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INDIAN EXPRESS

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NASA'S DART MISSION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

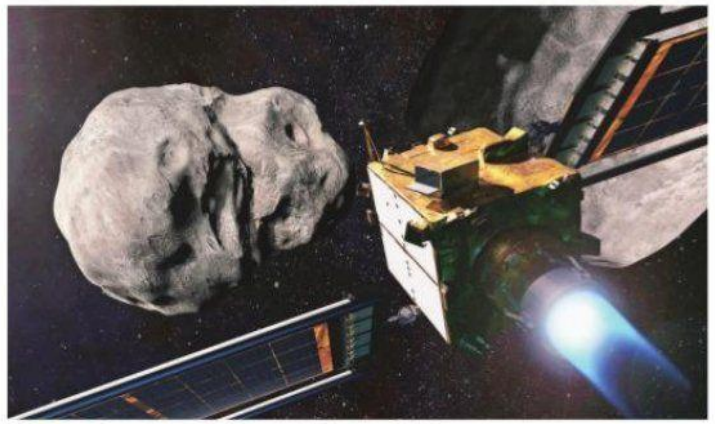


Illustration of NASA's DART spacecraft, which was launched to test a technique that could one day be used for planetary defence. *Reuters*

NASA is about to crash into asteroid

On Monday, NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test spacecraft, or DART, is set to collide with Dimorphos, a small asteroid that is the moon of a larger space rock, Didymos. These two near-Earth objects pose no immediate threat to our world

WHEN IS THE COLLISION?

- DART is set to crash into Dimorphos at 14,000 miles per hour at 7.14 pm Eastern time on Monday

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE COLLISION?

- The mission's target is Dimorphos, a small asteroid that is about 500 feet in diameter and orbits a larger object, a half-mile-wide asteroid named Didymos
- DART will be a self-driving suicidal spacecraft, guiding itself to its demise

WHY IS NASA CRASHING INTO AN ASTEROID?

- Blowing up an asteroid generally would not be a good thing to do. Rather, the mission is a proof-of-principle demonstration that hitting an oncoming asteroid with a projectile can nudge it into a different orbit
- For a dangerous oncoming asteroid, that nudge could be enough to change the trajectory from a direct hit to a near miss

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE MISSION SUCCEEDS?

- If DART and Dimorphos connect as planned, the small asteroid's orbit will get closer to larger Didymos. The magnitude of the change will depend on the structure of Dimorphos

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH NASA'S BIG MOON ROCKET?

- It had planned to launch Artemis I on Tuesday. But poor weather prompted it to call off the launch attempt

Source: NYT

Context: The DART spacecraft will crash into the asteroid Dimorphos in humanity's first test of a planetary defence technique.

NASA's DART mission

- NASA launched first planetary defense test mission named the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART).
- The main aim of the mission is to test the newly developed technology that would allow a spacecraft to crash into an asteroid and change its course.
- The target of the spacecraft is a small moonlet called Dimorphos (Greek for "two forms").
- It is about 160-metre in diameter and the spacecraft is expected to collide when it is 11 million kilometres away from Earth.
- Dimorphos orbits a larger asteroid named Didymos (Greek for "twin") which has a diameter of 780 metres.
- The asteroid and the moonlet do not pose any threat to Earth and the mission is to test the new technology to be prepared in case an asteroid heads towards Earth in the future.
- The spacecraft will navigate to the moonlet and intentionally collide with it at a speed of about 6.6 kilometres per second or 24,000 kilometres per hour.
- It is a suicide mission and the spacecraft will be completely destroyed.
- Didymos is a perfect system for the test mission because it is an eclipsing binary which means it has a moonlet that regularly orbits the asteroid and we can see it when it passes in front of the main asteroid.
- DART is a low-cost spacecraft, weighing around 610 kg at launch and 550 kg during impact. The main structure is a box (1.2 × 1.3 × 1.3 metres). It has two solar arrays and uses hydrazine propellant for maneuvering the spacecraft.
- It also carries about 10 kg of xenon which will be used to demonstrate the agency's new thrusters called NASA Evolutionary Xenon Thruster–Commercial (NEXT-C) in space.
- NEXT has very high fuel efficiency and flexible operations making it ideal for many classes of science missions.
- The spacecraft carries a high-resolution imager called Didymos Reconnaissance and Asteroid Camera for Optical Navigation (DRACO).
- Images from DRACO will be sent to Earth in real-time and will help study the impact site and surface of Dimorphos.
- DART will also carry a small satellite or CubeSat named LICIACube (Light Italian CubeSat for Imaging of Asteroids).
- It will be deployed ten days before the impact on Dimorphos.
- LICIACube is expected to capture images of the impact and the impact crater formed as a result of the collision. It can also capture images of any dust cloud formed during the impact.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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PORT OF ODESA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

MILITARY INSTALLATION AND DETONATED AMMUNITION STRUCK

Drone attack hits Odesa port; US warns of 'catastrophic consequences' over nukes

Don't think Putin is bluffing over nuclear arms, it could be a reality now, says Zelenskyy

AGENCIES
KYIV, SEPTEMBER 26

AN OVERNIGHT drone strike near the Ukrainian port of Odesa sparked a massive fire and explosion, the military said Monday, as Russia's leadership faced growing resistance to its efforts to call up hundreds of thousands of men to fight in Ukraine.

The airstrike on Odesa was the latest in a series of drone attacks on the key southern city in recent days, and hit a military installation and detonated ammunition when it struck. Firefighters were struggling to contain the blaze, and civilians nearby were evacuated, the Ukrainian military's southern command said.

It came hours after the United States vowed to take decisive action and promised "catastrophic consequences" if Russia uses nuclear weapons in Ukraine. Concerns are growing that Russia may seek to escalate the conflict once it completes what Ukraine and the West see as illegal referendums in parts of Ukraine under its control. Meanwhile, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he doesn't think Putin is bluffing when he says Moscow would be ready to use nuclear weapons to defend Russia. "Look, maybe yesterday it was bluff. Now, it could be a reality," Zelenskyy, who had previously played down such warnings as nuclear blackmail, told *CBS News* on Sunday.

The voting, which ends Tuesday, happened after thousands of residents had fled and has included images of armed Russian troops going door-to-door to pressure Ukrainians into casting a ballot. Russia is widely expected to declare the results in its favour, a step that could see Moscow annex the territory and give it the pretext to defend it as its own territory under the Russian nuclear umbrella.

Jake Sullivan, the US national security adviser, said Russia would pay a high, if unspecified, price if it made good on veiled threats to use nuclear weapons in the conflict. "If Russia crosses this line there will be catastrophic consequences," he told *NBC*'s Meet on Sunday.



A building in the retaken village of Shchurove, Ukraine. AP

WON'T RECOGNISE REFERENDUMS: KAZAKHSTAN

Almaty: Kazakhstan will not recognise the possible annexation of Ukraine's eastern regions by Russia through referendums, its foreign ministry said. "Kazakhstan proceeds from the principles of territorial integrity of states, their sovereign equivalence and peaceful coexistence," it added. REUTERS

Russian military recruiter shot

A young man shot a Russian military officer at close range at an enlistment office Monday, in an unusually bold attack reflecting resistance to the Russian leadership's efforts to mobilise hundreds of men to wage war on Ukraine.

Context: An overnight drone strike near the Ukrainian port of Odesa sparked a massive fire and explosion.



Port of Odesa or Odesa Sea Port

- The Port of Odesa or Odesa Sea Port, located near Odesa, is the largest Ukrainian seaport and one of the largest ports in the Black Sea basin, with a total annual traffic capacity of 40 million tonnes (15 million tonnes dry bulk and 25 million tonnes liquid bulk).
- The port has an immediate access to railways allowing quick transfer of cargo from sea routes to ground transportation.
- Along with its younger satellite ports of Chornomorsk (1958) and Yuzhne (1973), the Port of Odesa is a major freight and passenger transportation hub of Ukraine.
- The port is located at the western shores of the Odesa Bay.

LIVEMINT Page 2

PROJECT SAKHALIN-1

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Infrastructure)

ONGC says no clarity on resumption of Sakhalin-1

Singapore: India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) said on Monday there is no clarity on the resumption of its oil and gas project Sakhalin-1. Production at Sakhalin-1 was "minimized" shortly after the Ukraine war started and there is no clarity or timeline yet when it could be resumed, ONGC officials told *Reuters* on the sidelines of the 38th APPEC 2022. REUTERS



Context: India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) said there is no clarity on the resumption of its oil and gas project Sakhalin-1.

Project Sakhalin-1

- The Sakhalin-I project, a sister project to Sakhalin-II, is a consortium for production of oil and gas on Sakhalin Island and immediately offshore.
- It operates three fields in the Okhotsk Sea: Chayvo, Odoptu and Arkutun-Dagi.
- It is a prolific oil producing field like Bombay High.
- Exxon Mobil, Rosneft, Japanese SODECO and ONGC Videsh are the partners in this field which will continue to produce oil and gas till 2055.
- It is a covered rig to allow people to work in extreme temperature (-40 degree Celsius in winter)- it drills up to 14 KM in horizontal drilling.

Project Sakhalin-2

- The Sakhalin-2 project is an oil and gas development in Sakhalin Island, Russia.
- It includes development of the Piltun-Astokhskoye oil field and the Lunskoye natural gas field offshore Sakhalin Island in the Okhotsk Sea, and associated infrastructure onshore.
- The project is managed and operated by Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd. (Sakhalin Energy).
- Sakhalin-2 includes the first liquefied natural gas plant in Russia.



LIVEMINT Page 2

ELECTRONIC GOLD RECEIPT (EGR)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

BSE receives Sebi's approval to launch EGR on its platform

New Delhi: BSE on Monday said it has received the final approval from the capital markets regulator Sebi for introducing Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) on its platform. This comes after BSE received in-principle approval from the Sebi in February, after which the exchange conducted several mock trading sessions in the test environment for its members to facilitate trading in EGRs. PTI

HOW IT WORKS

- Investors can buy **electronic receipts** for gold kept in vaults
- These e-receipts could be **traded on exchanges**
- These could also be **exchanged for physical gold** at authorised vaults
- Govt has also allowed fund houses to launch **silver ETFs**

Context: BSE has received the final approval from the capital markets regulator Sebi for introducing Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) on its platform.

Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR)

- These are electronic receipts issued on the basis of a deposit of underlying physical gold.
- EGRs could be traded on proposed gold exchange in India.
- Gold Exchange would be a national platform for buying and selling EGRs issued against physical gold.
- Investors can trade in EGRs on stock exchanges and the proposed gold exchange.
- The transaction in a gold exchange has been divided into three parts:
- conversion of physical gold into EGR,
- trading of EGR on a stock exchange and
- conversion of EGR into physical gold.
- The Ministry of Finance declared electronic gold receipts (EGR) as "securities" for the purpose of section 2 of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956.
- This paved the way for SEBI to exercise its jurisdiction, as the regulator of the Indian securities market.



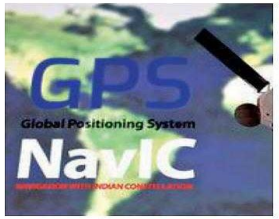
THE HINDU Page 1

NAVIGATION SYSTEM NAVIC
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

Centre's push for NavIC system lands smartphone giants on unknown road

Reuters
NEW DELHI

The Union government is pushing tech giants to make smartphones compatible with its home-grown navigation system within months, worrying the likes of Samsung, Xiaomi and Apple who fear elevated costs and disruptions as the move requires hardware changes, according to two industry sources and government documents seen by *Reuters*.



The government says NavIC provides more accurate domestic navigation. REUTERS

In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's drive for self-reliance, India has over the years expanded the use of its regional navigation satellite system called NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).

Foreign systems

The Union government wants to reduce dependence on foreign systems, including the widely used U.S. Global Positioning System (GPS), and says NavIC provides more accurate domestic navigation and that its use would benefit the economy.

China, the European Union, Japan and Russia have their own global or regional navigation systems to rival GPS. Operational since 2018, NavIC's uptake is minimal; it is mandated in public vehicle location trackers, for example.

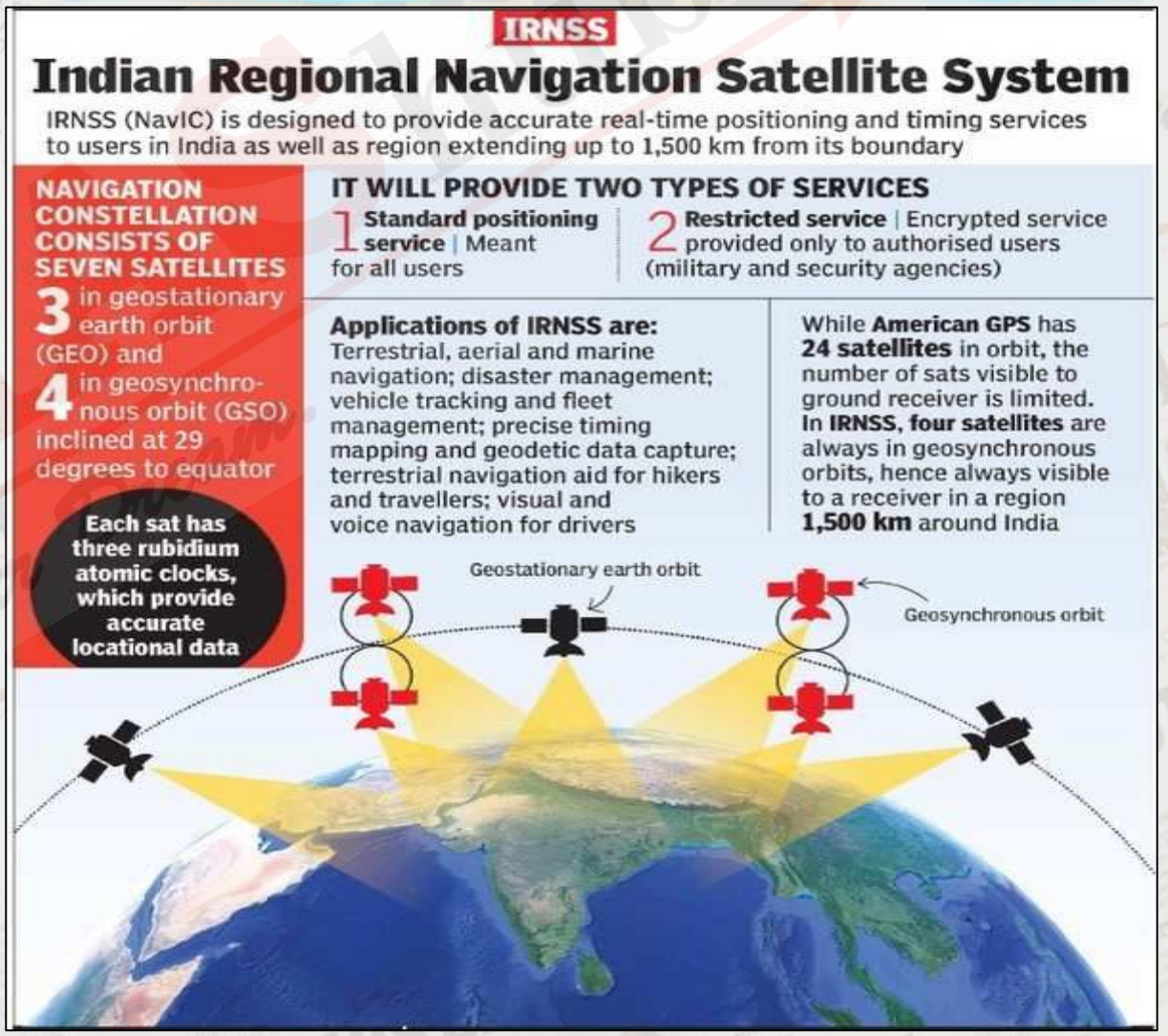
But government and industry documents show Mr. Modi's administration and space officials want to broaden its use.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Context: The government is discussing with smartphone manufacturers about embedding the indigenously-developed navigation system NavIC in phones manufactured domestically.

Navigation system NavIC

- NavIC, or Navigation with Indian Constellation, is an independent stand-alone navigation satellite system developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- NavIC consists of eight satellites and covers the whole of India's landmass and up to 1,500 km (930 miles) from its boundaries.
- Currently, NavIC's use is limited.
- It is being used in public vehicle tracking in India, for providing emergency warning alerts to fishermen venturing into the deep sea where there is no terrestrial network connectivity, and for tracking and providing information related to natural disasters.
- GPS caters to users across the globe and its satellites circle the earth twice a day, while NavIC is currently for use in India and adjacent areas.
- NavIC is an indigenous positioning system that is under Indian control.
- There is no risk of the service being withdrawn or denied in a given situation.



THE HINDU Page 10

OTHER BACKWARD CLASS
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Social Justice)

OBCs not on Central list can apply under EWS for Union government posts: DoPT

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

People belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities in the State list but not in the Central list will be eligible to apply for posts and services of the Government of India under the EWS quota criteria, provided they fulfill all other requirements, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has said in a list of FAQs it has put out on how to recruit under the 10% reservation provided for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).

The DoPT issued the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the answers to them after it received several references from Ministries, departments and individuals with regards to the criteria to qualify for the EWS quota.

The DoPT said the SC/ST members will not be eligible to apply for Central government posts

This comes at a time a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court is hearing a batch of petitions challenging the constitutionality of the EWS quota and has repeatedly voiced concerns of it eating into the 50% for the unreserved category – meant to be open for all irrespective of their caste, creed, or religion.

In addition to this, the DoPT, in the list of FAQs issued to States and Union Territories last week, added that members of the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes will not be eligible to apply for Central government positions irrespective of where they reside (even if the State of residence does not recognise their community as an SC or ST).

Unfilled vacancies

Further, the DoPT has clarified that unfilled EWS vacancies for a particular recruitment year cannot be carried over to the next and that successive attempts to fill these vacancies with EWS candidates should be made. "Thereafter, the unfilled vacancies may be filled up, treating them as unreserved provided it does not result in excess representation in the general category beyond the number added on account of non-availability of EWS candidate," the DoPT said.

Context: People belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities in the State list but not in the Central list will be eligible to apply for posts and services of the Government of India under the EWS quota criteria.

Other Backward Class

- Other Backward Class is a collective term used by the Government of India to classify castes which are educationally or socially disadvantaged.
- It is one of several official classifications of the population of India, along with General Class, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs).
- The OBCs were found to comprise 55% of the country's population by the Mandal Commission report of 1980, and were determined to be 41% in 2006 when the National Sample Survey Organisation took place.
- In the Indian Constitution, OBCs are described as socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC), and the Government of India is enjoined to ensure their social and educational development - for example, the OBCs are entitled to 27% reservations in public sector employment and higher education.
- The list of OBCs maintained by the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is dynamic, with castes and communities being added or removed depending on social, educational and economic factors.
- Under Article 340 of the Indian Constitution, it is obligatory for the government to promote the welfare of the OBCs.
- OBCs are granted 27% reservation in jobs and education under the central government.

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 1

Centre sets stiffer 40% air pollution reduction target for cities by 2026

Vishwa.Mohan
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Encouraged by the performance of 95 cities that showed improvement in air quality in 2021-22 as compared to 2017 levels, the Centre has revised the target of reducing air pollution (PM concentrations) in cities from 20-30% by 2024 to 40% by 2025-26.

Though a 40% reduction in PM concentrations over 2017 levels still wouldn't make air quality reach acceptable limits in Delhi and other NCR cities, Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow and Kanpur, the revised target may at least prompt the respective states to ratchet up their ambition through city-based action plans under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

The new target was conveyed to states during the national conference of environment ministers in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat last week. "Achieving a minimum 40% reduction is desirable under the revised target. We believe many cities can achieve much higher cuts, such as seen in Varanasi that recorded the highest 53% reduction in PM10 levels in 2021-22 (over 2017 levels)," said an environment ministry official.

▶Improved PM10, P 18

CITY RANKINGS SOON

Earlier target | 20-30% reduction in PM levels by 2024

Revised target | 40% reduction by 2025-26 under National Clean Air Programme

- 131 cities to be **ranked on actions to reduce pollution**
- Environment ministry's recently released analysis showed **PM10 levels in 95 cities had improved** over 2017 levels. It didn't analyse levels of the more hazardous PM2.5

NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME (NCAP)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Context: The Centre has revised the target of reducing air pollution (PM concentrations) in cities from 20-30% by 2024 to 40% by 2025-26.

National Clean Air Programme (Ncap)

- The NCAP launched in 2019 aims to bring a 20%-30% reduction in pollution levels from PM2. 5 and PM10 particles by 2024, using 2017 pollution levels as a base.
- At the national level, the implementation of the programme will be done by an apex committee at the Environment Ministry level.
- At the state level, committees at the Chief Secretary level will oversee the implementation of the scheme.
- For this initiative, 102 cites from 23 UTs and states have been chosen. Barring Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata, all the cities selected are tier 2 cities.
- The cities were selected on the basis of the ambient air quality data from the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP) of 2011 – 2015.
- Maharashtra has the maximum number of cities chosen for the programme.
- The initiatives under NCAP are:
    - The National Air Quality Monitoring Network will be augmented.
    - Air Quality Management Plan for the cities chosen.
    - Indoor Air Pollution Monitoring & Management
    - National Emission Inventory – this is an inventory of the quantity of pollutants discharged into the air.
    - Network of Technical Institutions
    - Technology Assessment Cell
    - International cooperation including the sharing of best practices with respect to abatement of air pollution.
- It is not notified under any existing act.

DOWN TO EARTH

Sept 27

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 -Env & Eco)



AGRICULTURE

Rotterdam Convention: International trade of 2 hazardous pesticides recommended for 'prior informed consent'

Iprodione & Terbufos dangerous for health of humans, aquatic animals; India among largest exporters of Terbufos

By Kiran Pandey

Published: Monday 26 September 2022

Rotterdam Convention

- Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedures (PIC) that entered into force in 2004, is a legally binding instrument.
- It was adopted in 1998 by a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam.
- India acceded to the Convention in 2006.
- The objective of the convention is to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in international trade of certain pesticides and hazardous chemicals to protect human health and environment from harm.

Context: International trade of two new hazardous pesticides - Iprodione and Terbufos - has been recommended for "prior informed consent" (PIC) procedure under Rotterdam convention.

Key points

- Iprodione, a fungicide used on vines, fruits, trees and vegetables, has been classified as carcinogenic and toxic for reproduction.
- Terbufos is a soil insecticide used commonly on sorghum, maize, beet and potatoes. It has also been found to pose risk to aquatic organisms due to its toxicity.
- Both the pesticides, which are used in agriculture, are known for their harmful impacts on human health and the environment.
- The PIC procedure is a mechanism for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing parties on their willingness to receive future shipments of hazardous chemicals.
- In India, the use of these chemicals was permitted by the 2015 Anupam Verma committee report. The country is among the largest exporters of Terbufos.
- The 17th meeting of the chemical review committee (CRC 17) had recommended these two pesticides for listing in Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention and had decided to prepare the decision guidance documents after that.
- Annex III includes pesticides and industrial chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted for health or environmental reasons by two or more parties.
- After being included under Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention, the chemicals are subject to the prior informed consent (PIC) procedure.
- The list will include 54 chemicals after Ipridione and Terbufos are added to it.

DOWN TO EARTH

Sept 27

TAMIRASES PROJECT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



WATER

Thamirabarani: Govt, ATREE adopt 'hyper local' approach to restore one of south Asia's oldest rivers

The TamiraSES project aims to enable conditions for native biodiversity to thrive and maintain and enhance multiple ecosystem services to local stakeholders

NEXT NEWS >

By Rajat Ghai

Published: Monday 26 September 2022

Context: The district administration of Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu along with Bengaluru-based non-profit Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) are using what they term as a 'hyper local' approach to restore one of south Asia's oldest rivers, the Thamirabarani.

Key points

- The district collector of Tirunelveli launched the first phase of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared by ATREE which is called TamiraSES restoration project.
- The TamiraSES project aims to restore the Social Ecological Systems of Tamiraparani river riverscape from head-waters to the estuary to enable conditions for native biodiversity to thrive and maintain and enhance multiple ecosystem services to local stakeholders.
- Five social ecological observatories will set up as part of first phase of the project. These will serve as pilots to scale up from the learnings from these sites.
- The first phase of the project would be restricted to the borders of Tirunelveli.
- It is a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach.

Thamiraparani river

- The Thamiraparani is unique in many respects.
- It is the only perennial river in Tamil Nadu.
- It originates in the Pothigai Hills of the Western Ghats in Tirunelveli district.
- The river flows through Tirunelveli and then neighbouring Thoothukudi and ends in the Gulf of Mannar at Punakayil.
- It thus originates and ends in the same state.
- The river supports wildlife such as the Nilgiri marten, slender loris, lion-tailed macaque, white spotted bush frog, galaxy frog, Sri Lankan Atlas moth and the great hornbill.
- The river also has historical value for the people of the state.
- It is mentioned extensively in Sangam Era literature.

PIB

Sept 27

COMBINED TASK FORCES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Internal Security)

INS Sunayna in Seychelles

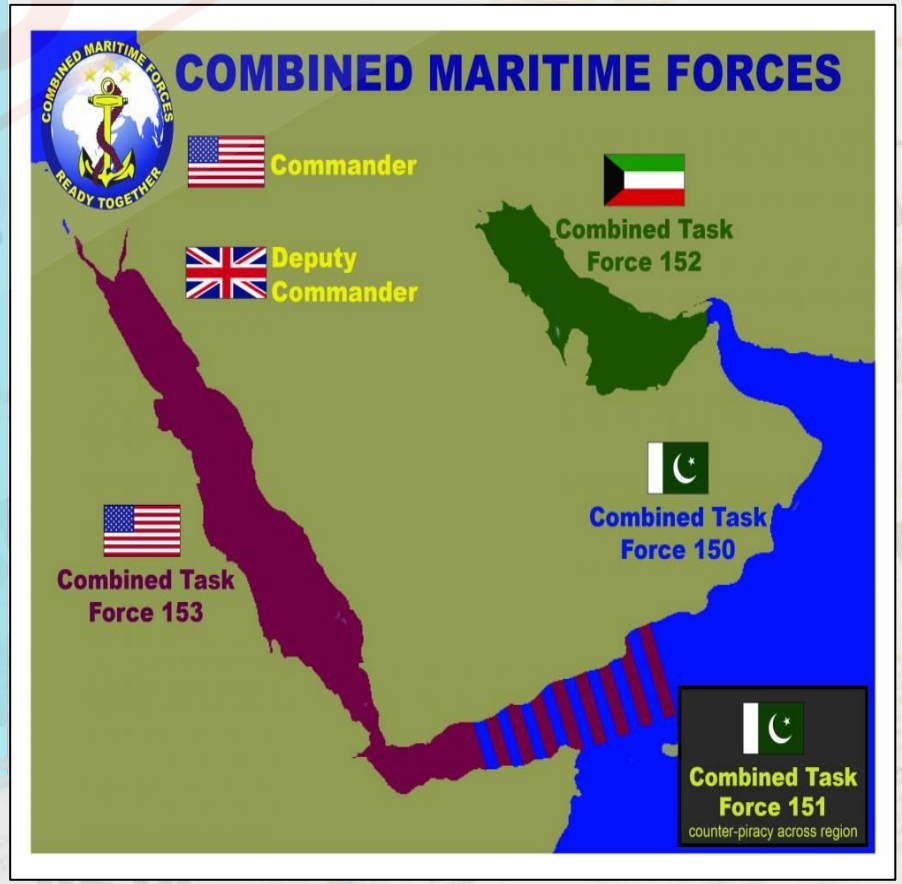
Indian Navy's Maiden Participation in Combined Maritime Forces Exercise

Context: INS Sunayna entered Port Victoria Seychelles to participate in the annual training exercise Operation Southern Readiness of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

- This not only reinforces Indian Navy's commitment to maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region but also marks the maiden participation of an Indian Navy ship in CMF exercise.
- The ship is scheduled to participate as associate partner in the capacity building exercises being conducted by CMF.
- The joint training exercise is being attended by representative delegations from USA, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and ship participation from UK, Spain & India.

About Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)

- The Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) is a multinational maritime partnership, which exists to uphold the International Rules Based Order (IRBO) by countering illicit non-state actors on the high seas.
- It promotes security, stability and prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, which encompass some of the world's most important shipping lanes.
- When requested, CMF assets at sea will also respond to environmental and humanitarian crises.
- CMF has four Combined Task Forces:
    - CTF 150 (Maritime Security Operations outside the Arabian Gulf)
    - CTF 151 (Counter Piracy)
    - CTF 152 (Maritime Security Operations inside the Arabian Gulf)
    - CTF 153 (Red Sea Maritime Security)
- All three commands are co-located at U.S. Naval Support Activity Bahrain. In the immediate neighbourhood, Pakistan is a full member of CMF.
- The 34 nation grouping is commanded by a U.S. Navy Vice Admiral, who also serves as Commander U.S. Naval Forces CENTCOM and U.S. Fifth Fleet.
- It is a flexible organisation and members are not bound by either a political or military mandate.



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