

GOVERNANCE**Evaluation of National Monsoon Mission**

Recently, the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has evaluated the economic benefits of the National Monsoon Mission (NMM).

Established in 1956, NCAER is India's oldest and largest independent, non-profit, economic policy research institute, based in New Delhi.

Key Points

- The study spanned across 173 rain-fed districts in 16 states which appropriately represented agro-climatic zones, rain-fed areas, coverage of major crops, and incidence of extreme weather events in the country. It was conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- The study refers to economic benefits as direct monetary gains to crop farmers, livestock rearers, and fishermen in the country.
- India's investment of nearly Rs. 1,000 crore in the NMM and High-Performance Computing (HPC) facilities would provide benefits worth Rs. 50,000 crore to nearly 1.07 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) agricultural households and 53 lakh BPL fisherfolk households in the country.
- The total annual economic benefits to agricultural households, farmers and livestock owners taken together, has been calculated at Rs. 13,331 crore and the incremental benefits over the next five years are estimated to be about Rs. 48,056 crore.
- The benefits are from accurate weather forecasting by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and other agencies working under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- Agro-meteorological services for farmers is one of the most prominent weather services of IMD.
- Every day Ocean State Forecast (OSF) and warnings to fishermen going out to the sea by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) helped in elimination of less or not so productive trips to the ocean.
- Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories resulted in successful trips generating additional catches.

Data Analysis of the Benefits:

- Based on weather advisories, 98% farmers made modifications such as changing variety/breed of the crop, arranging storage of harvest, early/delayed harvesting, changed crop, early/delayed sowing, changed the schedule of ploughing/land preparation, changed pesticide application schedule, changed fertiliser application schedule and changed scheduled irrigation.
- 94% of farmers were able to avoid losses and increase income because of services provided through NMM.
- 82% of fishermen surveyed, reported using OSF advisories before they venture into the sea every time.
- A total of approximately Rs 1.92 crore additional income was generated from 1,079 successful fishing expeditions made using PFZ advisories.

National Monsoon Mission

- It was launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences in 2012.
- Aim: To improve the forecasting skills by setting up a state-of-the-art dynamic prediction system for monsoon rainfall different time scales.
- NMM builds a working partnership between the academic and research and development (R&D) organisations, both national and international.
- Its augmentation with the HPC facilities has helped the country in achieving a paradigm shift in weather and climate modelling for operational weather forecast

Review of PMBJP

Recently, the Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers has held a comprehensive review meeting of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

Key Points

- PMBJP has achieved sales of Rs. 358 crores worth of pharma products through 6600 Janaushadhi Kendras during the first seven months of the fiscal year 2020-21 (up to 31st October) and is likely to surpass sales of Rs. 600 crore for the entire year.
- Sales figure has seen a jump from Rs 7.29 crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 433 crore in 2019-20.
- Janaushadhi Kendras have grown from mere 99 stores in 2014-15 to around 6600 stores in 2019-20.
- The Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) was appraised for ensuring the supply of medicines and other pharma products like masks to people at affordable rates during Covid-19.
- BPPI is the implementing agency of the PMBJP.
- It was established in December 2008 under the Department of Pharmaceuticals and has been registered as an independent society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Suggestions on Improvement:

- BPPI should take measures to reduce out of pocket expenditure of citizens on medicines, especially of marginalised sections of the society by strengthening supply chains and adopting innovative measures.
- There is a need to work on increasing awareness of people regarding efficacy and quality of Janaushadhi medicines, increasing coverage with a focus on remote and rural areas, and for making sure availability of medicines at each Janaushadhi shop.
- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana
- It is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in 2008 under the name Janaushadi Campaign, which was revamped as PMBJP in 2015-16.

Aim:

- To extend the coverage of quality generic medicines so as to reduce the out of pocket expenditure on medicines and thereby redefine the unit cost of treatment per person.
- To create awareness about generic medicines through education and publicity so that quality is not synonymous with an only high price.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras:

- Also called Janaushadhi Kendras, these were set up across the country under PMBJP to provide generic drugs.
- Generic drugs are marketed under a non-proprietary or approved name rather than a brand name. These are equally effective and inexpensive compared to their counterparts.
- All drugs procured under this scheme are tested for quality assurance at the National Accreditation Board Laboratories (NABL) accredited laboratories and are compliant with the World Health Organisation Good Manufacturing Practices (WHO GMP) benchmarks.
- Government grants of up to Rs. 2.5 lakhs are provided for setting up of PMBJKs, which can be set up by doctors, pharmacists, entrepreneurs, Self Help Groups (SHGs), NGOs, charitable societies, etc. at any suitable place or outside the hospital premises.

Janaushadhi Week:

- It was celebrated across the country from 1st to 7th March 2020, to inform and educate the general public about the price benefits and quality of the medicines being sold at Jan Aushadhi Kendras.

Janaushadhi Sugam Application:

- This mobile application was launched in August 2019 to help people in:
 - Locating nearby Janaushadhi Kendra through Google Maps.
 - Searching for Janaushadhi generic medicines.
 - Analysing product comparison of generic versus branded medicine in form of Maximum Retail Price (MRP) and overall savings, etc.

SOCIAL JUSTICE**Extension of Food Fortification Scheme**

In order to fight chronic anaemia and undernutrition, the government is making plans to distribute fortified rice through the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid Day Meal Schemes across the country from the year 2021, with special focus on Aspirational districts.

This was decided in a review meeting of an existing pilot scheme which aims to distribute fortified rice in 15 districts.

Key Points

- Existing Scheme: The centrally-sponsored pilot scheme was approved in February 2019, for a three-year period from 2019-20 onwards. Under it, one district each in 15 predominantly rice-eating States was selected.
- It was found that, out of 15 states only 5 — Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh — have started the distribution of fortified rice in their identified pilot districts.
- In other words, the scheme has only been implemented in five districts so far, although more than half the project duration is over.
- Renewed Push: The Food Corporation of India has now been mandated to scale up the annual supply of Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) from the current 15,000 tonnes to at least 1.3 lakh tonnes.
- To cover PDS, anganwadis and mid-day meals in the 112 aspirational districts, annual supply capacity would need to be increased to about 1.3 lakh tonnes.
- Further, existing rice mills will be equipped with Blending Machines for mixing FRK with normal rice.

Other Related Initiatives:

- Milk Fortification Project was launched by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in collaboration with the World Bank and Tata Trusts, as a pilot project in 2017. It is intended to address vitamin deficiency in consumers.

- Recently, the month of September was observed as Poshan Maah i.e. Nutrition month. It includes a month-long activities focussed on antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding, anaemia, growth monitoring, girls education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene and sanitation and eating healthy (food fortification).

Fortified Rice Kernels

- Fortifying rice involves grinding broken rice into powder, mixing it with nutrients, and then shaping it into rice-like kernels using an extrusion process.
- These fortified kernels are then mixed with normal rice in a ratio ranging from 1:50 to 1:200.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

- It was launched on 2nd October, 1975, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme offers a package of six services (Supplementary Nutrition, Pre-school non-formal education, Nutrition & health education, Immunization, Health check-up and Referral services) to children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Mid-day Meal Scheme

- It was launched in 1995 as a centrally sponsored scheme.
- It provides that every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school shall be provided with a hot cooked meal, free of charge every day except on school holidays.
- The Mid Day Meal Scheme comes under the HRD Ministry's Department of School Education and Literacy.

Aspirational Districts

- The programme was launched in January 2018 with the aim of expeditiously improving the socio-economic status of 117 districts through cooperative and competitive federalism.
- The Aspirational Districts programme aims to rapidly transform districts that have been showing relatively less progress in key social areas, and have emerged as pockets of under-development, thereby posing a challenge to balanced regional development.

Food Fortification

- About: According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), food fortification is defined as the practice of deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and to provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health.
- Types: Food fortification can be done for foods widely consumed by the general population (mass fortification), to fortify foods designed for specific population subgroups, such as complementary foods for young children or rations for displaced populations (targeted fortification) and/or to allow food manufacturers to voluntarily fortify foods available in the marketplace (market-driven fortification).
- Procedure: The extent to which a national or regional food supply is fortified varies considerably. The concentration of just one micronutrient might be increased in a single foodstuff (e.g. the iodization of salt), or, at the other end of the scale, there might be a whole range of food-micronutrient combinations.
- In October 2016, Food Safety and Standards Authority Of India (FSSAI) operationalized the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016 for fortifying staples namely Wheat Flour and Rice (with Iron, Vitamin B12 and Folic Acid), Milk and Edible Oil (with Vitamins A and D) and Double Fortified Salt (with Iodine and Iron) to reduce the high burden of micronutrient malnutrition in India.
- India's National Nutritional strategy, 2017, had listed food fortification as one of the interventions to address anaemia, vitamin A and iodine deficiencies apart from supplementation and dietary diversification.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**Future Pandemics and Reduction Measures**

Recently, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem (IPBES) has released a report which warns about future pandemics, their more frequent emergence, a faster pace of spread and more damage to the world killing more people than Covid-19, unless significant measures are taken.

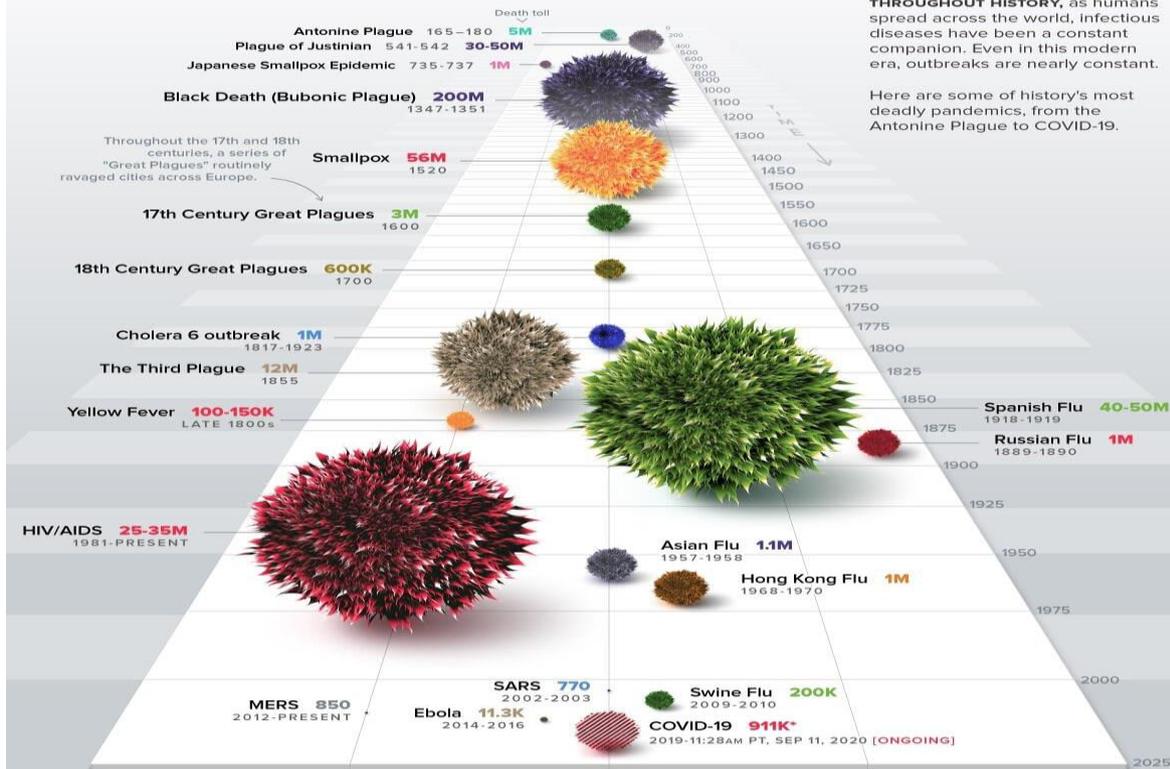
The IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body, established by the United Nations (UN) in 2012.

It aims to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

Key Points**Pandemics of the Century:**

HISTORY OF PANDEMICS

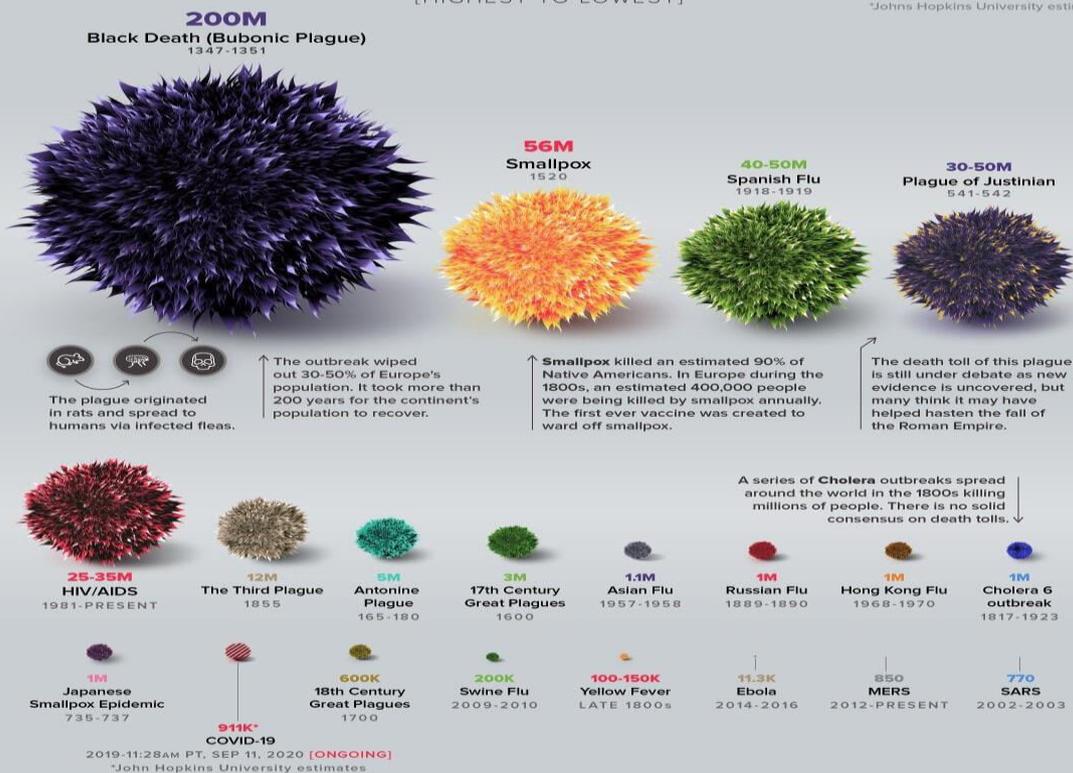
PAN-DEM-IC (of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.



THROUGHOUT HISTORY, as humans spread across the world, infectious diseases have been a constant companion. Even in this modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant.

Here are some of history's most deadly pandemics, from the Antonine Plague to COVID-19.

DEATH TOLL [HIGHEST TO LOWEST]



- Covid-19 is at least the sixth pandemic to have taken place in the last century since the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918.
- In March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic.
- Three of the pandemics were caused by influenza viruses, one by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) followed by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and now Covid-19.

Causes:

- Almost all the pandemics so far, have been zoonoses (diseases caused by germs that spread between animals and people).
- More than 70% of emerging diseases, such as Ebola, Zika and Nipah, are caused by microbes found in animals which spread due to contact among wildlife, livestock and people.
- The estimated value of the legal international wildlife trade in 2019 was about USD 107 billion, a 500% increase since 2005 and a 2000% increase since the 1980s.
- Covid-19's origins also lie in microbes carried by animals but its emergence has been entirely driven by human activities like all pandemics.
- About 30% of emerging infectious diseases are attributed to land-use change, agricultural expansion and urbanisation.

Future Possibilities:

- Currently, there are over 1.7 million 'undiscovered' viruses that exist in mammals and birds, out of which up to 827,000 could have the ability to infect humans.

Reduction Measures:

- Pandemic risk can be lowered by reducing the human activities that drive the loss of biodiversity, by greater conservation of protected areas and through measures that reduce unsustainable exploitation of high biodiversity regions.
- These measures will help in reducing the contact between wildlife-livestock and humans, thereby helping prevent the spread of new diseases.
- Policy options like launching a high-level intergovernmental council on pandemic prevention, countries setting mutually-agreed goals or targets regarding the environment, animals and people, and reducing zoonotic disease risk in the international wildlife trade by forming intergovernmental 'health and trade' partnerships will also reduce the risks substantially.

Pandemic

- According to the WHO, a pandemic is declared when a new disease for which people do not have immunity spreads around the world beyond expectations.

Epidemic

- An epidemic is a large outbreak, one that spreads among a population or region. It is less severe than pandemic due to a limited area of spread.

Enhanced Version of Pinaka Mk-1 Missile

Recently, an enhanced version of the Pinaka Mark (Mk)-1 missile was successfully flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.



Key Points

- Background: The enhanced version of the Pinaka Mk-1 system was taken up to achieve longer-range performance compared to the earlier design with lesser length.
- Development: The design and development has been carried out by Pune-based DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) laboratories - Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL).

Significance:

- The Enhanced Pinaka Mk-1 will eventually replace the Pinaka Mk-1 missiles, which are currently used by regiments of the Indian Army along India's frontiers with China and Pakistan.
- While the Mark-1 has a range of 38 km, the enhanced version of Mark-1 has a range of 45 km and some key additional features.
- The latest test is in continuation of a number of missile trials conducted by the DRDO in the last two months.
- The test comes months after the Ministry of Defence (MoD) announced that its acquisition wing signed contracts with three Indian private companies for supply of six regiments of Pinaka Rocket System, to be deployed along borders with Pakistan and China.
- The MoD had said that the induction would be completed by 2024. These six Pinaka Regiments would comprise 114 Launchers with Automated Gun Aiming and Positioning System (AGAPS), 45 command posts and 330 vehicles.

Pinaka Missile

- Development: The development of the Pinaka multi-barrel rocket systems was started by the DRDO in the late 1980s, as an alternative to the Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher systems of Russian make called the 'Grad', which are still used by some regiments.
- After successful tests of Pinaka Mark-1 in the late 1990, it was first used successfully in the battlefield during the 1999 Kargil War. Subsequently, multiple regiments of the system came up over the 2000s.

Features:

- The Pinaka, a multi-barrel rocket-launcher (MBRL) system named after Shiva's bow, can fire a salvo of 12 rockets over a period of 44 seconds.
- One battery of Pinaka system consists of six launch vehicles, accompanied by loader systems, radar and links with network-based systems and a command post. One battery can neutralise an area of 1 km by 1 km.
- As a key tactic of long-range artillery battle, the launchers have to 'shoot and scoot' to ensure they themselves do not become the targets, especially being detectable due to its back blast.
- Multiple Variants: DRDO has also developed and successfully tested the Mk-II and guided variants of the Pinaka, which has a range of around 60 km, while the Guided Pinaka system has a range of 75 km and has integrated navigation, control and guidance system to improve the end accuracy and enhance the range.
- The navigation system of Guided Pinaka missile is also aided by the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**Gulf Cooperation Council and India**

Recently, India had a virtual meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a leading regional organisation comprising almost all Arab countries.

Key Points

- Indian Workers Want to Return to Arab Countries: India has asked the members of the GCC to facilitate the return of Indians who want to resume work with the relaxing of Covid-19-related restrictions. This can happen through sustainable travel bubble arrangements.
- More than eight million Indians live and work in West Asia, with a majority of them within the region covered by the GCC, which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- 'Transport Bubbles' or 'Air Travel Arrangements' are temporary arrangements between two countries aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular international flights are suspended as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. They are reciprocal in nature, meaning airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits.

- Cooperation: Both sides affirmed their commitment to reform multilateral institutions to reflect the realities of the 21st century and work together to address contemporary challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, sustainable development and terrorism.
- The GCC welcomed India's inclusion in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member from January 2021.
- India assured continuing the flow of food, medicines and essential items to the Gulf region. Supply chains from India to the Gulf were not disrupted despite the lockdowns during the pandemic.

Gulf Cooperation Council

- GCC was established by an agreement concluded in 1981 among Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives.
- The structure of the GCC consists of the Supreme Council (the highest authority), the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General. The Secretariat is located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- It is a political, economic, social, and regional organisation according to its charter.



India's Relations with the GCC

- Political: The governments of the GCC members are India-friendly and Indian-friendly.
- The Prime Minister of India has received the 'Order of Zayed', the highest civilian order of the UAE and the 'King Hamad Order of the Renaissance', the third-highest civilian order of Bahrain.
- In the recent past, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have not adopted hostile posture to India's domestic developments such as removing the special status for Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370.
- Economic: The GCC states are among India's key suppliers of energy, and annual remittances from Indians in these countries are worth an estimated USD 4.8 billion.
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia are India's third and fourth-largest trading partners respectively and the total bilateral trade of the GCC countries with India for the year 2018-19 stood at USD 121.34 billion.
- UAE also features in the top 10 sources of FDI inflows into India.

Security:

- Both India and the GCC are members of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- Apart from the participation of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, and others in India's mega multilateral Milan Exercise, India also has bilateral exercises with most of them.

- India and Oman hold annual bilateral exercises across all three wings of the armed forces (Army Exercise 'Al Najah', Air Force Exercise 'Eastern Bridge', Naval Exercise 'Naseem al Bahr'). Further, Oman has provided the Indian Navy access to the Port of Duqm SEZ which is one of Indian Ocean's largest deep-sea ports.
- India has a bilateral naval (In-UAE BILAT) as well as an air force exercise (Desert Eagle-II) with the UAE.

Way Forward

- The Gulf region has historical, political, economic, strategic and cultural significance for India. India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) can provide a boost to the relations.
- Presently, the GCC region is volatile, thus, India needs to safeguard its large economic, political and demographic stakes in the region.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Hurricane Eta

Recently, Hurricane Eta has hit northeastern Nicaragua with life-threatening storm surge, catastrophic winds and flash flooding occurring over portions of Central America.



Key Points

- Description: It is categorised as a Category 4 hurricane. A Category 4 storm has wind speeds between 130-156 mph and can uproot trees and bring down power lines.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale

- Hurricanes are categorized on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, which rates them on a scale of 1 to 5 based on wind speed.
- Hurricanes that reach category three or higher are classified as major hurricanes.
- Origin: Tropical cyclones or hurricanes use warm, moist air as fuel, and therefore form over warm Equatorial water.

Mechanism:

- Low-Pressure Creation: When the warm, moist air rises upward from the surface of the ocean, it creates an area of low air pressure below.
- When this happens, the air from the surrounding areas rushes to fill this place, eventually rising when it becomes warm and moist too.
- An eye forms in the centre. It is the calmest part of the cyclone. Before the wind reaches the centre it gets warmed up and rises upwards.
- When the warm air rises and cools off, the moisture forms clouds. This system of clouds and winds continues to grow and spin.
- This disturbance is fuelled by the ocean's heat and the water that evaporates from its surface.
- Such storm systems rotate faster and faster. Storms that form towards the north of the equator rotate counterclockwise, while those that form to the south spin clockwise because of the rotation of the Earth.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. “The agriculture sector is critical for India from a consistent growth and food security perspective”. Discuss the steps to be taken to revitalise the agricultural sector. (250 words)

Ans.

The agriculture sector is critical for India from a consistent growth and food security perspective as the sector and allied activities account for approximately 55% of India’s workforce and nearly 15% of India’s GDP.

Today, India has come a long way from facing severe food shortages after independence to becoming a net exporter of food. While the agricultural sector has made considerable progress, in India, we still have a long way to go when it comes to global benchmarks in yield, water use efficiency etc.

Main issues faced by the agricultural sector in India:

- **Land Fragmentation:** It creates difficulties for marginal farmers to access credit or new technology, severely affecting farm productivity and their incomes, making them entirely dependent on usurious moneylenders.
- **Worsening soil health:** Rampant use of urea, partly caused by Nutrient Based Subsidy scheme, has led to worsening soil health, the decline in crop response ratio and contamination of surface water.
- **Climate change:** Climate change leads to change in temperature, precipitation pattern, increase in extreme weather conditions etc. which poses a great challenge to agriculture.
- **Dependence on rainfall and climate:** Indian agriculture is heavily dependent on monsoon and ever-increasing global temperature has made agriculture more prone to extreme weather events.
- **Lack of easy credit:** Small scale farmers are in constant need of loans for seeds, fertilizers etc. Due to lack of easy credit from the formal sector and hence take loans from local money lenders who charge high rates of interest which the farmers are unable to pay and are caught in a debt trap.
- **Lack of Mechanisation:** Introduction of latest technology has been limited due to various reasons like accessibility for credit and low awareness.

Steps to revitalise the agricultural sector

- **Need for planned production:** Indian agriculture needs to move from the current fragmented production model, where each farmer produces what he thinks is right, to a planned production at a district level. This can help in reducing the mismatch in supply-demand and price fluctuations.
- **Enhancement of soil nutrition:** To address the problem of worsening soil health, steps must be taken by the government to rationalise the use of fertilizers, promote organic farming and educate farmers.
- **Digital push to improve farming practices:** Digital adoption will be key to improving the reach and delivery of services like agronomy advice, enhance adoption of Precision Agriculture practices and improve price transparency through digital platforms.
- **Easier loans for farmers:** With farmer incomes highly dependent on external factors such as climate change and commodity price fluctuations, it is important to have robust risk management and financial solutions for the farmers.
- **The availability of credit through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and associated crop insurance is one such instrument.**
- **Go for end-to-end integrated supply chain for finished products:** The development of a robust supply chain infrastructure is critical for reducing high post-harvest losses estimated at between 10 and 18% in India. With many intermediaries, processors lose control over the quality of produce as well as traceability.
- **By encouraging private sector investment in processing, exports, and retailing of agriculture produce, we can bring local communities together to achieve economies of scale, encourage standard practices to meet quality specifications for exports including niche products like organic produce.**
- **Cooperative Farming:** Due to fragmented land holdings consolidation of land holdings also becomes important to raise farmer incomes. Farmers can voluntarily come together and pool land to gain the benefits of size. Through consolidation, farmers can reap the economies of scale both in input procurement and output marketing.

Conclusion

- India’s production levels of agriculture and allied segments along with current productivity, infrastructure and processing rates, represent huge untapped opportunities for all players of the agriculture value chain.

- Backed by progressive policies, fiscal incentives and an effective regulatory environment, the Indian agricultural sector can provide a strong thrust to the economic growth momentum of the nation.
- These favourable shifts in the agriculture industry will also lead to a substantial increase in farmer incomes in the country, and safeguard food security for the country's growing population.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Consider the following statements about the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):

1. Members of the Gulf Cooperation Council include Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait.
2. The Secretariat of GCC is located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), consider the following statements:

1. It aims to extend the coverage of branded medicines to reduce the out of pocket expenditure on medicines.
2. The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) **Neither 1 nor 2**

3. Which of the following states come under India's core cold wave zone?

1. Punjab
2. Rajasthan
3. New Delhi
4. Kerala

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 3 and 4 only
- b) **1, 2 and 3 only**
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

4. With reference to Central Vista Redevelopment Project, consider the following statements:

1. The project envisages construction of a new Parliament and Secretariat in Delhi.
2. It is proposed by the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) **1 only**
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 and 2

5. With reference to the National Monsoon Mission, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched to develop a dynamic monsoon prediction system.
2. It was launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences in 2012.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2