

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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THEORY OF MUTUALISM

Context

- The term “mutualism” was coined by **French philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon** in the mid-19th century as part of his **broader critique of capitalism and authoritarianism**.

Mutualism

- Cooperative Ownership:** It is an economic and social theory that emphasises **voluntary cooperation, reciprocity, and the fair exchange of goods and services**.
 - It advocates for a society where individuals and communities engage in **cooperative ownership**, decentralising and collectively managing productive resources like land or tools for the benefit of all.
- Free From Authority:** Such systems would be **free from central authority and capitalist exploitation**.
- Mutualism and Property:** It did not call for the complete elimination of ownership.
- It emphasises a form of ownership based on usage rather than accumulation and profit.
- Ownership of tools or land is acceptable, provided **it does not lead to exploitation of others**.

Mutualism and Anarchism

- Anarchism:**
 - Individual anarchists** emphasise **personal autonomy and freedom**, focusing on the liberation of the individual from state control.
 - Social anarchists** advocate for the **collective management of resources** and the organisation of society to promote equality and fairness.
- A mutualist society** could be organised without a state, based on cooperative principles where people freely enter into contracts and mutual exchanges, thus **blending both individual freedom and collective responsibility**.

Critiques of the Mutualism

- Weak Theory to Challenge Capitalism:** Its reliance on small-scale property ownership may not sufficiently challenge the capitalist system’s broader structural inequalities.
 - It fails to address the concentration of wealth and power that is intrinsic to modern capitalist economies.
- Too Idealistic:** Critics question the feasibility of creating an egalitarian society based on voluntary cooperation, suggesting that it may be too idealistic or difficult to implement on a large scale.

- Overlooking the Class Struggle:** The theory overlooks the realities of class struggle, where small producers are squeezed out by larger corporations.

Conclusion

- Despite these criticisms, mutualism remains a radical theory that offers an alternative to both capitalist exploitation and authoritarianism.
- These ideas aim to foster economic and social environments based on mutual aid and cooperation, rather than competition and exploitation.
- Mutualism seeks to build a society where individuals are free to pursue their own interests while maintaining a sense of community and mutual respect.

Source: TH

DONALD TRUMP THREAT TO BRICS OVER CURRENCY

In News

- US President-elect Donald Trump warned the **BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) with 100% tariffs** if they create a new BRICS currency or replace the US dollar as the global reserve currency.

BRICS Currency and US Dollar Dominance:

- The BRICS nations, in light of rising geopolitical tensions and the shortage of US dollars, are exploring alternatives to the US dollar for global trade.
 - Diverging economic structures, different monetary and trade policies, and other complexities make the creation of a common BRICS currency a long-term goal.

Global Currency Trends:

- The IMF’s COFER report shows a decline in the US dollar’s share in global reserves, while non-traditional currencies (e.g., Australian dollar, Chinese renminbi) are gaining market share.
- Renminbi internationalization efforts by China are also advancing, but its share of reserves has stalled.

India’s Approach:

- India is exploring integration into the recently launched BRICS Pay Card, designed to facilitate token retail payments, enhance tourism, and promote financial integration.
- India does not aim to displace the US dollar but seeks to address practical challenges like trade

partners' currency shortages, blocked financial channels, and issues related to "weaponized" currencies.

- **Focus on Economic Diplomacy:** India advocates for practical solutions such as settling trade payments in rupees, especially with countries facing dollar liquidity issues or sanctions.
- India acknowledges the stability provided by the US dollar and does not seek immediate de-dollarization.
 - ♦ India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed that BRICS should not aim to replace global institutions.

Initiatives for Rupee Internationalisation

- **Special Vostro Accounts:** To facilitate rupee-based trade settlements, India has introduced special vostro accounts to mitigate exchange rate risk, reduce transaction costs, and bolster forex reserves.
- **Targeting Global South:** India aims to support countries with dollar shortages (e.g., Sri Lanka, Maldives) and those facing Western sanctions (e.g., Russia, Venezuela).
- **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC):** India is advancing its CBDC initiative to streamline cross-border payments, enhance security and transparency, reduce reliance on intermediary banks, and keep pace with the global digital economy.

Approach on US Dollar

- India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar stated that **avoiding the US dollar is not part of India's policy** but efforts are made to find alternatives in specific cases due to US policies complicating trade with some countries.
 - ♦ India does not have malicious intent towards the dollar, but supports a multipolar world reflected in currencies and economic dealings.

Challenges in Bilateral Trade with Russia

- Despite efforts, India's trade with Russia in rupees remains low due to Indian banks' fear of US sanctions and an imbalanced trade relationship with Russia.

- Russia has large reserves of rupees but uses them for investment in Indian stocks and bonds instead of settling trade.
- **China's angle :** Trade between Russia and China in domestic currencies (rouble and yuan) has surged, with over 90% of trade now settled in these currencies.

Future of BRICS Currency and Global Financial Landscape:

- China might dominate BRICS currency initiatives, which could shift the power balance within the bloc.
- India should diplomatically engage with the US to explain its position and promote multipolarity.
- India should support financial reforms within BRICS but maintain strong ties with the US to balance its strategic and economic priorities.
 - ♦ Efforts to promote digital currencies (CBDCs) and platforms like UPI could position India as a leader in the BRICS currency initiatives.

Source: IE

COASTAL CRISIS: 33.6% OF INDIA'S COASTLINE THREATENED BY EROSION

Context

- In a recent Lok Sabha session, the Union Environment Ministry revealed that about one-third of India's coastline is threatened by erosion, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive coastal management strategies.

About the Coastal Erosion

- It is a significant environmental issue affecting India's extensive coastline, which spans **over 7,500 kilometers**.
- The Indian mainland coast includes **9 coastal states and 2 Union Territories (UTs)** having 66 coastal districts.
- **Morphology** of the coast consists of 43% sandy beach, 11% rocky coast, 36% of muddy flats, 10% of marshy coast, 97 major estuaries and 34 lagoons.

Sl. No	State	Landforms and features
East coast of India		
1	Tamil Nadu	Deltas, long narrow beaches, spits, tidal flats, mangroves, coral reefs, sand dunes, Ridge swale complex etc.
2	Andhra Pradesh	Deltas, long narrow beaches, spits, mangroves, cliffs, long sand dunes, Ridge swale complex etc.
3	Odisha	Deltas, long beaches, spits, tidal flats, long sand dunes, ridges etc.
4	West Bengal	Large delta, very thick mangroves, tidal channels, islands, dunes, tidal flat, beaches etc

West Coast of India		
5	Kerala	Estuaries, lagoons, barriers, spits, dunes, tombolo, cliff, beaches etc
6	Karnataka & Goa	Estuaries, spits, sand dunes, tombolo, cliff, wave cut platforms, beaches etc
7	Maharashtra	Estuaries, cliffs, small sand dunes, tombolo, cliff, wave cut platforms, pocket beaches etc
8	Gujarat	Marshy land, tidal flats, estuaries, cliffs, mud flats, mangroves wave cut platforms, beaches etc.

- According to the **National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)** (an attached office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences), approximately **33.6% of India's coastline is vulnerable to erosion**, 26.9% is *experiencing accretion (growth)*, and *39.6% remains stable*.
- ♦ **Sand Mining:** Illegal sand mining from beaches and riverbeds reduces the natural replenishment of sand along the coast.
- ♦ **Deforestation:** Removal of mangroves and coastal vegetation weakens the natural defense against erosion.

States Prone To Coastal Erosion

- **Karnataka:** The data presented in the Lok Sabha was particularly focused on **Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district**, where nearly 48.4% of the 36.66 km coastline has been eroded over the past three decades.
 - ♦ This region's plight is a **microcosm of the broader national issue**, with varying degrees of erosion observed across different states.

Other States

- **West Bengal:** Approximately 60.5% of the state's coastline is affected by erosion, with significant impacts on the Sundarbans.
- **Kerala:** Nearly 46.4% of Kerala's coastline faces erosion, with severe consequences for local communities and ecosystems.
- **Tamil Nadu:** Erosion affects 42.7% of the coastline, posing a threat to coastal infrastructure and livelihoods.

Causes of Coastal Erosion

- **Natural Factors:**
 - ♦ **Wave Action:** Continuous wave action erodes the shoreline, especially during high tides and storms.
 - ♦ **Sea-Level Rise:** Climate change-induced sea-level rise increases the frequency and intensity of coastal flooding and erosion.
 - ♦ **Storm Surges:** Cyclones and storm surges cause significant erosion, particularly in low-lying coastal areas.
- **Anthropogenic Factors:**
 - ♦ **Coastal Development:** Infrastructure projects like ports, harbors, and seawalls disrupt natural sediment flow and exacerbate erosion.

Impacts of Coastal Erosion

- **Loss of Land:** Coastal erosion leads to the loss of valuable land, affecting agriculture and settlements.
- **Displacement of Communities:** Erosion forces coastal communities to relocate, leading to socio-economic challenges.
- **Damage to Infrastructure:** Roads, bridges, and buildings near the coast are at risk of damage or destruction.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Coastal habitats, including mangroves, coral reefs, and wetlands, are degraded, impacting marine biodiversity.

Related Initiatives and Mitigation Measures

- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP):** Implemented in Gujarat, Odisha, and West Bengal, this World Bank-assisted project aims to protect and conserve coastal and marine environments through sustainable practices.
- **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification (2019):** It aims to conserve and protect coastal stretches, ensuring livelihood security for fisher and local communities while permitting erosion control measures.
 - ♦ It provides for **No Development Zones (NDZ)** along various categories of coastal areas to protect India's coastline from encroachment and erosion.
- **Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI):** The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has developed the CVI **to assess and map the vulnerability** of different coastal regions based on various parameters.
- **Multi-Hazard Vulnerability Maps:** INCOIS has developed detailed maps to identify areas vulnerable to coastal hazards.

Innovative Engineering Solutions

- **Artificial Reefs:** Constructing artificial reefs can dissipate wave energy and protect the shoreline.
- **Eco-friendly Breakwaters:** Using materials that blend with the natural environment can provide effective protection without harming marine ecosystems.
- **Geo-Tube Installation:** In areas like Pentha Village in Odisha, geo-tubes have been installed to create artificial barriers that protect the coast from erosion.
- **Mangrove and Shelterbelt Plantations:** Planting mangroves and other vegetation along the coast helps stabilize the shoreline and reduce the impact of waves and storm surges.

Awareness

- **Community-Driven Conservation:** Local communities are encouraged to participate in conservation efforts, leveraging traditional knowledge and modern technology.
- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Raising awareness about the importance of coastal ecosystems and the impacts of erosion can foster community support for mitigation measures.

Conclusion

- Addressing coastal erosion in India requires a multi-faceted approach that combines scientific research, community involvement, and sustainable development practices.
- By implementing effective mitigation measures and promoting awareness, India can protect its coastal regions and ensure the well-being of its coastal communities.

Source: DTE

13TH EDITION OF NATIONAL SEED CONGRESS (NSC)

Context

- Scientists, policymakers and industry representatives participated in the 13th edition of the three-day **National Seed Congress (NSC)**.
 - ♦ NSC is an annual confluence of researchers, policymakers, farmers, and representatives to strengthen the agricultural sector in India and globally.

About

- **Theme:** Innovating for a Sustainable Seed Ecosystem.
- **Major Highlights:**
 - ♦ To work more on innovative seed technologies for farmers in the country.

- ♦ Fostering South-South Collaboration in the Seed Sector.
- ♦ The focus will be on hybrid and biofortified crops, stress-tolerant varieties, and accelerated breeding cycles.
- ♦ Public-Private Partnerships in the sector to promote sustainable seed production and distribution.
- The outcomes of these deliberations will be implemented with the full support of the State government to ensure food security, economic growth, and the welfare of farmers.

Hybrid Crops

- Hybrid crops are created through the process of crossbreeding two genetically different plants, typically from different varieties or species, to combine desirable traits from both parent plants.
- **Aim:** To produce offspring that have superior qualities, such as increased yield, disease resistance, drought tolerance, or improved nutritional content.
- **Concern:** Hybrid crops often do not produce seeds that retain the same beneficial traits as the parent crop, so farmers need to purchase new seeds each year.

Biofortified Crops

- **Biofortified crops** are those that have been specially bred to have higher levels of essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, or amino acids, than their conventional counterparts.
 - ♦ This is done through traditional breeding techniques, genetic modification, or modern biotechnological methods.
- **Aim:** It aims to improve the nutritional value of crops, especially in regions where deficiencies in essential nutrients are widespread.
- **Golden Rice** has been genetically modified to produce higher levels of provitamin A (beta-carotene), aiming to reduce vitamin A deficiency.

The biofortified varieties have been licensed to various private seed companies and Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Sr. No.	Crop	Name of cultivar	No. of licenses
1.	Wheat	DBW 187	229
		DBW 303	204
		DBW 173	54
2.	Rice	DRR Dhan 45	4
		CR Dhan 310	2
3.	Maize	LQMH 1	2
4.	Pearl millet	HHB 299	5
		HHB 311	4
5.	Mustard	Pusa Mustard 30	6
		Pusa Double Zero Mustard 31	3
		Pusa Mustard 32	1
6.	Soybean	NRC 127	4
7.	Potato	Kufri Neekanth	5
		Kufri Manic	1
8.	Pomegranate	Sholapur Lal	7
Total			531

Key Difference:

- **Hybrid crops focus on improving traits** like yield, resilience, or growth characteristics by crossbreeding different varieties.
- **Biofortified crops focus on improving nutritional content** to address deficiencies in key micronutrients.

Merits of biofortification:

- It is regarded as the **most sustainable approach** to alleviate malnutrition.
- It provides **nutrients in natural form**.
- **Biofortified food is affordable** as it does not involve any additional price.
- 'Biofortified varieties' are as **high yielding** as 'traditional varieties', thus no loss is incurred to the farmers.
- It does **not require elaborate infrastructure** facilities as required in 'food fortification'.
- It does not involve **additional cost** on preparing the enriched food grains.

Government Initiatives to Promote Sustainable Seed Production and Distribution:

- **National Seed Policy (2002):** Encourages the private and public sectors to increase seed production, improve quality control, and facilitate the distribution of seeds.
- **National Gene Bank:** Maintains the genetic diversity of crops, conserving traditional and indigenous varieties for future use.
- **State Seed Banks:** Support local farmers by conserving native seeds and facilitating seed exchange.
- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM):** To increase the production of staple crops like rice, wheat, and pulses, with a focus on promoting the use of high-quality seeds.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):** It encourages the use of climate-resilient seeds for water-scarce regions.
- **National Mission on Organic Farming (NMOF):** Encourages organic seed production, providing subsidies for organic inputs and promoting seed-saving techniques.
- **Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs):** FPOs facilitate the production and distribution of locally adapted seeds, enhancing the involvement of farmers in seed systems and promoting seed diversity.

Source: TH

INDIA'S AGREEMENT WITH ADB FOR HORTICULTURE PRODUCTIVITY**In News**

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$98 million loan to improve access to certified disease-free planting materials for **horticulture farmers, enhancing crop yield, quality, and climate resilience**.

About Loan Agreement

- **Implementation:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will implement the project through the National Horticulture Board and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- **Support:** The project supports India's Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme (CPP), focused on enhancing plant health management.
 - ♦ It will develop a regulatory framework and institutional systems to implement the CPP effectively for horticulture in India.
- The project will establish clean plant centres to maintain disease-free foundation materials, equipped with advanced diagnostic labs and staffed with trained experts. It will also roll out a certification scheme for private nurseries to ensure the quality of their planting materials.
- **Objective:** The project aims to boost crop yield, quality, and resilience to climate impacts by improving plant health.
 - ♦ The project helps farmers adapt to climate change by promoting plant health management to tackle the impact of rising temperatures and changing pest and disease behavior.

About horticulture production in the country

- **India's horticulture sector, crucial** for the economy and nutrition, has been significantly enhanced through various government schemes.
- The horticulture production in the country in 2023-24 (Second Advance Estimates) is estimated to be about 352.23 Million Tonnes, a decrease of about 32.51 Lakh Tonnes (0.91%) over 2022-23 (Final Estimates).
 - ♦ Increase in production of Fruits, Honey, Flowers, Plantation Crops, Spices and Aromatics & Medicinal Plants is seen over 2023-24 (Final Estimates) whereas decrease in Vegetables.
- India ranks second-largest producer of fruits, vegetables, tea, farmed fish, sugarcane, wheat, rice, cotton, and sugar.

Impacts

- The horticulture sector significantly boosts the Indian economy by **generating employment for millions, particularly in rural areas.**
- It **provides livelihoods to farmers** and laborers and supports related industries such as food processing, packaging, and transportation.

Key horticulture initiatives in India:

- **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)** :It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented from 2014-15 for holistic development of horticulture in the country, covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew and cocoa.
- **National Horticulture Mission (NHM)**: Launched in 2005, the mission aims to promote holistic growth in the horticulture sector, improving production, nutritional security, and farmer income.
- **Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (HCDP)**: Focuses on leveraging regional specialization to promote integrated development of horticulture clusters, aiming to increase exports and enhance global competitiveness of Indian horticultural products.
- **Soil Health Card Scheme**: Provides soil testing and crop-wise nutrient recommendations, helping farmers make informed decisions, improving yields, and reducing input costs.
- **Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH)**: Focuses on horticulture development in the North East and Himalayan regions, promoting region-specific crops and sustainable farming practices to improve farmers' livelihoods.

Challenges

- **Inadequate infrastructure, cold storage facilities,** and transportation issues lead to significant post-harvest losses.
- **Market Access**: Farmers often struggle with accessing markets and fair pricing, affecting their income and profitability.
- **Sustainability**: Ensuring sustainable farming practices and addressing environmental concerns are crucial for the sector's long-term viability.

Future Outlook

- The future of India's horticulture sector looks promising, with increasing domestic and global demand for high-quality produce.
- Continued government support, coupled with innovation and investment, will drive the sector's growth.

- By addressing existing challenges and leveraging its strengths, India's horticulture sector can achieve greater heights and contribute more significantly to the economy and food security.

Source :TH

NEWS IN SHORT

THE GREAT STUPA OF SANCHI

Context

- A two-day Mahabodhi Mahotsav was held at the Great Stupa at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi

- A stupa is a **Buddhist commemorative monument** usually containing sacred **relics of the Buddha** or other saints.
 - ♦ The archetypal stupa is a **hemispherical structure**, whose origins can be traced to pre-Buddhist burial mounds found in India.
- **Established**: The stupa was commissioned in the **third century BCE** by Emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty, who embraced Buddhism after his conversion following the Kalinga War.
 - ♦ It was constructed to house relics of the Buddha and to serve as a center for Buddhist worship.
- **Structure**:
 - ♦ The Great Stupa is a hemispherical dome made of stone and brick, with a central structure that is a large, raised platform containing the relics of the Buddha.
 - ♦ It is topped by a **'harmika'** to hold the triple umbrella, or **'chhatraveli'**, which represents the **three jewels of Buddhism – the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.**
 - ♦ Above the dome, there is a pillar-like structure called the chatra, which is a symbol of the Buddha's presence and enlightenment.



- The Stupa is a **UNESCO World Heritage site** and a pilgrimage destination for Buddhists from around the world.

Source: AIR

NAZCA GEOGLYPHS IN PERU

In News

Recent advancements in AI and drone technology have dramatically accelerated the discovery of new Nazca geoglyphs

- These discoveries provide deeper insights into Nazca culture, which is known for its ritualistic and ceremonial significance rather than written records.

About Nazca Lines

- **They are** located 400 km south of Lima, Peru and are ancient geoglyphs found on the **barren Nazca Pampa**.
 - ♦ Geoglyphs created by removing rocks and earth to form negative images, preserved due to the desert's dry and windless conditions.
 - ♦ They date back over 2,000 years, and the dry desert climate has preserved them from erosion.
- **Discovered** in the 1920s, these geoglyphs were initially unknown, with around 430 identified over nearly a century.



Peru

- **Location:** It is situated in the western part of South America.
 - ♦ It shares borders with Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile.
- **Geographical Features:** Peru extends along the **Andes**, the world's longest exposed mountain range.
 - ♦ The highest peak in the country is **Mount Huascarán**.
 - ♦ **Major rivers** are the Amazon, Purus, Jurua etc. **Lake Titicaca** is a large freshwater lake in the **Andes mountains** on the **border of Bolivia and Peru**. It is often called the **highest navigable lake in the world**.

Source: IE

OXFORD LAUDS PRAGATI PLATFORM

In News

- A recent study by Oxford University's Saïd Business School (SBS) has lauded the **PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) infrastructure** monitoring system.

Findings of the Study

- **Impact on Infrastructure Development:** Fast-tracked 340 projects worth \$205 billion, addressing critical challenges in infrastructure like land acquisition and inter-ministerial coordination.
 - ♦ Enabled the completion of essential infrastructure services, such as roads, railways, water supply, and electricity distribution.
- **Technological Innovation:** Leveraged real-time data, drone feeds, and video conferencing for efficient decision-making and project acceleration.
 - ♦ Incorporated sustainability by promoting green technologies and streamlining environmental clearances.
- **Economic Transformation:** Infrastructure spending under PRAGATI has a GDP multiplier effect of 2.5 to 3.5 for every rupee spent, as per RBI and National Institute of Public Finance and Policy studies.
- **Social Benefits:** Improved the quality of life for millions by providing essential services and ensuring inclusivity in development.
 - ♦ Addressed bureaucratic inertia by fostering a Team India mindset and encouraging accountability across stakeholders.
- **Lessons for Global Development:** Provides a governance model for nations grappling with the Middle-Income Trap.

About PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) Platform

- **Launch:** Introduced in 2015 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- **Core objectives of PRAGATI:**
 - ♦ To expedite project implementation.
 - ♦ To foster a collaborative approach among various government agencies.
 - ♦ To ensure accountability in governance and project execution.
- **Key features of PRAGATI:**
 - ♦ Integration of technology for real-time monitoring.

- ◆ Direct interaction between the Prime Minister and senior officials at both state and central levels.
- ◆ A focus on removing administrative silos and improving coordination.

Source: TOI

PROSPECTS AND CONCERNS FOR THE RABI CROP

In News

- The Rabi cropping season is facing challenges due to:
 - ◆ High October temperatures, which have delayed sowing and affected crop germination.
 - ◆ Shortages of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) fertiliser, which have hindered timely planting.

Reasons Behind the Slow Progress

- **High October Temperatures:** Temperatures were 0.68°C above normal, delaying sowing and causing poor germination, especially in crops like jeera (cumin) and other spices.
- **Fertiliser Shortages:** The unavailability of DAP fertiliser disrupted planting schedules for farmers.
- **Delayed Start of Sowing:** Farmers in key states like Uttar Pradesh began sowing later than usual (October 20-22 instead of mid-October).

Rabi Crops

- **Sowing Period:** Around October, during the Retreating Monsoon and Northeast Monsoon.
- **Harvesting Period:** April to May (summer season).
- **Climate Requirements:** Warm climate for seed germination.
 - ◆ Cold climate for crop growth.
- **Rainfall:** Not heavily dependent on rainfall; irrigation is commonly used.
- **Major Crops:** Wheat, gram (chickpeas), peas, barley, mustard.

Other Crops Grown

- **Kharif Crops:**
 - ◆ **Sowing Period:** During the Southwest Monsoon (end May to early June).
 - ◆ **Harvesting Period:** Post-monsoon rains (beginning October).
 - ◆ **Climate Requirements:** Requires heavy rainfall and hot weather for growth.

- ◆ **Major Crops:** Rice, maize, pulses (urad, moong dal), millets, cotton.
- **Zaid Crops:**
 - ◆ **Sowing and Harvesting Period:** March to July (between Rabi and Kharif seasons).
 - ◆ **Climate Requirements:** Warm weather with adequate water supply.
 - ◆ **Major Crops:** Seasonal fruits (e.g. watermelon, muskmelon), vegetables, and fodder crops.

Source: TH

WINDFALL TAX

In News

- The government abolished the **windfall tax on crude oil, ATF, petrol, and diesel exports**.

About Windfall Tax

- A windfall tax is **imposed on industries or companies that experience extraordinary profits** due to favorable market conditions, not attributable to their own efforts or innovation.
- These taxes help **governments capture a share of these gains to fund public projects**, manage fiscal deficits, or address wealth disparities.
- **Introduced in July 2022**, when global crude oil prices surged due to geopolitical tensions, including the Russia-Ukraine war.
- It targeted domestic crude oil producers and exporters of petroleum products (e.g., petrol, diesel, ATF), who benefited from elevated global prices.

Why was it abolished?

- **Stabilizing global oil prices:** Crude oil prices have come down from their peaks, reducing the need for the tax.
- **Boosting Domestic and Export Sectors:** Encourages more investments in oil and gas exploration and production.

Source: ET

VADHAVAN PORT

Context

- The VadHAVAN greenfield port is under construction near **Dahanu in Maharashtra**.

About

- **Development:** Developed jointly by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) and the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB).

- It is scheduled to be finished by **2034**, it is projected to be **among the top 10 ports in the world**.
- It will **double India's container trade** from the current levels upon completion.
- **A greenfield project means** that the construction or expansion of the port takes place on previously undeveloped land.
- **Brownfield projects** are built on land that has been previously used and often requires redevelopment or rehabilitation.

Source: TH

EXERCISE CINBAX

Context

- The 1st edition of joint table top exercise CINBAX, between the Indian Army and the Cambodian Army commenced at Foreign Training Node, Pune (India).

About

- Exercise CINBAX is a **planning exercise** designed to simulate joint Counter Terrorism (CT) operations conducted under **Chapter VII** of the United Nations Charter.
- The exercise will be carried out in **three phases** and will include discussions on information operations, cyber warfare, hybrid warfare, logistics and casualty management, HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) operations etc.

Source: PIB

EXERCISE AGNI WARRIOR (XAW-2024)

Context

- The Indian Army and the Singapore Army concluded the 13th edition of Exercise Agni Warrior (XAW), in Maharashtra (India).

About

- Held in India **since 2004**, XAW is conducted under the ambit of the Army Bilateral Agreement, and highlights the warm and long-standing defence relationship between Singapore and India.
- The **aim of XAW-2024** was to maximise mutual understanding of drills and procedures to achieve jointness as a multinational force under the **United Nations Charter**.

Source: PIB

ARAVALLI GREEN WALL PROJECT (AGWP)

In News

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification's 16th Conference of Parties (COP16) is being held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, marking the first time the event is hosted in West Asia.

- **COP16 is the largest multilateral event** ever hosted by Saudi Arabia, providing a platform for governments, businesses, and civil society to collaborate on sustainable land management.

Presentation of the Aravalli Green Wall Project (AGWP)

- India will present the AGWP, a major initiative aimed at restoring 1.15 million hectares of degraded land across four states in northwestern India.
- **Features of the Aravalli Green Wall Project (AGWP):** The project covers the 5 km buffer area around the Aravalli Hill Range in Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi.
- **National Goals:** The project is part of India's effort to achieve the national goal of creating an additional 2.5 billion tonnes of carbon sink by 2030.
- **Broader Impact:** The project contributes to India's commitments under international conventions such as:
 - ◆ UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification),
 - ◆ CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity),
 - ◆ UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).
- **Objectives and Features of AGWP:** The project focuses on combating desertification, land degradation, and drought.
 - ◆ It integrates indigenous species afforestation, biodiversity conservation, and advanced water management strategies.

Source: DD News

NAGALAND STATEHOOD DAY

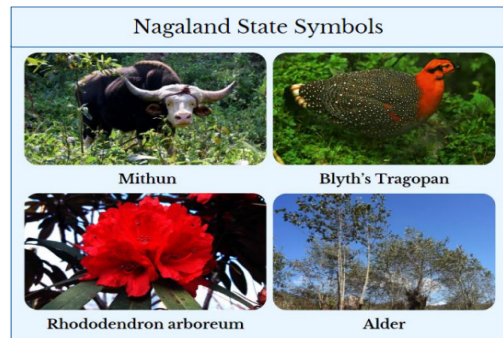
Context

- **Nagaland Statehood Day** was observed on December 1.

About Nagaland: Key Facts

- **Formation:** The state was formed on **December 1, 1963**, as the 16th state of India, and since then the day is annually celebrated as **Nagaland Statehood Day**.

- ♦ Until 1957, the region we today call Nagaland was just a district of the state of **Assam**, known to people as 'The Naga Hills'.
- **Boundary:** One of the **seven sister States**, Nagaland is bound by Assam in the west, Myanmar in the east, Arunachal Pradesh and part of Assam in the North and Manipur in the South.
- **Official language:** Nagaland's official language is **English** while Nagamese, a kind of pidgin Assamese, has become the common lingua.
- **Tribes:** There are **17 major tribes** living in Nagaland: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Tikhir, Yimkiung, and Zeliang.
- **Hornbill Festival:** Also called the 'Festival of Festivals' and named after the Hornbill (**Dhanesh bird**), this 10-day event celebrates the traditions, cuisine, lifestyles, and dances of Nagaland's Indigenous Warrior Tribes.
- **Amur falcons:** Nagaland is also known as the 'Falcon Capital of the World' as it is the primary stopover roosting site for Amur falcons.
- **Economy:** Nagaland is predominantly an **agrarian economy** with 71% of its population dependent on agriculture.
- **Naga chilli:** Considered one of the world's hottest chillies based on the Scoville Heat Units (SHUs), is grown in Nagaland.



Source: PIB

