Improved Living Conditions and Amenities:

» Develop improved living quarters, recreational facilities, and educational opportunities for personnel stationed in the Andamans to boost morale and retention.

    i. Example: **Offering special incentives like tax breaks or higher salaries** for personnel stationed in the Andamans could incentivize longer deployments.

Specialised Training Programs:

» Develop **specialised training programs** to equip personnel with the skills necessary to operate effectively in the unique island environment and address emerging threats.

    i. Example: A **2022 study** by the **Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (JWS)** recommended **increased training opportunities for combined operations between the Army, Navy, and Air Force under the ANC.**

Strengthening Interoperability:

Standardised Training and Procedures:

» Implement standardised training procedures and communication protocols across the Army, Navy, and Air Force within the ANC to ensure seamless coordination and rapid response.

    i. Example: Conducting regular **joint exercises** that simulate real-world scenarios can improve interoperability between different branches.

Advanced Command and Control Systems:

» Invest in advanced **C4ISR** (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) systems to facilitate real-time information sharing and enhance situational awareness for the ANC.

Strategic Upgradation of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI):

Port Blair as a Regional Hub:

» **Port Blair** could serve as a central hub for regional navies to foster interoperability in various areas such as disaster relief, medical aid, counter-piracy efforts, search and rescue operations, and other cooperative maritime endeavours.

Balancing Development and Environment:

✳ **Sustainable Infrastructure Development:** Adopt sustainable construction practices and incorporate environment-friendly technologies to minimise the ecological impact of military development projects.

» Example: Utilising **solar power for energy** needs in the Andamans can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and protect the environment.

✳ **Collaboration with Environmental Agencies:**

» Work closely with environmental agencies like the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and develop effective conservation strategies.

» Forest and environmental clearances must be accorded with **minimum red tape.**

International Collaboration:

✳ India could also explore the possibility of leveraging international arrangements in the Indo-Pacific such as the **Quad** and the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** to catalyse development efforts on the islands.

CONCLUSION

To fully harness the strategic potential of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and maintain a strong Bay of Bengal presence, the ANC must be reinforced as an **independent joint command**. By boosting its capabilities and partnering with groups like the Quad, India can **safeguard its maritime interests and contribute to Indo-Pacific stability.**

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) In light of the growing political complexities and emerging threats in the Indo-Pacific, what comprehensive strategies can be implemented to ensure the Andaman and Nicobar Command remains as a robust defender of India's maritime interests and a key player in regional security? Examine. **(15 marks) (250 words)**

HEAT ACTION PLAN

Syllabus: GS I - Important Geophysical Phenomena

PYQ MAPPING

*Q) Bring out the causes for the formation of heat islands in the urban habitat of the world **(2013)***

SHORT TAKES

India Meteorological Department: Established in 1875 at Shimla and later shifted to New Delhi, the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** centralised meteorological work in India under Mr. H. F. Blanford as Meteorological Reporter.

Heat wave: A heatwave refers to dangerously **high air temperatures**, determined qualitatively by the risk they pose to human health and quantitatively by specific temperature thresholds for each region. In India, the IMD declares a heatwave if **maximum temperatures exceed 40°C in the plains, 37°C in coastal areas, and 30°C in hilly regions**.

Heat Action Plan (HAP): Heat action plans (HAPs) serve as the **primary policy response to economically damaging and life-threatening heatwaves.** They outline various activities, disaster responses, and post-heatwave measures aimed at reducing the impact of heatwaves.

WHY IN NEWS?

The IMD cautioned that from April to June, most of India will experience temperatures surpassing normal levels. This warning aligns with a recent alert from the UN's World Meteorological Organization, suggesting that **2024 is anticipated to be even hotter** after last year's record-breaking global temperatures.

INTRODUCTION

Heat Action Plans (HAPs) are **guidance documents prepared by state**, district, and city governments **to help prepare for**, respond to, and recover and learn from heat waves. One of their most important functions is to direct scarce healthcare, financial, information, and infrastructural resources to those most vulnerable to extreme heat in that jurisdiction.

FEATURES

➡ **General Pattern :** HAPs in India typically include **an overview of regional heat profiles, past heatwave occurrences, and trends** in summer temperatures. They also assess vulnerability and propose response strategies involving multiple

departments like disaster management, labour, and police, detailing roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a heatwave.

➡ **Heat early warning systems:** Facilitate early heatwave detection and enable prompt intervention. **Colour-coded alert systems** signalling increasing heat levels prompt coordinated responses from authorities during extreme heat, notifying residents.

  » For example, the **Ahmedabad Heat Action Plan (HAP)** utilises **meteorological data to forecast heatwaves**, triggering actions like opening cooling centres and arranging transportation for vulnerable populations.

➡ **Communicating heat risks:** Increasing awareness about heat wave dangers and safety measures. **Specialised initiatives target vulnerable populations** such as children, the elderly, and those with prolonged heat exposure from their occupations.

  » Example: **Delhi's HAP** conducts a **targeted campaign for vulnerable groups**, offering advice like staying hydrated and avoiding strenuous activities during heatwaves

➡ **Heat response measures:** During heatwaves it safeguards vulnerable populations and mitigates heat-related risks. **Urban heat island mitigation methods**, like green infrastructure and expanding green spaces, are incorporated while traffic and congestion reduction policies are streamlined.

  » Example: **Mumbai's HAP** implements a response plan involving **cooling centres, transportation assistance, and monitoring vulnerable individuals**, alongside initiatives to combat urban heat islands through tree planting and **green space expansion.**

➡ **Coordination among agencies:** Collaboration between government agencies, healthcare providers, and community organisations to ensure an effective response to heatwaves.
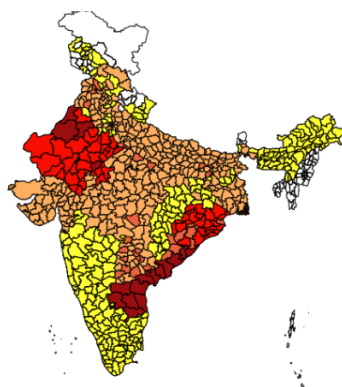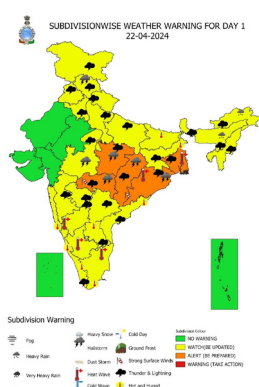
➡ **Enhancing public awareness:** Involves educating people about the dangers of heatwaves and effective safety measures, with campaigns playing a crucial role in reducing heat-related illnesses and fatalities.

IMPORTANT

☀ **Uncontrollable temperature**: Temperatures exceed 45°C in certain areas like **Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Gangetic West Bengal** as heat extends its reach.

☀ **Rising disastrous heat waves:** In the last 50 years, India has witnessed over **700 heatwave incidents resulting in over 17,000 fatalities**, as per a 2021 study published in the Weather and Climate Extremes journal.

☀ **Silent Killer** :Heatwaves, while less attention-grabbing than earthquakes or floods, have claimed a significant number of lives in India until recently, causing **24,223 deaths between 1992 and 2015.**

☀ **Disadvantaged are more prone**:Most victims of heat waves were impoverished individuals working in unorganised sectors like daily-wage labourers and street vendors, forced to toil outdoors for economic sustenance. Their inability to escape outdoor work makes them especially susceptible to the hazards of heatwave conditions.

☀ **Economic stress** - The **International Labour Organisation** anticipates a **5.8% rise in work hours lost due to heat stress by 2030**, amounting to **34 million jobs**, spanning outdoor industries like agriculture and mining, as well as indoor sectors lacking adequate air conditioning, such as manufacturing, hospitality, and transportation.

Year	Recorded deaths caused by heat waves	Year	Recorded deaths caused by heat waves	Year	Recorded deaths caused by heat waves
1992	612	2000	534	2008	616
1993	631	2001	505	2009	1071
1994	773	2002	720	2010	1274
1995	1677	2003	807	2011	793
1996	434	2004	756	2012	1247
1997	393	2005	1075	2013	1216
1998	3058	2006	754	2014	1677
1999	628	2007	932	2015	2040

ISSUES WITH CURRENT HAPS

- **Disregard for regional differences -** National heatwave thresholds set the standard, yet **localised assessments are essential** at state, district, and city levels. Urban factors like the urban heat island effect, roofing types, and proximity to water influence temperatures, urging the need for localized determinations beyond just humidity.

- **Inconsistent techniques** - Many HAPs **lack consistent vulnerability assessments** due to varied methods. A comprehensive climate risk assessment is needed to predict heatwave likelihoods, estimate people and asset exposures, and address inherent vulnerabilities.

- **Implementation Challenges: HAPs are guidelines rather than legal mandates**, which means bureaucrats may not be accountable for delays in implementation. In many cases, important provisions of HAPs have been implemented only if a bureaucrat or a politician felt like doing so.

- **Absence of tailored intervention** - **Lacking tailored interventions** that consider the diverse requirements of communities, considering local social, demographic, and infrastructure factors. The **informal sector, representing over 90% of India's economy**, prominently features pushcart vendors, tea sellers, domestic workers, and sanitation staff, underscoring the need for targeted support.

- **Resource deficiency** - The execution of HAPs varies widely **based on local government priorities and available capacities**, often hindered by the lack of dedicated budgets. Additionally, the absence of dialogue between state entities, civil society organisations, and worker unions prevents the co-planning of financial mechanisms to support informal workers during heat waves without income loss.

- **Lack of transparency:** There is **no national repository of HAPs** and very few HAPs are listed online. Further, it is unclear whether these HAPs are being updated periodically and whether this is based on evaluation data. India also needs better data on heat-related deaths and morbidity.

  » Example: While NDMA has claimed that heat-related deaths had come down from over 2,000 in 2015 to just four in 2020, an analysis of **National Crime Records Bureau data calculates 1,274 heat-related deaths in India in 2019.**

Global Examples

European Countries

o **HEAT-SHIELD** - **Project by EU endeavours** to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change, particularly rising workplace temperatures, on the workforce.

o **Heat-Health Action Plan (HHAP) & Heat-Health Warning System (HHWS)** - The collective strategy of national or regional authorities in various European countries **to address health risks from extreme heat is commonly known** as a Heat-Health Action Plan (HHAP), with its **weather-based alert system** called the Heat-Health Warning System (HHWS).

International Organisations

o **WMO** and **WHO** have jointly created guidance for practitioners in National Meteorological and Hydrological Services **(NMHSs)** and National Health Services **(NHSs)**, addressing the heat-health issue and how to develop effective heat-health warning systems **(HHWSs)** within broader **heat-health action plans (HHAPs)**, focusing on practical rather than prescriptive approaches.

India

o **First HAP**- **Ahmedabad municipality** partnered with the **Indian Institute of Public Health** and **American academies** to develop the **country's first heat action plan (HAP) in 2013.**

o **Climate Hazards and Vulnerability Atlas -** The India Meteorological Department **(IMD)** has compiled a **Climate Hazards and Vulnerability Atlas of India**, covering thirteen of the most perilous meteorological phenomena, **including Heat Waves.**

USA

o **Extreme Heat Action Plan**- **Governor of California** collaborated with the Legislature to allocate an **$800 million budget package last year** to safeguard California from heat, with $300 million earmarked for the Extreme Heat Action Plan and other initiatives to protect communities and the environment. In the 2022-23 budget, the Governor proposes allocating this additional funding to support the implementation of the Extreme Heat Action Plan

o **Climate Adaptation Strategy**- Progress on implementing the Extreme Heat Action Plan will be monitored via the California Climate Adaptation Strategy's yearly reporting, bolstering the state's comprehensive climate adaptation efforts.

WAY FORWARD

* **Setting an expert committee: Heat is not currently recognized as a disaster eligible for mitigation and relief funds** under the **National and State Disaster Risk Management Funds (N/SDRMFs)**. An expert committee should reconsider this decision, informed by the latest science and HAP implementation experience.

* **Effective monitoring:** Make **regular monitoring** the centrepiece of the annual evaluation process, ensuring interventions effectively reach vulnerable groups and reduce exposure.

* **Technological progress** - Incorporating **granular scale heat vulnerability** and **hotspot mapping assessments**, leveraging the latest advancements in geospatial technology and field-based assessments, is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of our Heat Action Plans (HAPs).

* **Knowledge Sharing:** Several states and cities are simultaneously experimenting with different combinations of solutions with varying levels of effectiveness. It is important to create platforms to exchange which solutions and processes work.

  » Example: **Ahmedabad's Cool Roofs Program** aims to mitigate urban heat island effects. These roofs reflect sunlight and **reduce indoor temperatures by up to 5°C,** benefiting vulnerable residents.

* **Addressing regional variations:** Expanding heatwave definitions to **include local factors** and developing regional-specific Heat Action Plans (HAPs) is vital for effective strategies in combating extreme temperatures.

* **Anticipatory cash transfers:** Provide financial assistance to vulnerable populations before the onset of the crisis, enabling them to **prepare and mitigate its impacts effectively.**

  » **Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** has introduced an **Extreme Heat Insurance** product for its members with **support from Rockefeller Foundation.**

* **Public Awareness and Outreach:** Utilising various media channels for disseminating **preventive measures** against heat waves, including pamphlets, advertisements, and social media campaigns, to educate and protect vulnerable populations.

* **Resource Management:** Allocate specific funding for Heat Action Plans (HAPs) to ensure their efficient execution. Foster discussions among stakeholders to establish financial systems aiding informal workers during heatwaves.

* **Collaborative Integration**: Fuse **Heat Action Plans (HAPs) with wider urban resilience and climate adaptation strategies** to maximise resource efficiency. Enhance data gathering and monitoring frameworks to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of HAPs.

* **Expand risk assessments**: HAPs should assess how risks compound across demographics and livelihoods. For instance, **elderly individuals working outdoors** face different risks than those working indoors. Additionally, vulnerable groups should include informal home-based workers.

* **Getting future ready:** India faces a clear scientific forecast of more frequent and intense heat waves, hotter days and nights, and shifts in seasons. HAP revisions should incorporate high-resolution climate projections and past temperature trends to transform them into **proactive tools for heat planning** rather than merely reactive ones for heat management.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a pressing requirement to implement **Heat Action Plans (HAPs)** to alleviate the negative effects of heatwaves, given the increasing unpredictability of climate change and the resulting surge in extreme weather incidents. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic caught our public health systems off guard, it's essential for South Asia to **enhance its preparedness and management systems for heatwaves**, with HAPs offering valuable support in this endeavour.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) The frequency of heat waves is increasing over the years. Discussing the reasons for heat waves , highlight the mechanisms for preparedness to reduce the risk during such events **(15 marks)(250 words)**

GREEN CREDITS PROGRAMME

Syllabus: GS III - Environmental Conservation

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What are the key features of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) initiated by the Government of India? **(2020)**

Q) How does the draft Environment Impact Assessment(EIA) Notification, 2020 differ from the existing EIA Notification, 2006? **(2020)**

Q) Define the concept of carrying capacity of an ecosystem as relevant to an environment. Explain how understanding this concept is vital while planning for sustainable development of a region. **(2019)**

SHORT TAKES

LiFE (Lifestyle For Environment):

➤ The **LiFE Movement** was proposed by India at the **United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)** held in **Glasgow in 2021.**

- The LiFE movement encourages an **eco-conscious lifestyle** that emphasises ' thoughtful and purposeful use ' rather than 'mindless and wasteful consumption.'

- The LiFE initiative's aim is to inspire individuals worldwide to perform basic **climate-friendly acts** in their daily lives and to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle .

- The mission is to create and expand a global network of ' **Pro-Planet People ' (P3).**

WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the **Environment Ministry** issued new guidelines on its **Green Credit Programme (GCP)**, two months after it had prescribed rules governing the first initiative, afforestation.

INTRODUCTION

The Green Credit Program (GCP), launched by India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, is an innovative market-based mechanism and is included under the 'Lifestyle for Environment' (LiFE) movement. It aims to i**ncentivize voluntary environmental actions** across various sectors, engaging individuals, communities, private sector industries, and companies.

GCP GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

➡ **Oversight:**

» The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) oversees the Green Credit Programme (GCP) in India.

» The **MoEFCC is the nodal agency** for planning, promoting, coordinating, and overseeing the implementation of India's environmental and forestry policies and programs.

➡ **Implementation and Management:**

» **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)**: This body acts as the GCP Administrator which is responsible for the program's day-to-day operations, including:

i. Developing program **guidelines and methodologies.**

ii. Managing the **issuance and verification of Green Credits.**

iii. **Monitoring and evaluation** of the program's effectiveness.

iv. **Operating the domestic market platform** for Green Credit trading.

OBJECTIVE

Incentivize Environmental Actions Through Market Mechanism:

🌀 The program aims to **establish a market-based system** that incentivizes individuals and organisations to go beyond compliance with environmental regulations.

🌀 Participants earn **"Green Credits"** for taking voluntary environmental actions, motivating them to contribute to environmental well-being.

Generate Tradable Green Credits:

🌀 The Green Credits earned can be **traded on a designated domestic market platform**.

🌀 This allows entities that find it difficult to undertake certain environmental projects (like tree plantation) to purchase credits from those who have generated them, which creates a financial incentive for environmental action and facilitates a market-driven approach to environmental improvement.

◉ **Activities includes:**

» **Ecomark-based green credit:** To encourage manufacturers to obtain an **'Ecomark' label for their goods and services.**

- It provides accreditation and labelling for household and consumer products that meet specific environmental criteria while maintaining quality standards as per Indian norms.

- Products accredited under the Ecomark Scheme will adhere to specific environmental criteria, ensuring **minimal environmental impact.**

- The program aims to boost consumer awareness of environmental issues and encourage eco-friendly choices.

- It also drives manufacturers toward **sustainable production**, with a focus on accurate labelling to prevent misleading product information.

- The **Central Pollution Control Board** administers the Ecomark Scheme in partnership with **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**, which is the national body for standards and certification.

» **Tree plantation-based green credit:** To **promote activities for increasing the green cover** across the country through tree plantation and related activities.

» **Water-based green credit:** To promote water conservation, water harvesting, and water use efficiency/savings, including treatment and reuse of wastewater.

» **Sustainable agriculture-based green credit:** To promote natural and regenerative agricultural practices and land restoration to improve productivity, soil health, and nutritional value of food produced.

» **Waste management-based green credit:** To promote sustainable and improved practices for **waste management**, including collection, segregation, and treatment.

» **Air pollution reduction-based green credit:** To promote measures for **reducing air pollution and other pollution** abatement activities.

» **Mangrove conservation and restoration-based green credit:** To promote measures for conservation and restoration of mangroves.

» **Sustainable building and infrastructure-based green credit:** To encourage the construction of buildings and other infrastructure using sustainable technologies and materials.

Sovereign Green Bonds (SGB)

Why in News:

☀ **RBI** to allow foreign investors in International Financial Services Centre **(IFSC)** to invest in **Sovereign Green Bonds**

☀ SGBs are **debt instruments** issued **by RBI** in India on behalf of the central government to tap finance from potential investors for deployment in public sector projects aimed at reducing the carbon intensity of the economy.

☀ At present, foreign portfolio investors registered with **SEBI are permitted to invest in SGBs** under the different routes available for investment by FPIs in government securities.

GREEN BONDS:

☀ Green bonds are **issued by companies**, **countries and multilateral organisations** to exclusively fund projects that have positive environmental or climate benefits and **provide investors with fixed income payments.**

☀ The projects can **include renewable energy, clean transportation and green buildings**, among others.

India's Sovereign Green Bonds Framework:

☀ First announced in the **Union Budget 2022-23**, the proceeds of these green bonds will be issued for mobilising resources for green infrastructure.

☀ **Features of the SGBs:**

» SGBs will be issued through **Uniform Price Auction** (a public sale in which a fixed number of similar things are sold at the same price).

» SGBs will be **eligible for Repurchase Transactions (Repo)** as well as for **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).**

» SGBs will be **eligible for trading in the secondary market.**

» The proceeds from the green bonds issuance will be **deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)** in line with the regular treasury policy, and then funds from the CFI will be made available for the eligible green projects.

☼ **Eligible Projects:**

» Renewable energy, Energy efficiency, Clean transportation, Climate adaptation, Sustainable water management, Pollution control, Sustainable land use, Green buildings, Biodiversity conservation.

» **Sectors not included:**

- **Nuclear power generation**, **landfill project**s, **alcohol/weapons/tobacco/gaming/palm oi**l industries and **hydropower plants larger than 25 MW** have been excluded from the framework.

☼ **Implementing Agency:**

» The **Ministry of Finance** has constituted a **Green Finance Working Committee (GFWC)** including members from relevant ministries and chaired by the Chief Economic Advisor.

SIGNIFICANCE

For Environment:

- **Going Beyond Compliance:**

o Currently, environmental regulations **set minimum standards.** The GCP encourages actions that exceed those standards, promoting activities like water conservation and sustainable agricultural practices that benefit the environment in the long run.

- **Participation from Diverse Groups:**

o The program is **open to individuals, communities, industries, and companies** which broadens the range of participants involved in environmental improvement efforts compared to traditional regulation-driven approaches.

- **Improved Air and Water Quality:**

o By focusing on areas such as water conservation, the program can directly improve water quality.

o It can also indirectly contribute to cleaner air by incentivizing sustainable practices.

- **Enhanced Biodiversity:**

o Activities like **afforestation** (planting trees) encouraged by the program can create new habitats and support biodiversity.

- **Combating Climate Change:**

o Though not its primary focus, the program can help mitigate climate change by promoting **activities that lower carbon emissions or increase carbon sequestration**, such as tree planting.

For Government:

- **Meeting National Commitments**:

o As a signatory to international environmental agreements like the **Paris Agreement**, India has environmental targets to meet.

o The GCP can support the government's efforts by incentivizing actions that reduce emissions, conserve resources, and promote sustainability.

- **Domestic Environmental Goals:**

o The program can contribute to achieving national environmental goals outlined in initiatives like **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), which promotes sustainable living.**

- **Improved Environmental Governance:**

  o **Market-Based Approach:** The GCP offers a market-based approach to environmental improvement, potentially complementing traditional command-and-control regulations which can lead to more efficient use of resources and broader participation in environmental efforts.

  o **Data Collection and Monitoring:** The program can collect valuable data on environmental actions by various stakeholders, which can be used to improve environmental monitoring, inform policy formulation, and track progress towards environmental goals.

- **Promoting Environmental Consciousness:**

  o By creating a market for environmental actions, the GCP **can raise public awareness about environmental issues** and encourage a culture of sustainability.

  o **Engaging Diverse Stakeholders:** The program's open participation structure can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for the environment among individuals, communities, and businesses.

For Companies:

- **Environmental Benefits:**

  o **Meeting Sustainability Goals:**

    ▪ Many companies have set sustainability goals to reduce their environmental impact.

    ▪ The GCP provides a **framework for companies** to take concrete actions towards these goals, like water conservation or waste reduction, and earn recognition for their efforts.

  o **Enhanced Brand Image:**

    ▪ Consumers are increasingly concerned about environmental issues.

    ▪ Participation in the GCP can help companies showcase their commitment to sustainability and improve their brand image.

  o **Compliance and Risk Management:**

    ▪ **Stringent environmental regulations** are becoming more common.

    ▪ By proactively taking steps through the GCP, companies can potentially reduce their risk of non-compliance and associated penalties.

- **Economic Benefits:**

  o **Cost Savings:**

    ▪ Green initiatives encouraged by the GCP, like water conservation or energy efficiency improvements, can lead to **long-term cost savings for companies.**

  o **Access to Green Finance:**

    ▪ Companies with a strong Green Credit record may find it easier to access green finance options from banks and other financial institutions looking to support sustainable businesses.

For Citizens:

- **Direct Contribution:**

  o The program allows individuals to directly contribute to environmental improvement through actions like **rainwater harvesting, tree planting, or waste management at home.**

  o Earning Green Credits can provide a sense of accomplishment and **encourage further environmental action.**

- **Lifestyle Changes:**
  - o The GCP can incentivize individuals to adopt more sustainable practices in their daily lives, such as reducing energy consumption or using public transport.
  - o This contributes to a broader cultural shift towards environmental consciousness.
- **Reduced Costs:**
  - o By adopting sustainable practices encouraged by the program, like reducing water usage or using energy-efficient appliances, citizens can **potentially save money on utility bills.**
- **Environmental Education:**
  - o The program can raise awareness about environmental issues and motivate citizens to learn more about **sustainable living practices.**

CONCERNS

🔴 **Commodification of Environmental Conservation:**
  - » Critics argue that the GCP turns environmental conservation into a commodity, potentially **undermining the spirit of India's forest conservation laws.**

🔴 **Forest Diversion Concerns:**
  - » The GCP's provision for companies to **"exchange" green credits** for complying with compensatory afforestation requirements raises concerns that it could be exploited by industries seeking to ease forest diversion requirements, particularly **in sectors like mining and infrastructure.**

🔴 **Ecological Impact:**
  - » Planting trees as a part of afforestation efforts **does not guarantee ecosystem improvement.**
  - » India's diverse forest types require specific approaches, and **planting the wrong types of trees could lead to the proliferation of invasive species** or disrupt sustainable ecosystems.

🔴 **Monoculture Threat:**
  - » There's a risk that the GCP may promote the replacement of natural forests with **invasive monocultures,** potentially harming biodiversity and **ecological balance.**

🔴 **Carbon Trading Controversy**:
  - » The GCP allows green credits resulting from carbon storage (e.g., tree planting) to be used for carbon trading.
  - » However, the methodology for equating these activities is unclear, raising doubts about the effectiveness and legitimacy of such carbon trading schemes

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Standardisation and Quantification**:
  - » Develop clear and **consistent methodologies** for quantifying environmental benefits across different activities.
  - » **Example:** the National Carbon Credit Registry is an **open-source software** developed by the United Nations Development Program **(UNDP)** to help countries **manage and trade carbon credits**

✳ **Robust Verification System:**
  - » Invest in a robust verification system that utilises technology like **remote sensing** or **blockchain** to ensure the credibility of Green Credits.
  - » **Third-party verification agencies** can also be involved.

✳ **Demand Creation:**
  - » Encourage industries with high environmental footprints to participate as buyers by setting mandatory or voluntary environmental credit purchase targets.
  - » Promote the program to businesses that can benefit from buying credits, like those in urban areas with limited space for green projects.

✷ **Pricing of Credits**:

  » Conduct market research and stakeholder consultations to **determine a fair and transparent price for Green Credits** that incentivizes both buyers and sellers.

✷ **Solution for Monoculture:**

  » **Give preference to indigenous species** and encourage activities that promote ecological corridors and landscape connectivity between planting sites.

  » **Site Inspections:** Incorporate mandatory site inspections during the verification process for afforestation projects to ensure a diversity of species is being planted.

  » **Remote Sensing Analysis:** Explore using remote sensing techniques to monitor the composition of planted forests over time. This can help identify and potentially penalise projects that deviate from diverse planting plans

✷ **Double Counting and Leakage Prevention:**

  » Implement robust **tracking systems** and eligibility criteria for activities that generate Green Credits.

  » I**nvest in research** to identify and mitigate potential leakage risks.

✷ **Awareness and Capacity Building:**

  » Launch **public awareness campaigns** about the GCP, highlighting its benefits for individuals, communities, and businesses.

  » Partner with **NGOs and civil society** organisations to build capacity at the community level.

✷ **Regular Reviews and Improvement:**

  » Conduct **regular reviews of the program** to assess its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

CONCLUSION

The Green Credit Program (GCP) shows promise in advancing environmental action in India, but key concerns must be addressed to ensure its success. Addressing these issues will not only foster sustainability but also contribute to India's progress toward **Sustainable Development Goals 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).**

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Considering the potential for commodification of environmental conservation, how can the Green Credit Programme (GCP) be designed to ensure genuine environmental benefits are prioritised over simply earning credits. Critically Examine. **(15 M)(250 W)**

AGROFORESTRY

Syllabus: GS III - *Agricultural Marketing*

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Assess the role of National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in boosting the production, productivity and income of horticulture farms. How far has it succeeded in increasing the income of farmers? **(2018)***

Q) *What is an Integrated Farming System ? How is it helpful to small and marginal farmers in India ? **(2022)***

Q) *In view of the declining average size of land holdings in India which has made agriculture non-viable for a majority of farmers, should contract farming and land leasing be promoted in agriculture? Critically evaluate the pros and cons. **(2015)***

SHORT TAKES

Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs): It is an integral part of the **National Agricultural Research System (NARS)**, aims at assessment of location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied enterprises, through technology assessment, refinement and demonstrations.

WHAT IS AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is any **sustainable land-use system** that maintains or increases total yields by combining food crops (annuals) with tree crops (perennials) and/or livestock on the same unit of land, either **alternately or at the same time**, using management practices that suit the social and cultural characteristics of the local people and the economic and eco-logical conditions of the area.
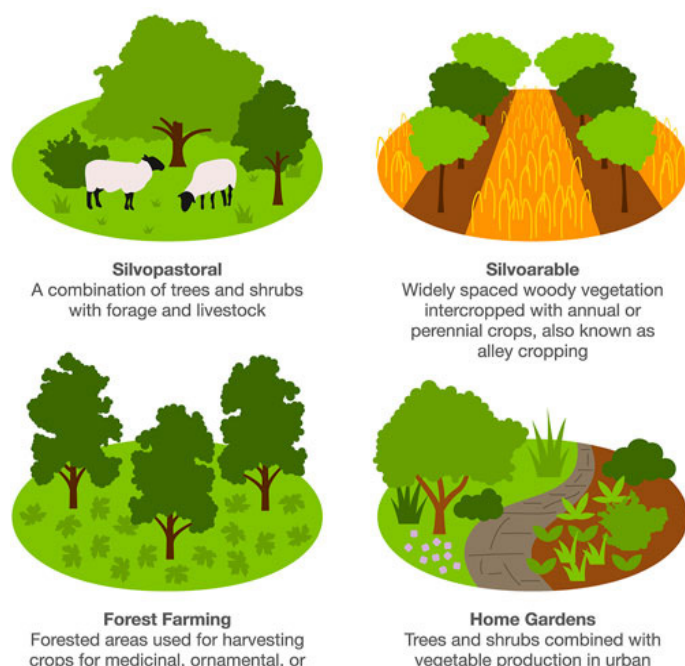
WHY IN NEWS?

NITI Aayog Launches **Greening India's Wastelands with Agroforestry (GROW)** Report and Portal, a collaborative project led by NITI Aayog that uses remote sensing and **Geographic Information System (GIS)** technology to assess the potential of agroforestry in all districts of India.

INTRODUCTION

Agroforestry, a traditional land-use practice in India that integrates crops, trees, and livestock, is regaining popularity after decades of monocropping inspired by the Green Revolution. This **diversified approach** to agriculture can enhance both farmer livelihoods and environmental sustainability.

Agroforestry and its attributes
It is a combination of practicing agriculture and forestry together on same land

What are the components of agroforestry?
There are three main components of agroforestry — crops, trees and livestock.

What are the major agroforestry systems based on the type of component?
Agroforestry systems are classified into three categories based on the types of components: Agrisilviculture (crops + trees), silvopastoral (pasture/livestock + trees); and Agrosilvopastoral (crops + pasture + trees).

What are the major attributes that agroforestry systems should possess?
There are three attributes of agroforestry systems:
Productivity: Production of preferred goods and increasing productivity of land
Sustainability: Conserving the production potential
Adoptability: Acceptance of the prescribed practice

What are the trees suitable for rainfed areas?
Neem, Pongamia, Sandalwood and Anjan tree among others

What are the tree crops suited for saline / sodic lands?
Eucalyptus, Casuarina, Pongamia, Neem and Flame of Forest among others

TYPES OF AGROFORESTRY

Silvopastoral
A combination of trees and shrubs with forage and livestock

Silvoarable
Widely spaced woody vegetation intercropped with annual or perennial crops, also known as alley cropping

Forest Farming
Forested areas used for harvesting crops for medicinal, ornamental, or

Home Gardens
Trees and shrubs combined with vegetable production in urban

OTHER SYSTEMS

♣ **Apiculture with trees:** In this system various **honey (nectar)** producing trees frequently visited by honeybees are planted on the boundary of the agricultural fields

♣ **Aquaforestry:**

» In this system various **trees and shrubs preferred by fish** are planted on the boundary and around fish ponds.

» Tree leaves are used as **feed for fish.** The main role of this system is fish production and bund stabilisation around fish ponds

♣ **Mixed wood lots:**

» In this system, special location specific **MultiPurpose Trees (MPTs)** are grown mixed or separately planted for various purposes such as wood, fodder, soil conservation, soil reclamation etc.

BENEFITS OF AGROFORESTRY SYSTEM

Environmental Benefits:

🌀 **Improved Soil Fertility:**

» **Trees fix nitrogen** from the air, enriching the soil.

» Their leaves decompose, adding organic matter that **improves soil health and fertility.** This, in turn, benefits crops grown alongside the trees.

🌀 **Enhanced Soil Conservation**:

» Tree roots bind the soil particles together, **reducing soil erosion** caused by wind and heavy rain.

» This is particularly important on slopes and in areas with fragile soils

🌀 **Increased Water Conservation:**

» Trees act like **natural sponges**, soaking up rainwater and releasing it slowly throughout the dry season, this helps

to **regulate water flow and prevent floods.**

» The shade provided by trees also **reduces evaporation** from the soil surface.

🌀 **Boosted Biodiversity:**

» Agroforestry systems create a more **complex habitat** for a wider variety of plants and animals.

» This biodiversity can help to **control pests and diseases** naturally.

Economic Benefits:

🌀 **Increased Crop Yields:**

» Trees can provide shade and shelter for crops, protecting them from harsh sunlight and wind.

» This can **improve crop yields**, especially for shade-loving crops like coffee or cocoa.

🌀 **Diversified Income Streams:**

» Farmers can **generate additional income** from the trees they plant in their agroforestry systems.

» This could include fruits, nuts, timber, or fodder for livestock.

🌀 **Reduced Reliance on External Inputs:**

» Trees can help to **suppress weeds and pests**, reducing the need for chemical herbicides and pesticides.

» This can **save farmers money** and reduce their environmental impact.

🌀 **Improved Climate Resilience:**

» The diversification of crops and trees in an agroforestry system can make farms more resilient to the effects of climate change, such as drought and flooding.

Social benefits:

🌀 **Improvement in rural living standards** from sustained employment and higher income.

🌀 **Improvement in nutrition and health** due to increased quality and diversity of food outputs.

🌀 **Stabilisation and improvement of communities** through elimination of the need to shift sites of farm activities.

Need for Agroforestry in India

Environmental Needs:

🇮🇳 **Land Degradation:**

» According to the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** , over **50% of India's land is degraded** due to soil erosion, salinity, and chemical imbalances.

» Agroforestry's ability to improve soil fertility and conservation can help reverse this trend.

🇮🇳 **Deforestation**:

» According to the **2021 India State of Forest Report (ISFR)**, **India's total forest cover is 80.9 million hectares**, or 24.62% of the country's total land area.

» The **National Forest Policy** of India states that to maintain ecological stability, at least **33% of the country's total geographical area should be under forest cover.**

Economic Needs:

🇮🇳 **Livelihood Security:**

» A large portion of India's population depends on agriculture, diversification and additional income streams offered by agroforestry can improve the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers, as highlighted by the **Central Agroforestry Research Institute.**

🇮🇳 **Climate Change Challenges:**

» India is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts like droughts and floods.

» The **Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations** (CEEW) emphasises that agroforestry systems can make farms more resilient to these challenges.

Social Needs:

🇮🇳 **Fuelwood and Fodder Security:**

» A significant portion of India's rural population relies on wood for cooking and fodder for livestock.

» Agroforestry practices can provide a **sustainable source of fuelwood and fodder**, reducing pressure on natural forests.

🇮🇳 **Nutritional Security:**

» According to the **2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI),** India's malnutrition status is considered serious, with a score of **28.7 out of 100**, **ranking 111 out of 125 countries.**

» Integrating fruit trees into cropping systems can enhance dietary diversity and address malnutrition, especially in vulnerable communities.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

🔴 **Lack of Awareness and Knowledge:**

» Farmers accustomed to traditional monoculture practices might not understand the long-term benefits of integrating trees with crops, leading to initial hesitance.

» A **2018 study by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)** revealed that awareness about agroforestry benefits **remains limited** among some Indian farmers, particularly smallholders.

🔴 **Institutional and Policy Constraints:**

» In some regions, **complex regulations and bureaucratic hurdles** regarding tree felling and transportation can make it difficult for farmers to manage or harvest trees within their agroforestry systems.

🔴 **Limited Market Access and Infrastructure:**

» Farmers who plant specialty fruit trees in their agroforestry systems might face challenges connecting with **reliable buyers or processing facilities**, leading to lower income potential.

» A 2017 report by the **Central Agroforestry Research Institute (ICAR-CAFRI)** highlighted the need for better **market linkages** for agroforestry products like fruits, nuts, and timber.

🔴 **Competition for Land and Water Resources:**

» The Ministry of Agriculture acknowledged **water scarcity** as a challenge when drafting the **National Agroforestry Policy (2014).**

» In drought-prone regions, farmers might be hesitant to dedicate land and water to trees, prioritising immediate food security needs over long-term benefits.

🔴 **Long-term Investment with Delayed Returns:**

» Unlike seasonal crops, trees in agroforestry systems often take years to mature and provide economic returns. This can be a deterrent for farmers seeking quicker financial gains.

» Example: A farmer who plants a timber tree in their agroforestry system might need to wait 10-15 years before harvesting, potentially discouraging them compared to a crop with a shorter harvest cycle.

WAY FORWARD

✴ **Knowledge Dissemination and Capacity Building:**

» **Partner with NGOs** and **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)** to conduct training workshops for farmers on different agroforestry models suited to their regions.

» Develop **localised educational materials** (videos, pamphlets) in regional languages showcasing successful agroforestry practices by fellow farmers.

✳ **Strengthening Institutional Frameworks and Policies:**

» Advocate for streamlining regulations related to tree felling and transportation within agroforestry systems, ensuring ecological responsibility while facilitating farmer management.

» **Incentivize local Panchayats (village councils)** to allocate degraded common lands for community-based agroforestry projects, promoting both environmental restoration and shared benefits.

✳ **Fostering Market Linkages and Value Chains:**

» **Collaborate with private companies and cooperatives** to establish collection centres and processing facilities for specialty fruits, nuts, and timber produced through agroforestry.

» Promote **e-commerce platforms** and Farmer Producer Organizations **(FPOs)** to connect agroforestry farmers directly with consumers, bypassing middlemen and increasing their profits.

✳ **Addressing Land and Water Resource Concerns:**

» Integrate drought-resistant tree species into agroforestry models, along with **water-harvesting techniques**, to minimise competition for scarce water resources.

- Example:Planting trees that don't compete with crops for water is a way to manage trade-offs between agriculture and water usage.

- **Bengaluru-based WELL Labs** adapted an **open-source water-accounting tool** called "**Jaltol**" to assess water competition between trees and crops.

- Insights: Mango plantations in central Karnataka don't compete with kharif crops for water.

» Encourage **intercropping with legumes** in initial stages of establishing agroforestry systems.

» Legumes fix nitrogen in the soil, improving fertility and potentially reducing overall water needs for crops.

✳ **Overcoming Long-Term Investment Challenges:**

» Introduce **microfinance schemes** or **government subsidies** specifically targeted at s**upporting initial costs** associated with establishing agroforestry practices.

» **Develop carbon credit trading** programs that compensate farmers for the **carbon sequestration benefits** of their agroforestry systems, providing an additional income stream.

✳ **Finding combination of Native Species for Better result:**

» Identifying suitable native species is crucial to combat land degradation and diversify livelihood opportunities, though it's challenging.

» Decision support tools that utilise comprehensive plant trait databases for hundreds of tree species can aid in selecting the most appropriate ones.

- Example: **Diversity for Restoration (D4R)** tool was developed by **Biodiversity International** and now suited to needs of India. It will scientifically aid eco-restoration and support agroforestry but giving inputs to multiple stakeholders.

Grow Initiative

★ **Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal was launched by NITI Aayog.**

★ This multi-institutional effort led by **NITI Aayog** utilised **remote sensing and GIS** to assess agroforestry suitability across all districts in India.

★ Using thematic datasets, an **Agroforestry Suitability Index (ASI)** was developed for national-level prioritisation.

★ Currently, **agroforestry covers 8.65% of India's total geographical area**, totalling about **28.42 million hectares**

GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

NIGER:

☀ Agroforestry **for Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands:**

» In Niger, the **Sahel Evergreen Initiative** focuses on planting native trees like Acacia senegal in degraded lands.

BRAZIL:

☀ Farmers in the Amazon are incorporating **leguminous trees like Gliricidia Sepium into their pastures.**

☀ These trees provide shade and forage for cattle, while also **fixing nitrogen in the soil and improving pasture quality.**

VIETNAM:

☀ The **IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)** supports initiatives where communities plant fruit trees like **durian and rambutan** alongside cash crops like rubber.

Costa Rica

☀ Utilising Financial Incentives and Certification Schemes:

» Costa Rica's **Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program** provides financial rewards to farmers who adopt sustainable practices like agroforestry.

LOCAL BEST PRACTICES

KERALA:

◉ Farmers adopt a technique called "**Ingu Kulthi"** (literally, "arecanut and banana").

◉ Here, **banana trees** are planted alongside **Arecanut palms.**

◉ Bananas provide shade for the shade-loving Arecanut palms, while also generating additional income.

RAJASTHAN:

◉ Farmers adopt **Wadi (micro-watershed)** based agroforestry systems.

◉ Here, trenches are dug along contour lines to capture rainwater runoff.

◉ Trees are then planted in these **trenches**, improving water **infiltration and soil moisture.**

ANDHRA PRADESH:

◉ The Deccan Development Society (DDS) has established a network of **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** for **marketing non-timber forest products (NTFPs)** like honey and medicinal herbs produced through agroforestry practices.

◉ This approach ensures farmers receive fair prices for their produce and incentivizes wider adoption.

CONCLUSION

Embracing agroforestry and fostering collaboration among stakeholders can unlock its transformative potential, leading to a future where **sustainable agriculture** and **environmental conservation coexist**, ensuring food security and a **greener planet** for generations to come.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) With a growing global focus on climate change adaptation, how can agroforestry systems be specifically designed to improve the resilience of farms to extreme weather events like droughts and floods. Discuss **(15 M) (250 W)**

MAOIST MENACE

Syllabus: GS III - *Challenges to Internal Security*

PYQ MAPPING

Q) The persisting drives of the government for development of large industries in backward areas have resulted in isolating the tribal population and the farmers who face multiple displacements with Malkangiri and Naxalbari foci, discuss the corrective strategies needed to win the left wing extremism (LWE) doctrine affected citizens back into the mainstream of social and economic growth **(2015)**

Q) Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is showing a downward trend, but still affects many parts of the country. Briefly explain the Government of India's approach to counter the challenges posed by LWE **(2018)**

Q) Naxalism is a social, economic and developmental issue manifesting as a violent internal security threat. In this context, discuss the emerging issues and suggest a multilayered strategy to tackle the menace of Naxalism **(2022)**

SHORT TAKES

Maoism: Originating in China from the teachings of Mao Zedong, **Maoism** emphasised armed revolution to establish a classless society, rooting itself in **anti-imperialist struggle.** Naxalism in India draws on Maoist principles for a similar societal transformation through armed means.

Naxalism: Originating from the **1967 Naxalbari** uprising in West Bengal, Naxalism emerged as a peasant revolt against landowners due to persisting economic discontent post-independence. Stemming from a **split within the Communist Party of India (Marxist),** it embraced Maoist ideology, initially concentrated in West Bengal but later expanding to rural areas across central and eastern India through groups like the **Communist Party of India (Maoist).**

Red Corridor: The Naxalites are primarily located in the **"Red Corridor,"** spanning from **West Bengal to Karnataka.** Most violence occurs in states like **Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and Odisha.** This region, characterised by dense forests and limited infrastructure, enables Naxalite control and shields them from government surveillance.

WHY IN NEWS?

Security forces engaged in a significant operation in **southern Chhattisgarh's Kanker** district, resulting in the alleged killing of 29 Maoists, just days before the Lok Sabha elections. This operation marks one of the largest successes **against left-wing extremism** in Chhattisgarh's history since its inception in 2000.

INTRODUCTION

The Maoist insurgency in India has been a longstanding challenge, rooted in historical grievances, ideological rifts, and socio-economic disparities. Emerging from the **Naxalbari uprising in 1967**, it has evolved into a complex conflict spanning several states, notably in the eastern and central regions of the country.

Red Corridor

HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY

Communist Party of India (CPI)

➡️ **Origin:** Established in **1925**, CPI aimed at leading a **proletarian-led revolution against British rule.** Drawn from disillusioned members of Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, CPI found inspiration in global communist movements and the success of the **October Revolution in Russia.**

➡️ **Telangana Movement: Telangana movement (1946-1951)** was aimed at land redistribution and liberation of peasants. CPI's presence in Telangana led to promotion of guerrilla warfare, but faced military crackdowns by the Indian Army.

➡️ **Withdrawal:** Indian Army's offensive forced CPI to choose between surrender and continued armed struggle. CPI's leadership was divided, leading to **negotiations with Indian National Congress (INC)** and formal withdrawal from insurgency in October 1951.
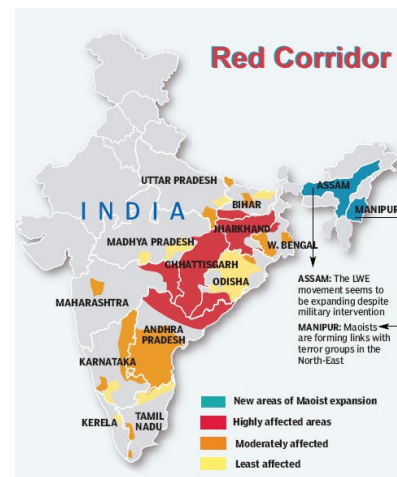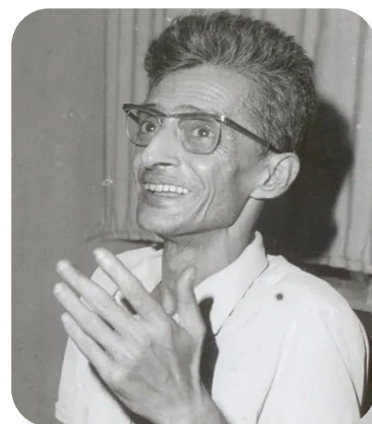
Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M)

➡️ **Origin:** Ideological rifts started in the CPI regarding the party's approach to the Constitution, the Capital class, Nehru and his socialism. One section led by **S.A.Dange** favoured the INC since the ties with USSR were improving,

but a leftist faction having seen the imposition of **president's rule** and throwing out of the first communist ruled state in India shied away.

➡ The global **rift between Russian and Chinese communism** and the Sino-India border war ultimately led to formation of CPI-M led **B.K.Ranadive and A.K.Gopalan..**

➡ **Ideology:** CPI-M emerged advocating for a **more revolutionary** approach, siding with **Chinese Maoist ideology** over Soviet influence.

➡ **Conflicts:**

» In 1965, during the **India-Pakistan conflict** over Kashmir, CPI-M faced a dilemma as **Mao's China supported Pakistan**. This challenged the party's loyalty to Chinese communist ideology, leading to internal discontent and accusations of betrayal.

» The **left parties won the 1967 West Bengal elections** dislodging the INC. However, the internal ideological issues persisted.

» An impatient extreme leftist faction of party workers, who later called themselves the **Maoist Communist Centre (MCC),** emboldened by the fact that now they have a communist government, started to seize paddy lands from rich **landlords (jotedars)** in their **Naxalbari** strongholds with some **santhal tribals .**

» The issue led to the death of a police officer and retaliatory killings of tribals. The left government could not support such lawlessness and aided the central government in curbing the movement.

Communist Party of India- Marxist Leninist (CPI-ML)

➡ **Origin:** The Naxalbari incident had been brought under control with the arrest of leaders like **Jangal Santhal** and going underground of **Charu Mazumdar.** They were expelled by the CPI-M.

➡ In 1969, they officially split from the CPI-M by forming the **Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist (CPI-ML).**

➡ **Ideology:** Mazumdar's CPI-ML, despite its name, leaned heavily towards Maoist ideology, evident in its slogan: **"China's Chairman is our Chairman. The Chinese path is our path."** However, after India's defeat in the **Sino-Indian War of 1962**, promoting Maoist propaganda clashed with patriotic sentiments, making it unpopular.

➡ **Operation Steeplechase:** In 1971, this operation marked a turning point as the government deployed the army and CRPF into West Bengal, lasting 45 days and effectively crushing the Naxalite movement. This led to a decline in activity for the next two decades.

➡ **Split:** It later splits into various naxalite groups, including CPI (Marxist-Leninist) People's War or People's War Group (PWG) and **Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI).**

Communist Party of India-Maoists

➡ **1980s-1990s:** Both CPI (Marxist-Leninist) People's War and Maoist Communist Centre of India carry out **armed struggles** in various parts of India, primarily in rural areas with significant tribal populations and socio-economic disparities. They aim to **overthrow the Indian state through armed revolution.**

➡ **2004:** PWG and MCCI with other splinter groups merged forming the Communist Party of India-Maoists. This merger strengthens the Maoist movement in India and consolidates their efforts towards a unified revolutionary front.

➡ **The Modern Maoists:** The CPI (Maoist) continues its armed struggle against the Indian government, primarily in regions known as the "Red Corridor," which includes parts of **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Maharashtra.** They engage in guerrilla warfare tactics and aim to establish a "people's democratic state" through the overthrow of the Indian state.

REASON FOR SPREAD

✦ **Historical Injustices:** Historically, India has had deep-rooted socio-economic disparities, particularly in rural areas. These disparities, often along caste and class lines, have led to marginalisation and exploitation of certain communities, creating fertile ground for radical ideologies like Maoism to take root and spread.

⚡ **Socio economic neglect:** Neglect in rural areas, particularly among **Dalits and Adivasis**, fuels resentment and support for the Naxalite movement. Exploitation by local elites, limited access to resources, and political marginalisation **exacerbate their grievances.**

⚡ **Poor governance:** Delayed and inefficient implementation of welfare schemes, contribute significantly to the proliferation of Naxalism whereas Naxalites effectively **recruit new members, particularly unemployed youths** in rural areas, by offering monthly salaries and uniforms, thereby capitalising on economic vulnerabilities and discontent among the youth.

⚡ **Lack of opportunities:** The **scarcity of educational opportunities** in rural areas stifles the aspirations of youth for better livelihoods. Inadequate schooling infrastructure and quality education perpetuates the cycle of underdevelopment.

⚡ **Collaboration of villagers**: Insurgency in Maoist-affected areas thrives due to villagers' active involvement, coerced or influenced by Maoists, engaging in **intelligence gathering and combat**. This collaboration endures through Maoist indoctrination and governance gaps, fueling insurgency growth.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Security operations:

◉ **Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare (CTJW) College:** Established in 2004 in Kanker, the CTJW College provided essential training in **guerrilla warfare for security personnel**.Training was made mandatory for local police, CRPF, superintendents of police, and collectors.

◉ **Salwa Judum:** It was established in 2005 as a **state-sponsored militia in Chhattisgarh,** India to counter the Naxalites, a far-left Maoist movement. The militia was made up of local tribal youth who received support and training from the state government. In 2011 it was **banned by the Supreme Court of India for its human rights and other violations.**

◉ **Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA):** Formed in 2008, CoBRA is a **specialised unit of the CRPF,** trained in guerrilla tactics and jungle warfare.

◉ **Security Related Expenditure (SRE):** Under **SRE Scheme funds** are provided to LWE affected states for capacity building of the States through provisions of ex-gratia to the family of civilian/security forces killed in LWE violence, training and operational needs of security forces, rehabilitation of surrendered LWE cadre, community policing, compensation to security force personnel/civilians for property damage by left wing extremists, etc.

Policy measures:

◉ **Ban under UAPA:** On June 22, **2009, the Government of India banned the Communist Party of India (Maoist)** by invoking Section 41 of the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act**, branding it as a terrorist organisation.

◉ **National Policy and Action Plan**: In 2015, the NDA government had adopted the '**National Policy and Action Plan',** which aimed at addressing Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in the country.

» In 2017, the **SAMADHAN doctrine** was developed by the Government of India to combat left-wing extremism (LWE).

◉ **Naxal Surrender Policy:** It offers rehabilitation and support to former insurgents who renounce violence and wish to reintegrate into society. It includes provisions for skill development, financial assistance, and other incentives to encourage surrender.

» **Example:** The Naxal surrender policy led to a significant decrease in Odisha cadre recruitment, estimated at **10% of the Maoist strength.** In 2014, **Nachika Linga, a prominent leader** surrendered along with many local Maoists.

◉ **Three pronged strategy**:The '**Vishwas-Vikas-Suraksha'** strategy aims to build trust, foster development, and enhance security in Chhattisgarh. Through proactive development initiatives, the government seeks to win the confidence of locals and address underlying grievances.

Special schemes:

State security initiatives:

» Various states have formed dedicated security teams like the specialised **C-60 force of Maharashtra.**

» Chhattisgarh recently formed a **State Investigation Agency (SIA)** to coordinate with NIA to handle cases related to terrorism, Naxalism, and leftist extremism efficiently.

Capacity building:

» **Educational facilities:**

- **Ekalavya Schools:** As many as **234 Eklavya Model Residential Schools** (EMRS) have been sanctioned for areas affected by Left-Wing Extremism, of which **119 are functional.**

- **PortaCabin Schools:** This initiative offers free education to tribal children in remote Naxal areas of Chattisgarh since 2012, with **portable schools accommodating 500-600 children** each, facilitating easy relocation in emergencies.

» **Training Programme:**

- **CIIIT: Maharashtra government and Tata Technology Limited**, started the **Centre for Invention, Innovation, Incubation, and Training (CIIIT)** to boost **skill development and industry-based training** in **Gadchiroli**, a Naxal-affected district.

- **Roshni scheme:** Launched in 2013, this initiative **targets 50,000 youth** in 24 Naxal-affected districts over three years, with **50% women beneficiarie**s, funded jointly by Union and State Governments and works in a public-private partnership.

» **Tribal Development:**

- **Pariyana Coaching:** Chhattisgarh government launches **free coaching institute in Narayanpur district,** aiding tribal students aspiring for medical and engineering careers in Maoist-affected Abujhmad forest, in collaboration with local educators and administration.

- **Nangat Pila Project**: Kondagaon, a Naxal-hit district in Chhattisgarh, sees a **40% drop in malnourished children** over two years due to this project, while also boosting livelihoods for women and self-help groups.

CHALLENGES

● **Affects normal life:** Navigating daily life in Maoist-affected regions presents numerous challenges, from compromised security to restricted opportunities, hindering the socio-economic development and well-being of local communities.

» **Example: Sainath Chaitu Naroti, a 26-year-old tribal youth,** was fatally **shot by Naxals** recently in Maharashtra, for pursuing police recruitment.

● **Lack of connectivity:** Connectivity is crucial for enhancing communication, security, and development in Maoist-affected regions.

» **Example**: Until now, only about **30% of Abujhmad in Chhattisgarh has had mobile connectivity.** The first mobile tower was erected in Abujhmad in 2011, and since then, only nine more have been installed.

● **Displacement:** Internal displacement of people is a pressing concern in regions affected by conflict and insurgency.

» **Example:** By 2024, **more than 6,200 Murias had relocated to 54 settlements,** termed as Internally Displaced People (IDP) settlements, in Andhra Pradesh's Godavari region, fleeing from the Dandakaranya region.

» Ramachandrapuram was established by **40 families of the Gutti Koya tribe** escaping conflict in Naxal-hit Chhattisgarh during the **2005-11 Salwa Judum-Naxalites clashes.**

● **Multiple Agencies:** Different agencies like **CRPF, COBRA, Chhattisgarh Police, and DRG** add complexity to anti insurgency operations.

» **Example:** The **District Reserve Group (DRG)** is composed of **former Special Police Officers of Salwa Judum, surrendered Maoists, and local tribal youth**. DRGs undergo distinct training, causing coordination challenges. This may hinder cohesive operations in face-to-face encounters with Maoists.

● **Deceptive Tactics:** Maoists demonstrate strategic sophistication, countering security forces with empty target areas and ambushes, indicating awareness of surveillance and tactical manoeuvring.

● **Mental health:** Paramilitary forces stationed in remote camps far from homes. Limited leave periods, combined with lengthy travel times, result in minimal time spent with family, impacting morale and mental well-being leading to suicides

» **Example: Since 2018**, there have been **around 30 cases of suicide or fratricide in the paramilitary forces.**

● **Operational Secrecy Issues:** Maintaining secrecy in large-scale operations becomes increasingly difficult due to **logistical movements**, communication among personnel, and the use of drones, which can be detected by Maoists, compromising the element of surprise.

● **Inter-Agency Distrust:** Instances like the **Burkapal ambush(2017)** and **Palodi IED blast(2018)** have deepened distrust between paramilitary forces and state police, exacerbated by conflicting chains of command and rank disparities, hindering effective coordination and operations.

» **Example:** In June **2020**, **two Chhattisgarh Police jawans were caught selling ammunition to Maoists,** revealing a trust deficit within the security forces and raising concerns about the reliability of former Maoist informants.

● **Fake encounters**: Amid the government's efforts, accusations of fake encounters have emerged from human rights activists and families of alleged Maoist victims.

» **Example:** In February, wives of three deceased men, accompanied by locals, protested at a police station in Kanker, alleging innocence of the slain individuals.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Improve network connectivity:** Mobile towers in remote areas aim to connect the native population to essential services like education and healthcare, countering the Maoists' strategy of keeping them isolated and uninformed.

✳ **Effective Dialogue:** The central government should engage in sincere dialogue with the Naxalites and state leaders to address grievances and offer pathways to mainstream participation, as evidenced by the significant reduction in violence observed during ceasefire and dialogue initiatives in regions like Andhra Pradesh in 2004.

✳ **Holistic Assessments:** There is a need for holistic analysis beyond mere statistics to gauge the trajectory of Maoism. Parameters such as recruitment trends, senior member surrenders, and military capabilities are vital for a nuanced understanding of Maoist activity.

✳ **Infrastructure Development** : Investing in road construction, schools, health centres, and providing electricity, is essential in Maoist-controlled areas which will provide access to information and alternative perspectives.

✳ **Dual strategy:** Government efforts should persist with a dual strategy of **development and direct action**, emphasising enhancements in healthcare and education to curb Maoist influence and build trust among villagers.

✳ **Proper policing:** Ruthlessness and aggression should be directed towards higher-ranking Naxal leaders, not low-level cadres or sympathisers. Security forces must refrain from misconduct with villagers, particularly women, and avoid any human rights violations.

CONCLUSION

In summary, countering the Maoist insurgency demands a comprehensive strategy blending development projects with robust security measures. Strengthening infrastructure, expanding connectivity, and prioritising education and healthcare are pivotal for winning community trust and undermining Maoist influence. Addressing the Maoist insurgency is vital for regional peace, stability, and development, ensuring the safety and prosperity of affected communities.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Describe the current status of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India and outline the Government of India's strategy to combat this persistent challenge. **(10 M)(150 W)**

MODEL ESSAY

"That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part"

Introduction

- Quote by Thomas Jefferson
- Define Inclusive governance and role of democracy

History

- **Ancient civilizations**: Like Greece and Rome -democratic principles began to emerge

- **Magna Carta (1215)**: In England -inclusive governance -limiting power of the monarchy -principle of rule of law.

- **Uprisings:** Democratic ideas of American Revolution- French Revolution

- **Decolonisation:** Formation of independent nations in in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean

- **Expansion of Suffrage:** Expanded the franchise to previously disenfranchised groups(women and racial minorities)

Significance of inclusion

- **Socio political Perspective** : Fosters unity & inclusivity- Upholds legitimacy-acceptance of governmental authority- egalitarianism - holistic societal progress.

- **Economic Perspective:** Prioritise economic policies which ensures stability and benefits all sectors of society.

- **Psychological perspective:** Increase self esteem - bolsters individual and collective well-being.

Challenges

- **Rising authoritarianism: Eg:** Kim Jong Un in North Korea, Single party system in China
- **Barriers to Citizen Participation:**Voter suppression tactics. **Eg:** Restricted Access to Information in China.
- **Marginalisation and Exclusion:** Ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples-**Eg:** Rohingya (Myanmar) , Uighur Muslim (China), Maori Hakka (New Zealand)
- **Lack of Trust in Government Institutions: Eg:** Election Fraud Allegations in Belarus in 2020

- **Transparency and Accountability Deficits:** Breeds corruption -culture of impunity among officials. **Eg:** Lack of Government Accountability in Russia

- **Power Dynamics and Elitism:** unequal distribution of power and resources. **Eg:** Dynasty politics and Nepotism

- **Risks of Fragmentation and Division: :** Divisive politics and identity-based conflicts **Eg:**political instability in Nigeria

Way forward

- **Enhance Transparency and Accountability**: **Eg:** Strengthening RTI in India, transparent govt spending data by Sweden & Norway

- **Strengthen Civic Engagement**:Citizen involvement in policy-making **Eg:** participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil

- **Anti-Corruption Measures:**Independent anti-corruption agencies or protection laws.**Eg:** Specialised anti-corruption courts, Lokpal& Lokayukta

- **Embrace Technological Innovations:** Efficient service delivery **Eg**: e-governance initiatives.

- **Education Reforms**: Equitable access to learning opportunities **Eg**: curriculum development and inclusive education policies in Finland

Conclusion

- Inclusive governance - cornerstone of true progress-every citizen's voice finds resonance

- Need for collaborative approaches -prioritise transparency, accountability, and meaningful citizen participation

Sample Questions

- The Greatest Threat to Our Planet Is the Belief That Someone Else Will Save It

- There is no greater violence than to deny the dreams of our children

- Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are a young civil servant, appointed at a subordinate position in a State government's Public Work Department at the state headquarters. You found that the senior officer and the Minister-in-charge of the department are in unholy alliance and most of the tenders regarding the contract were given based on their whims and fancies instead of an objective criteria.As a result, the resources allocated for contracted projects were misused for personal gain. You also received reports indicating that the materials used for construction were of poor quality. Whenever you wanted to correct the things, your proposals were either overruled or you were shouted back and threatened by your seniors and by the Minister.

Answer the following questions:

(a) What are the ethical issues involved in the present situation?

(b) Evaluate the options available to you and what will be your course of acton.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Societal Values and Inclusivity:** The Free Libraries Network (FLN), consisting of over 250 libraries across South Asia, issued 'The People's National Library Policy 2024,' derived from grassroots activism, to reinforce principles of equity and justice aligned with the Indian Constitution's ideals.These libraries are inclusive, anti-caste, feminist, disability-friendly, and free for all, embodying values of accessibility and equality.

2. **Ethics and Integrity in Public Service:** Nisha Bangre, a former deputy collector in Madhya Pradesh, abandoned her civil services career to join politics. Feeling betrayed after being denied tickets for both state assembly and upcoming Lok Sabha elections, she expressed a desire to return to her former job.

3. **Social Change:** A survey among 1,000 IIT students revealed that 76% of IIT Bombay students advocate for formal sex education in the college curriculum.

4. **Consumer protection:** Following a Commerce Ministry advisory, e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and BigBasket are instructed to remove drinks such as Bournvita, Horlicks, and Protinex from the health drinks category due to the absence of a defined 'health drink' under the country's laws.

5. **Religious ethics:** In Indonesia, clerics are issuing fatwas, retrofitting mosques, and urging congregants to combat climate change, aiming to spark an environmental awakening through Islam thus promoting the idea that environmentalism is rooted in the Quran.

6. **Empathy:**Nine-year-old Tarun's cherished bicycle, a gift from a friend, made his daily school commute easier. However, as his parents worked in factories, they couldn't afford a replacement.He shared his story with the Delhi Police, who not only empathised but also provided him with a new bicycle, enabling him to resume his school journey on time.

7. **Resilience:** Hayat, a 21-year-old former actor affected by Taliban decrees, now creates videos on various topics for her YouTube channel. Despite facing hostility, she wears a medical mask and sunglasses for safety when filming outside, highlighting the challenges for Afghan women creating online content.

8. **Determination:** Nearly two-dozen women are leading the fight to relocate their village in eastern Serbia away from a copper mine operated by a Chinese company. Since January, they've been taking turns guarding a barricade on a bridge,aiming to prevent trucks from entering the mine that polluted their land and water.

MAINS JOT DOWN

GS- II - *ISSUES RELATED TO WOMEN*

➡ CSIR Report 2022

» While India produces the **highest percentage of women STEM** graduates in the world (about 40%), their **share in STEM jobs** in the country is very low at 14%.

GS- II - *INTERNATIONAL RELATION*

➡ The Australian Government in its **National Defense Strategy (NDS) 2024** identified India as **'top-tier security partner'** in the Indo-Pacific Region (IPR).

GS- III - *ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION*

➡ In its recent Judgement, the **Supreme Court on Jim Corbett National Park**, highlighted the collusion among politicians, forest officials, and local contractors in the illegal cutting down of 6,000 trees in Jim Corbett National Park.

➡ This action violates conservation-focused laws such as the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Project Tiger, and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

➡ **NOAA's Coral Reef Watch (CRW)** and **International Coral Reef Initiative** (ICRI) confirm the **4th global mass coral bleaching event**.

➡ Mass bleaching of coral reefs, since early 2023, has been confirmed in at least 53 countries, territories, and local economies including Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

➡ It is second such event in the past 10 years with earlier event lasting from 2014 to 2017

GS- III - *INFRASTRUCTURE*

➡ A significant chunk of credit deployment by Indian carriers is towards new aircraft acquisitions.

➡ According to the **Reserve Bank of India**, 40 scheduled banks have cumulatively doubled their lending to the aviation sector in January at ₹45,076 crore, as against ₹23,407 crore three years ago.

GS- I - *PERSONALITIES IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT*

➡ **Thakur Ranmat Singh**

» **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** highlighted the contribution of the freedom fighter Thakur Ranmat Singh

» He held the rank of a Sardar in the service of the **Maharaja of Rewa** (Madhya Pradesh)

» Played a key role in starting the Revolt of 1857 in Satna, Madhya Pradesh.

GS- III - *GOVERNEMNT POLICIES & INTERVENTION*

➡ In a recent judgement, the **Supreme Court of India** has recognised the existence of a **fundamental right to be free from the adverse impacts of climate change**.

➡ It noted that the right is recognised by the right to equality (Article 14) and the right to life (Article 21) enshrined under the Constitution of India.

➡ The judgement has garnered significant attention from environmentalists, mostly focusing only on its impacts on the protection of the Great Indian Bustard.

GS- II - *HEALTH*

➡ The latest **Rural Health Statistics report** underscores a severe deficiency of specialist doctors at Community Health Centers (CHCs) across India, with nearly 80% of the required specialists absent.

➡ This shortage encompasses various medical disciplines, including surgeons (83.2%), obstetricians and gynaecologists (74.2%), physicians (79.1%), and paediatricians (81.6%).

GS- I - *URBANISATION*

➡ The persistence of caste-based segregation in Indian cities, despite urbanisation and modernization, is a cause of concern.

➡ It highlights the gap between Ambedkar's vision of urbanisation as a means of dismantling caste hierarchies.

➡ A recent report by the **Housing and Land Rights Network** on forced evictions in India also shows that Dalits and Muslims are the most impacted by slum demolition drives.

GS- III - *GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT*

➡ Recently, the Central government has launched a new platform called **CDP-SURAKSHA ("System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance)** to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers under the **Cluster Development Programme (CDP).**

➡ This will boost the growth of India's horticulture sector, which contributes nearly one-third to the agriculture gross value addition (GVA).

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

MH-1718:

• MH-1718 is the pin code for a post office in Antarctica with an Indian address.

• The Department of Posts opened a second branch of the post office at the Bharati research station in Antarctica, and the pin code is currently considered "experimental".

PRATUSH:

• PRATUSH is a radio telescope designed to be placed on the far side of the moon.

• It is built by Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

NITROPLAST:

• Researchers have discovered a type of organelle, called **nitroplast**, in a **marine algae** *Braarudosphaera bigelowii*, that can fix nitrogen.

BALLOON PAYMENT:

• It is the lump sum payment which is attached to a loan, mortgage, or a commercial loan.

• This payment is usually made towards the end of the loan period. Balloon payment is higher than what you might be paying towards the loan on a monthly basis.

CLICKJACKING:

• Is a phenomenon of hijacking "clicks" in a website context.

• It makes use of buttons which seem very authentic and attractive to users, which they are more inclined to click on. Here lies the mystery.

• The buttons might have hidden links or hidden functionality.