

National Mission on Natural Farming:

❖ Context

- Government has formulated the **Natural Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)** by up-scaling the Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP) to promote natural farming on a larger scale across the country.

❖ Concept of Natural Farming:

- Natural Farming can be **defined as “chemical- free farming and livestock based”**.
- Soundly grounded in agro-ecology, it is a **diversified farming** system that integrates crops, trees and livestock, allowing the optimum use of functional biodiversity.
- Natural Farming holds the promise of enhancing farmers’ income while delivering many other benefits, such as restoration of soil fertility & environmental health, & mitigating and/or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Natural Farming builds on **natural or ecological processes** that exist in or around farms.

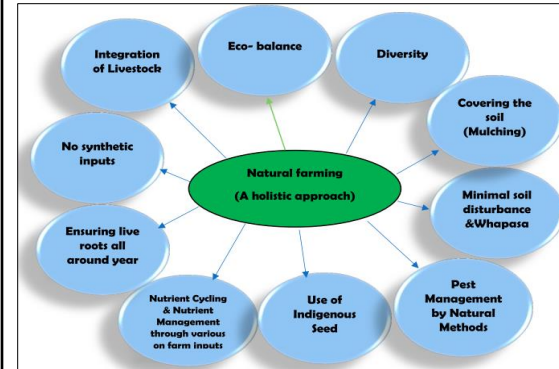
❖ Features of Natural Farming:

- According to natural farming principles, **plants get 98% of their supply of nutrients from the air, water, and sunlight** and the remaining 2% can be fulfilled by good quality soil with plenty of friendly microorganisms.
- **The soil is always supposed** to be covered with organic mulch, which creates humus and encourages the growth of friendly microorganisms.
- Farm made bio-cultures named ‘**Jeevamrit, Beejamrit etc.**’ are added to the soil instead of any fertilizers to improve microflora of soil.
- The system requires cow dung and cow urine obtained from Indian breed cows only.
- In natural farming, **neither chemical nor organic fertilizers are added** to the soil. In fact, no external fertilizers are added to soil or given to plants.

- In natural farming, **decomposition of organic** matter by microbes and earthworms is encouraged right on the soil surface itself, which gradually adds nutrition in the soil, over the period.
- In natural farming **there is no ploughing, no tilling of soil** and no fertilizers, and no weeding is done just the way it would be in natural ecosystems.
- Natural, **farm-made pesticides like Dashparni ark and Neem Astra** are used to control pests & diseases.
- **Weeds are considered essential** and used as living or dead mulch layer, multi-cropping is encouraged over single crop method.

❖ Current Scenario of Natural Farming in India:

- **There are several states practicing** Natural Farming. Prominent among them are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.



- **Till now 6.5 lakh ha. Area** is covered under natural farming in India. Different State governments are promoting natural farming through various schemes.

Legal Guarantee on Minimum Support Prices (MSP)

❖ Context

- Recently, members of a farmer organisation squatted on railway tracks in Punjab to **demand a legal guarantee on MSP.**

❖ Key Highlights:

- There is **currently no statutory backing for MSP prices**, nor any law mandating their enforcement.
- Farmer unions want **MSP based on a C2+50% formula** “should be made a **legal entitlement for all agricultural produce.**”
- So that every farmer of the country can be guaranteed at least the MSP announced by the government **for their entire crop.**
- The government only procures about a third of wheat and rice crops at MSP rates (of which half is bought in Punjab and Haryana alone), and 10%-20% of select pulses and oilseeds.
- According to the **Shanta Kumar Committee’s 2015 report**, only 6% of the farm households sell wheat and rice to the government at MSP rates.

❖ Minimum Support Prices:

- The MSP is a **minimum price guarantee** that acts as a safety net or insurance for farmers when they sell particular crops.

- These crops are **procured by government agencies** at a promised price to farmers and the MSP cannot be altered in any given situation.
- **A total of 23 crops are procured under MSP.**
- The MSP is set by the central government for select crops, based on **recommendations it receives from the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP).**
- MSP based on a calculation of **at least one-and-a-half (1.5) times** the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
- The **present MSP** has been calculated based on the A2+FL method.
 - **A2+FL=** It covers actual **paid-out costs plus an imputed value of unpaid family labor.**
 - 1.5 times MSP Formula = 1.5 times the A2+FL costs.
- **C2 Formula**
 - Farm unions are demanding that a comprehensive cost calculation (C2) must also include **capital assets and the rentals and interest forgone on owned land** as recommended by the National Commission for Farmers.

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- **As of now, CACP recommends MSPs of 23 commodities**, which comprise.
 - 7 cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi).
 - 5 pulses (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil).
 - 7 oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, seasmum, sunflower, safflower, niger seed).
 - 4 commercial crops (copra, sugarcane, cotton and raw jute).

Royal Bengal Tiger

❖ Context

- Recently, a Royal Bengal tiger was found dead in Assam's **Orang National Park**.

❖ Royal Bengal Tiger

- **About**
 - Royal Bengal Tigers are also known as Indian Tiger and Bengal Tiger.
 - They constitute a large population of tiger families in the world.
 - **Scientific Name:** Panthera tigris tigris.
- **Habitat and Distribution:**
 - Royal Bengal Tiger lives mostly in the dense forest of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal.
 - Together, these countries have more than 80% of the world's Tiger Population.
- **Threats:**
 - Hunting, Poaching, Urbanization, Habitat loss, and the Illegal Wildlife Trade.
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List-** Endangered.
 - **WPA 1972-** Schedule I.
 - **CITES-** Appendix I.
- **Conservation:**
 - India is home to 53 tiger reserves spread across 18 states & the last tiger census of 2018 showed a rise in the tiger population.
 - India **achieved the target of doubling the tiger population four years ahead** of schedule (2022) of the **St. Petersburg Declaration** on tiger conservation.
 - The Govt. of India had launched **“Project Tiger”** on 1st April 1973 to promote conservation of the tiger.
 - **National Tiger Conservation Authority-** It is a **statutory body** under the MoEFCC and was established in 2005 following the **recommendations of the Tiger Task Force**.
- ❖ **About Orang National Park:**
 - Also known as **Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park**.
 - It is **located on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River**.
 - The **Pachnoi river and the Dhansiri rivers flow** along the eastern and western boundaries of Orang National Park respectively. **Both these rivers are tributaries of the Brahmaputra**.
 - It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1985 but was declared as National Park in 1999.
 - It is also known as the **mini Kaziranga National Park** (IUCN site) since the two parks have a similar landscape made up of marshes, streams, and grasslands.

News in Between the Lines

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)



❖ Context

- Recently, The Gujarat government signed an agreement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to conduct the **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)** test for students of government schools.

❖ Key Highlights:




- The PISA measures **15-year-olds' ability to use reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges**.
- It also tests students of this age group in **“critical thinking, problem solving and effective communication**.
- **Gujarat is the first state** in the country to sign such an agreement.

❖ About OECD:

- OECD was **established on Dec. 14, 1960**, by 18 European nations, plus the United States and Canada.
- **Headquarter- Paris, France**.
- It is a **group of 38 member** countries that discuss & develop economic and social policy.
- **Members of the OECD are typically democratic countries** that support free-market economies.
- Most OECD members are **high-income economies** with a **very high Human Development Index (HDI)** and are regarded as developed countries.
- The OECD member states collectively comprised 62.2% of global nominal GDP (US\$49.6 trillion) & 42.8% of global GDP (\$54.2 trillion) at purchasing power parity in 2017.
- The stated goal of OECD is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all.




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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OECD is an official Permanent observer to the United Nations and is referred to as a think-tank or as a monitoring group. • India is one of the many non-member economies with which the OECD has working relationships in addition to its member countries.
<p>Contesting Two Seats in One Poll</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recently, The Supreme Court refused to set aside a provision in the election law which allows candidates to contest polls from two constituencies simultaneously. ❖ Key Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The petitioner had sought the court to declare Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act invalid and ultra vires. • SC said that this is a policy matter and an issue concerning political democracy. It is for the Parliament to take a call. • Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act (RPA). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It permits a candidate to contest any election (parliamentary, state assembly, biennial council, or by-elections) from up to two constituencies. ▪ The provision was introduced in 1996. ▪ Prior to this provision there was no bar on the number of constituencies from which a candidate could contest. ▪ Section 70 of RPA states that if a person is elected to more than one seat in either House of Parliament or in the House or either House of the Legislature of a State, then, unless within the prescribed time he resigns all but one of the seats all the seats shall become vacant.
<p>Deer Could Be Reservoir Of Old Coronavirus Variants</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The alpha and gamma variants of the coronavirus continued to circulate and evolve in white-tailed deer, even after they stopped spreading widely among people, a new study suggests. ❖ What's The Link between Deer and Coronavirus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous studies of deer have suggested humans have repeatedly introduced the coronavirus into white-tailed deer populations in the United States and Canada and that deer can spread the virus to one another. • Scientists are not sure how people are passing the virus to deer, but they have speculated that it might happen when people feed deer or deer encounter human trash or waste. • The scale of the risk that infected deer pose to humans remains unclear. Scientists have documented one case that most likely resulted from deer-to-human transmission in Ontario. • They have noted that hunters and others who have regular contact with the animals could potentially catch the virus from them.
<p>SANT GURU RAVIDAS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Prime Minister pays tributes to Sant Ravidas on his Jayanti. ❖ Who was Sant Ravidas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shri Guru Sant Ravidas Ji was a great Saint, philosopher, poet, social reformer, and follower of God in India during the 15th century. • He was one of the most famous and leading stars of the nirguna sampradaya and was one of the prominent leaders of the North Indian Bhakti movement. • He had given a variety of spiritual and social messages through his great writings of poetry to his lovers, followers, and peoples of the society to reform their minds and show their boundless love towards God. • Sant Guru Ravidas Ji is considered as a spiritual Guru of Meera Bai who was the queen of Chittoor and daughter of Rao Dudaji. • He spread a message that “God created man and not man created God” means everyone is created by God and has equal rights on this earth. • His padas, devotional songs, and other writings (around 41 verses) are mentioned in the Sikh Scriptures, Guru Granth Sahib (compiled by the 5th Sikh's Guru, Arjan Dev).

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<p>HAL's Helicopter Factory</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prime Minister to dedicate to the nation HAL's Helicopter Factory at Tumakuru, Karnataka. ❖ Key Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greenfield Helicopter Factory, spread across 615 acres of land, is planned with a vision to become a one-stop solution for all helicopter requirements of the country. • It is India's largest helicopter manufacturing facility and will initially produce Light Utility Helicopters (LUHs). • The LUH is an indigenously designed and developed 3-ton class, single engine multipurpose utility helicopter with unique features of high maneuverability. • Initially, the factory will produce around 30 helicopters per year and can be enhanced to 60 and then 90 per year in a phased manner. • The proximity of the factory, with the existing HAL facilities in Bengaluru, will boost the aerospace manufacturing ecosystem in the region and support skill & infrastructure development such as schools, colleges and residential areas.
<p>PLASTINDIA 2023</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Health and Family Welfare launches PLASTINDIA 2023. ❖ Key Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is projected to contribute more than 10% of the incremental global growth in Petrochemicals over the next decades". ❖ About PLASTINDIA 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLASTINDIA refers to a series of exhibitions under the Plastindia Foundation, which will hold the 11th International Plastics Exhibition, Conference and Convention. • The exhibition will provide opportunities for employment generation, facilitate the growth of the Indian plastic industry & make India a hub for sourcing plastic for global needs.
<p>Great Indian Bustard</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In view of recent mortalities of Great Indian Bustard (GIB), a Supreme Court constituted committee has requested the court to pass directions prioritising underground laying of power transmission lines. ❖ About Great Indian Bustard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's a flagship grassland species, representing the health of the grassland ecology. ▪ It is one of the largest flying birds in the world, and India's heaviest flying bird. ▪ The male bird weighs upto 12-15 kg and female bird up to 5-8 kg. • Distribution & Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Great Indian Bustard found mainly in the Indian subcontinent. ▪ Its population of about 150 in Rajasthan accounts for 95% of its total world population. ▪ Less than 10 birds each in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. • Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intensive agricultural practices, Laying of power lines and industrialisation, Poaching. • Conservation Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972- Schedule I. ▪ CITES- Appendix I. ▪ IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered. • Side Note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The captive breeding of GIBs was taken up in the DNP through a project executed by the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India in 2019. ▪ Last year, the Supreme Court had asked the ministry of environment and forest, to explore the possibility of having a 'project Great Indian Bustard (GIB)', on the lines of 'Project Tiger'. ▪ According to a 2021 report of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), GIB are on the verge of extinction with hardly 50 to 249 of them alive.