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MK Yadav Sir

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ECONOMIC TIMES

Page 4

CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS MECHANISM

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Common e-Payments Mechanism Deal Likely During Prachanda's Visit

DipanjanRoy.Chaudhury
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda''s visit to India visit this week could lead to some critical bilateral agreements to widen cross-border partnership, including a pact on a common digital payments mechanism, in the backdrop of strong people-to-people ties.

Construction of a dry port in the Chandani-Dodhara area of Nepal, inauguration of integrated check posts in Nepalgunj and setting up a new integrated check post in Bhairahawa are on the agenda when Prachanda meets PMNarendra Modi here on June 1.

Prachanda is scheduled to visit India from May 31 to June 3 on his maiden trip abroad as PM. He will be accompanied by his daughter and several ministers.

The cross-border digital payments mechanism using e-wallet is expected to boost trade and tourism by eliminating currency hassles. The pact will allow Indian tourists to make digital payments in Nepal using Indian e-wallets such as BharatPe, PhonePe, Google Pay and Paytm.

An overland Indian visitors' survey conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic showed that the average length of stay of Indian tourists coming overland was 5.8 days. The average expenditure per visitor was Rs 11,310.

The launch of digital payment services will eliminate the hassle of carrying large amounts of cash for Indian tourists and businessmen visiting Nepal.

Last year, payment system operator Gateway Payment Service began a cross-border payment system for the first time in Nepal based on inter-operable and mobile-first technology.

Recently, Nepal Rastra Bank Governor Maha Prasad Adhikari underscored the need for greater collaboration on fintech between India and Nepal to begin a cross-border and QR payment systems for mutual benefit. Thousands of Nepali citizens are working in India across sectors.

BOUNDARY TALKS LIKELY

India and Nepal could reach an understanding for holding a Boundary Working Group meeting

This January, the Nepalese government opened the door to foreign investors to participate in Nepal's digital payment system under a newly amended policy.

Besides, during Prachanda's visit, India and Nepal could reach an understanding for holding the meeting of the Boundary Working Group, which is mandated to clear the no-man's land, install boundary pillars as per the agreed strip maps, and renovate and maintain old border pillars.

Last year India had requested Nepal to stop the entry of Pakistani and Chinese nationals into India through the India-Nepal border points.

Context: Nepalese Prime Minister's visit to India visit this week could lead to some critical **bilateral agreements to widen cross-border partnership,** including a pact on a common digital payments mechanism, in the backdrop of strong people-to-people ties.

- Construction of a dry port in the **Chandani-Dodhara area of Nepal,** inauguration of integrated check posts in Nepalgunj and setting up a new integrated check post in Bhairahawa are on the agenda when he meets Indian PM here on June 1.

Status of India's Digital payments

- Indian digital payment systems are available in **Singapore, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, France, and BENELUX markets** – Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – and Switzerland, among others.
- **India has signed MoUs with 13 countries** that want to adopt the UPI interface for digital payments
  - Singapore: UPI-PayNow linkage
- In India, **40% of all payments done are digital.**
  - Nearly 50 per cent of them are classified as **small or micropayments**
  - The value of instant digital transactions in 2022 was four times more than the combined transactions in the United States, Britain, Germany, and France together.

BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 4

CMSP ACT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

790 mt and rising: Big & small MDOs help meet coal demand

SHREYA JAI
New Delhi, 28 May

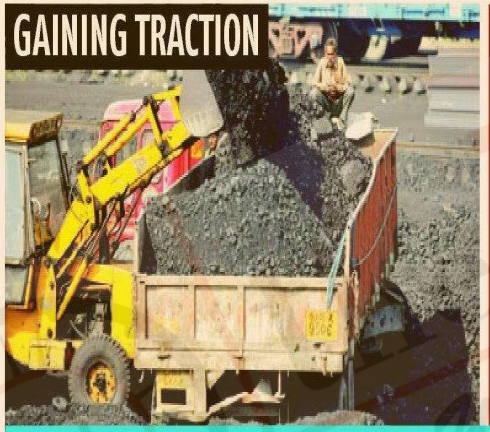
In 2015, the coal mining sector started from scratch following a Supreme Court order cancelling all prior mine allocations and the implementation of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act (CMSPA).

This led to record coal mine awards to both public and private sectors and the industry, which until last decade was seen as dominated by contractors, metamorphosed into a thriving mine developer and operator (MDO) ecosystem.

According to data collated by *Business Standard*, 82 mines with a cumulative annual production of around 790 million tonnes (mt) are being operated and mined by private MDOs. These are the mines that have been awarded to several public sector companies, such as NTPC, NLC, and SAIL, and power generation companies of several state governments. This is in addition to the coal production planned by national miner Coal India (CIL), which is looking to outsource close to 90 per cent of its mines to MDOs in five years.

There are nearly 15 MDO tenders under process for a cumulative capacity of 112 mt per annum (mtpa).

Conglomerates Adani Enterprises and Essel Mining, engineering companies such as Dilip Buildcon and BGR Mining, and even local contractors which are now EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) firms are plugged into the coal MDO ecosystem. Turn to Page 8



Context: 82 mines with a cumulative annual production of around 790 million tonnes (mt) are being operated and mined by private **mine developer and operator (MDO)**.

- In 2015, the coal mining sector started from scratch following a Supreme Court order cancelling all prior mine allocations and the implementation of the **Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act (CMSPA).**
- This led to record coal mine awards to both public and private sectors and the industry, which until last decade was seen as dominated by contractors, metamorphosed into a thriving **mine developer and operator (MDO) ecosystem.**

Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act (CMSPA)

- **About**: The government brought an ordinance called Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Ordinance.
  - Later, the ordinance was replaced by **Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015.**
- **Objective**: To **empower the government to allocate the coal mines** on the basis of competitive bidding to ensure continuity in coal mining operations and promote optimum utilisation of coal resources.

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 11

IRAQ TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

Iraq plans $17bn transportation project linking Asia to Europe

Irbil: Iraq's PM on Saturday announced plans for a $17 billion regional transportation project intended to facilitate the flow of goods from Asia to Europe. The announcement was made at a one-day meet in Baghdad that convened transport ministers and representatives from Iraq, the Gulf countries, Turkiye, Iran, Syria, and Jordan.

Iraqi PM Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said the planned Development Road project would facilitate the movement of goods from the Gulf to Europe first to Turkiye, then to Europe, through a network of railways and highways. The project, which would involve the construction of 1,200 km of railways and highways, will be "an economic lifeline," said al-Sudani. AP

Context: Iraq announced plans for a $17 billion **regional transportation project i**ntended to facilitate the flow of goods from **Asia to Europe.**

- The planned project, which would **involve the construction of about 1,200 km (about 745 miles) of railways and highways,** will be "an economic lifeline and a promising opportunity for the convergence of interests, history, and cultures.



PIB

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SOLAR DECATHLON INDIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

Winners of Solar Decathlon India Design Challenge for Net-Zero Future Proof Building 2022-2023 announced

Context: 12 teams won awards in different categories in the 3rd edition of the **Solar Decathlon India (SDI) Design Challenge**, which saw participation from 1780 students and 126 academic institutions

Key Points

- Student teams presented net-zero solutions for 36 real building projects on the final day of presentation.
- A total of 12 teams won the **Solar Decathlon India (SDI) Design Challenge for Net-Zero Future Proof Building** in the different categories at the 3rd edition of the challenge conducted at Infosys' campus in Mysuru.
- Six teams that topped their divisions pitched their solutions to a Grand Jury consisting of real estate and media stalwarts, and Team V^0 from Visvesvaraya **National Institute of Technology,** Nagpur, won the coveted Grand Prize for the most promising and investment-worthy design.

Solar Decathlon India (SDI)

- The Solar Decathlon India is conducted every year by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) and the Alliance for an **Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE).**
- It is under the aegis of the **Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF),** an autonomous bilateral organisation jointly funded by both the Governments (The Department of Science & Technology, Government of India and the U.S. Department of State are the respective nodal departments on the two sides).
- The **Council of Architecture (CoA)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding as a knowledge partner with AEEE, who co-organises SDI, to expand outreach and the impact of Solar Decathlon India aimed at building the next generation of leaders to combat climate change in India.

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 1

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

New Parliament building will become basis for creation of a new India: PM

Draws parallel with national awakening during Mahatma Gandhi's movement 25 years before Independence

MANOJ C G & DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, MAY 28

THE INAUGURATION of India's new Parliament, built over the last two years, marks a moment in the life of a nation that draws on its civilizational history and, at the same time, holds the promise of a more prosperous and equitable future, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here Sunday.

Suggesting that India is witnessing an awakening of national consciousness similar to what was seen during the decisive last 25-year phase of the freedom struggle, Modi projected the building as a symbol of a resurgent "new India" and linked it to his government's welfare deliveries in the past nine years.

As many as 21 Opposition parties, led by the Congress, stayed away from the function protesting what they called was the Government's "grave insult" to the President by not inviting her.

In her message read out at the inauguration ceremony, President Droupadi Murmu said she was glad that the Prime Minister, who symbolises the trust of Parliament, is inaugurating the building.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



'NEW BHAVAN, NEW JOURNEY'

FULL COVERAGE ON PAGE 7

Context: The inauguration of **India's new Parliament**, built over the last two years, marks a moment in the life of a nation that draws on its civilizational history and, at the same time, holds the promise of a more prosperous and equitable future, Prime Minister said.

Key features of the new parliament building

- It is designed by **architect Bimal Patel** and constructed by Tata Projects Ltd.
- It has a built-up area of around **65,000 square meters** and can accommodate up to 1,272 members of parliament in its two chambers: the Lok Sabha (lower house) and the Rajya Sabha (upper house).
- It has **888 seats for the Lok Sabha** members and 384 seats for the Rajya Sabha members, with provision for future expansion.
- It also has a **grand Constitution Hall, a library, committee rooms,** offices and other facilities.
- It is expected to **enhance the efficiency** and functionality of the parliament and provide more space and amenities for the members and their staff.
- It is **designed to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient,** with features such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels, waste management and natural ventilation.

New seat of power

A look at some of the features of the proposed four-storey Parliament building

Shape: Triangular

Total area 64,500 square metres

Main spaces Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and Central Lounge

THEME OF INTERIORS

Lok Sabha Peacock (National bird)

Rajya Sabha Lotus (National flower)

Central Lounge Banyan (National tree)

- The National Emblem will crown the new Parliament building

CAPACITY

Lok Sabha 888 seats (current chamber can accommodate 552 people)

Rajya Sabha 384 seats

- The Lok Sabha Hall will also have additional capacity, up to **1,272 seats,** to host joint sessions

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING



Gearing up: Construction workers walking past a hoarding featuring the new Parliament building. ▪ REUTERS

- **Construction was scheduled to start in December, but the works have been stopped till the Supreme Court disposes of challenges to the project**

Estimated cost ₹971 crore

Contractor Tata Projects Ltd.

Architect HCP Design, Planning and Management

Completion deadline: October 2022, in time for the winter session of Parliament in the 75th year of Independence

PIB

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EXERCISE AL-MOHED-AL HIND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Relations)

INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA BILATERAL MARITIME EXERCISE AL MOHED AL HINDI 23

Context: The sea phase of second edition of **bilateral exercise 'Al Mohed Al Hindi 23'**, between Indian Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Force (RSNF) was held from 23 - 25 May 23 off Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

- **INS Tarkash, INS Subhadra and Dornier Maritime Patrol aircraft (MPA)** participated in the exercise from the Indian side.
- The RSNF was represented by HMS Badr and Abdul Aziz, MH 60R helo and UAV.

Exercise Al-Mohed-Al Hind

- **About**: Exercise Al-Mohed Al-Hindi is a bilateral naval exercise between **India and Saudi Arabia.**
- **Features**: The successful conduct of **'Al Mohed Al Hindi 23'** showcased high degree of professionalism, interoperability and exchanges of best practices between the two navies.
    - The bilateral exercise met all its objectives and both sides **intend to graduate to more advanced level of exercises** in the next edition.



LIVE MINT

Page 2

INDIA-JAPAN ACT EAST FORUM

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - International Relations)

India-Japan talks on NE investments soon

Shashank Mattoo
shashank.mattoo@livemint.com
NEW DELHI

New Delhi and Tokyo are set to explore increased investments in India's Northeast during the India-Japan Act East Forum to be held this summer, according to persons aware of the matter.

Japan has been an active investor in India's Northeast with much of its activities concentrated in agriculture, agro-economy, tourism and urban development projects. However, Japan has unveiled an ambitious new connectivity initiative, the "Bay of Bengal-Northeast India Industrial Value Chain".

Japan has been an active investor in India's NE, in fields like agriculture, tourism, urban development

The initiative was announced during Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit to India in March.

"Northeast India, which is surrounded by land, still has unexploited economic potential. Viewing Bangladesh and other areas of the South as a single economic zone, we will promote the Bay of Bengal-North East India industrial value chain concept in cooperation with India and Bangladesh in order to foster growth in the entire region," said Kishida, while delivering the Sapru House Lecture organized by the Indian Council on World Affairs (ICWA) in New Delhi.

Japan plans for a new industrial and manufacturing zone that includes Bangladesh and India's Northeast. Japan is looking to attract regional investment moving out of pricier South-east Asian markets like Thailand to the Bay of Bengal.

According to persons aware of the matter, increased investments in the Northeast, particularly in connectivity, may be discussed at the Act East Forum later this year.

The Bay of Bengal-Northeast India Industrial Value Chain may also be up for discussion.

Context: Indian and Japan are set to explore increased investments in India's Northeast during the **India-Japan Act East Forum** to be held this summer.

India-Japan Act East Forum

- It was established in 2017 which aims to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration under the rubric of **India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy".**
- The purpose of forum is to **converge India's Act East Policy with Japan's Free and Open Asia-Pacific strategy** in the backdrop of China's One Belt One Road initiative.
- It will **enhance connectivity and promote developmental projects** in India's Northeast region in an efficient and effective manner.
- It can **complement India's connectivity initiatives** in Bangladesh, Myanmar and beyond, besides BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Motor Vehicle Agreements.

DTE

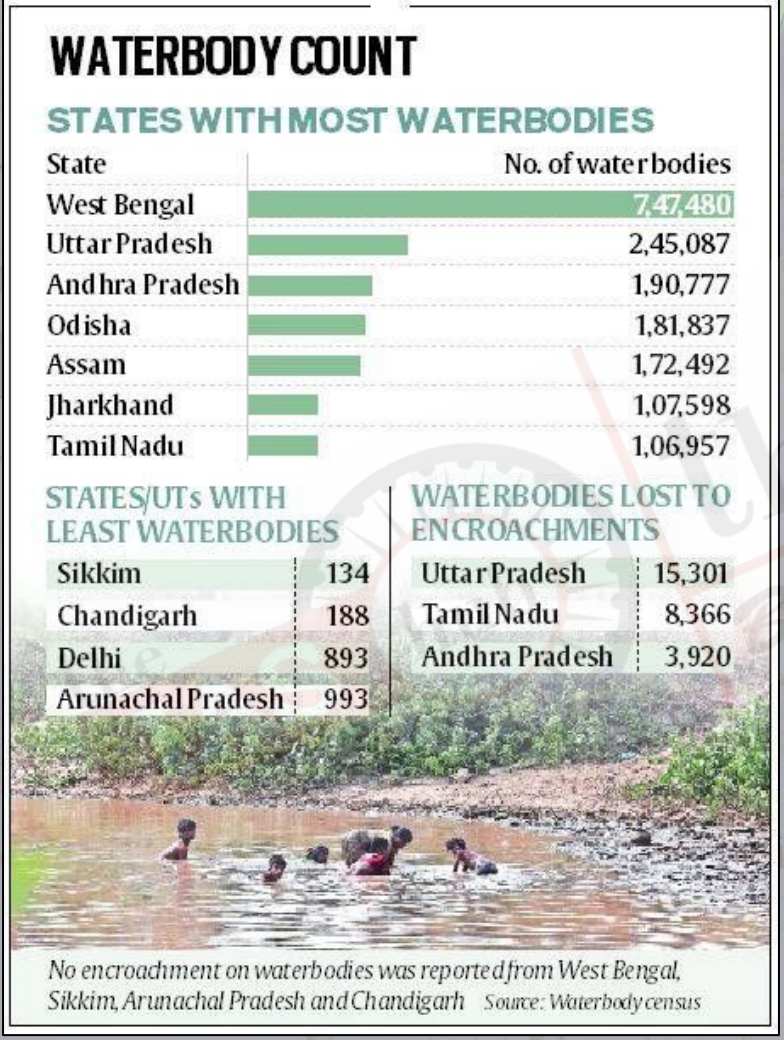
MAY 29

WATER BODIES CENSUS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

India's first census of waterbodies is a much awaited one but experts question the methodology; here is why

There is confusion regarding the definition of waterbodies used; there are also discrepancies about whether waterbodies are in rural or urban areas and whether or not they have been encroached upon



Context: In March 2023, the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti released the **"Water Bodies First Census Report"**.

- Though the census is by far the widest such survey, **experts doubt if it can be called national in scope.**
- India has a total of 7,933 towns and 0.64 million villages, as per Census 2011, but the water bodies census covers only 3,009 towns and 0.36 million villages - less than half of the total.

Key Points

- Since 1986, India has conducted a census of minor irrigation every five years, exclusively on rural water bodies.
- The **"Water Bodies First Census Report"** is a broader version of the sixth minor irrigation census and covers all types of rural as well as urban water bodies - such as those used for irrigation, industry, pisciculture, drinking, recreation, religion, groundwater recharge, conservation - natural and human-made, and owned by the government and private individuals.
- It has also quantified the encroachment of water bodies created under **various water conservation programmes.**

Water Bodies Census Report

- The census defines a waterbody as **"all natural or man-made units bounded on all sides with some or no masonry work** used for storing water for irrigation or other purposes (example industrial, pisciculture, domestic/drinking, recreation, religious, ground water recharge etc)"
- According to the report, **"West Bengal has the highest number of ponds and reservoirs,** whereas Andhra Pradesh has highest number of tanks. Tamil Nadu has the highest number of lakes and Maharashtra is the leading state with water conservation schemes."
- The census also **collected data on encroachment of water bodies** for the first time.
    - 1.6% water bodies out of all the enumerated water bodies are reported to be encroached, out of which 95.4% are in rural areas and remaining 4.6% in urban areas.
    - Out of all encroached water bodies, 62.8% have less than 25% area under encroachment, whereas 11.8% water bodies have more than 75% area under encroachment,.

DTE

MAY 29

CHILIKA LAKE

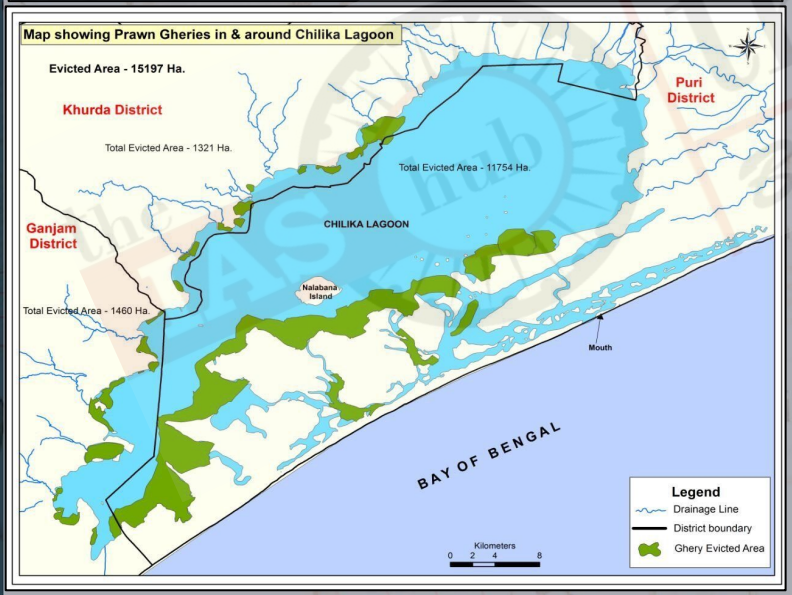
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Odisha's Chilika lake gets more winged visitors this summer despite scorching heat

Over 62,000 birds of 88 species found in lake during annual summer survey

By Hrusikesh Mohanty
Published: Friday 26 May 2023





Context: More birds flocked to the **Chilika Lake** in Odisha this summer than the previous years, despite the day temperature in and around Asia's largest brackish water lagoon hovering 39 to 41 degrees Celsius.

Key Points

- The **highest number of birds** has been spotted in the Tangi range (24,285) followed by, Balugaon (20,581), Satapada (8,763), Chilika (6,694) and Rambha (2,624), sources said.
- The species like **grey-headed swamphen or purple swamphen** were spotted the most number (8,386) followed by Asian Openbilled-stork (7,454), whiskered tern (5,033), little cormorant (4,263) and little egret (3,929), sources said.
- Habitat improvement, availability of food and eviction of the prawn gherries (enclosures) in the lake are some of the reasons for more birds flocking this summer and in the last winter than the previous years.
- The birds, mostly from beyond the Himalayas in northern **Eurasia, the Caspian region, Siberia, Kazakhstan, Baikal lake** and the remote areas of Russia and neighbouring countries, visit the Chilika every winter and start their homeward journey before the onset of summer.

Chilika Lake

- It is **Asia's largest and world's second-largest brackish water lagoon** after The New Caledonian barrier reef.
    - A lagoon is a shallow body of water separated from a larger body of water by a narrow landform, such as reefs, barrier islands, barrier peninsulas, or isthmuses.
- It is spread over the **Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha.**
- It is located at the mouth of the **Daya River,** flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 km2.
- **Chilika lake hosts birds** migrating from thousands of miles away from th**e Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal, Aral Sea**, remote parts of Russia, Kirghiz steppes of Mongolia, Central and South-East Asia, Ladakh and the Himalayas.
- It has been listed as Ramsar Site as well as a tentative **UNESCO World Heritage site.**
- In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the **Ramsar Convention.**

THE HINDU Page 14

DENGUE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci Tech)

'From prevalence in eight States in 2001, dengue now a nationwide infection'

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Faced with a shortage of entomologists, a trickier vector, increased travel, and less than optimal public participation for prevention, the infection geography of dengue, which was restricted to eight States in 2001, currently covers all the States and Union Territories in India. Dengue has now breached the country's last bastion, Ladakh (with two cases in 2022), senior health officials say.

As the country gets ready to welcome the south-west monsoon, which is associated with the rise of certain diseases, including malaria, dengue and zika, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) confirmed that dengue's infection geography has grown.

"During the past two decades, there has been a significant geographical spread of dengue with an 11-fold increase and repeated outbreaks. ...Rural areas contributed approximately 32% of the total cases in 2015-16 and have increased to 41%-45% now," experts maintained.



The WHO says half of the world population is at risk. AFP

Half of world at risk

The World Health Organization estimates the global incidence of dengue has grown over recent decades, with half of the world population now at risk. The ICMR said that this risk from dengue, which is now endemic in more than 100 countries, has been propelled by several factors, including climate change, increased urbanisation and increased travel.

Himmat Singh, from the ICMR-National Institute of Malaria Research, notes that the problems in the control of the Aedes-borne disease are manifold. "Day-biting habit, multiple biting, long incubation period, fast transport, eggs retained up to one year, container breeding, human environment, and intermittent water supply and poor waste management at construction sites add to the problem," Dr. Singh said.

According to the Central government's paper on dengue outbreaks in India, the dengue vector is very different from the malaria vector and so, bio-environmental strategies alone will not work. This, coupled with the shortage of entomologists in the country, works to help the spread of dengue.

ICMR officials said that besides the work on vaccines, they were also looking at increasing awareness and promoting prevention, people's participation, and the use of the latest technology, including satellite imaging and drones to map vulnerable areas.

Context: Faced with a shortage of entomologists, a trickier vector, increased travel, and less than optimal public participation to prevent its spread, the infection geography of **dengue**, which was restricted to eight States in 2001, currently covers all the States and Union Territories in India.

- **Dengue** has now breached the country's last bastion, Ladakh (with two cases in 2022).

Dengue Disease

- **About**: a **viral infection** transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes.
- **Primary vectors**: Aedes aegypti mosquitoes..
  - This mosquito also transmits chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika infection.
  - The virus responsible for causing dengue, is called **dengue virus (DENV).**
- **Region affected**: found in **tropical and sub-tropical climates** worldwide, mostly in urban and semi-urban areas.
- **Symptoms:** Sudden high fever, severe headaches, pain behind the eyes, severe bone, joint, and muscle pain, etc.
- **Treatment**: There is **no specific treatment** for dengue/severe dengue.
  - Early detection of disease progression associated with severe dengue, and access to proper medical care lowers fatality rates of severe dengue to below 1%.
- **Vaccine**: As of 2022, **one version of Dengue vaccine is commercially available**, known as CYD-TDV, and sold under the brand name Dengvaxia.
  - The dengue vaccine CYD-TDV or Dengvaxia was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration in 2019, the first dengue vaccine to get the regulatory nod in the US.
  - The vaccine is only recommended in those who have previously had dengue fever or populations in which most people have been previously infected.
  - It is available in 20 countries for people ages 9 - 45 years old

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