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WEDNESDAY, 01st OCTOBER 2025

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1. Gokul Jalashay and Udaipur Jheel

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- **Mains** - GS 3 -Environment

Why in the news?

- Gokul Jalashay and Udaipur Jheel, two wetlands from Bihar got designated as Ramsar Sites.

Gokul Jalashay

- **Location:** Located in Buxar District
- **Features:**
  - ➔ An oxbow lake situated along the southern margin of the Ganga River.
  - ➔ Serves as a natural flood cushion for adjoining villages and supports more than 50 species of birds.
  - ➔ Source of livelihood to local people through fishing, agriculture, and irrigation activities.
  - ➔ The catchment area is ritually cleaned by villagers every year during a community festival.

Udaipur Jheel

- **Location:** Located in West Champaran District
- **Features:**
  - ➔ An oxbow lake encircling a village
  - ➔ Supports around 280 plant species, notably *Alysicarpus roxburghianus*, an Indian endemic.
  - ➔ Serves as a key wintering habitat for 35 migratory bird species, including the **vulnerable Common Pochard**.

Ramsar Sites:

- Ramsar sites are the wetlands of International importance, recognised under the Ramsar Convention- promoting conservation and sustainable use.
- India became a party in the Ramsar Convention in 1982.
- Currently there are 93 Ramsar sites in India, making it the top 3rd country in the world.
- Tamil Nadu leads in India in terms of the number of Ramsar sites, followed by Uttar Pradesh

2. Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme

- **Prelims** - Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Economy

Why in the news?

- The Government has extended the RoDTEP incentive scheme for exporters till 31st March 2026.

Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme

- **What is it?:**
  - ➔ The scheme aims to **reimburse embedded taxes and duties** that are not refunded under any other mechanism, thereby making Indian exports more competitive.
  - ➔ It was introduced on **1st January 2021**, replacing the **MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme)** after WTO compliance issues.
- **Why was it enacted?:**
  - ➔ Indian exporters faceD hidden, non-refunded taxes such as- Electricity duty, VAT on fuel used in transportation, Mandi tax, stamp duty, and Embedded Central/State levies not covered under GST.
  - ➔ WTO ruling (2019) against MEIS (considered a **prohibited export subsidy**) led to a shift towards WTO-compliant RoDTEP.
- **Key Features:**
  - ➔ The refunds are issued in the form of **transferable electronic scrips / credits** held in a digital ledger.
  - ➔ The process is digitized: exporters declare the RoDTEP claim in the shipping bill, the claim is processed via customs, and credit scrips are generated via **ICEGATE portal**.
  - ➔ The scrips can be used for paying eligible customs duties, rebates, or even transferred to other importers.
  - ➔ Rates are Notified by the Ministry of Commerce for eligible sectors (generally 0.5%–4.3% of FOB value).

- ➔ Covers **85%+ of tariff lines**, including labour-intensive sectors (textiles, leather, gems, agriculture, marine, handicrafts).

- **Implementation Mechanism:**
  - ➔ Exporter claims refund at the time of **shipping bill** filing.
  - ➔ Customs verifies and credits rebate in **electronic ledger**.
  - ➔ Exporters can use credit for **basic customs duty payment** or transfer it to another importer.
- **Advantages:**
  - ➔ Avoids the burden of compounding taxes and hidden taxes on Exporters.
  - ➔ Makes Indian exports **cost-competitive** in global markets.
  - ➔ Provides a **level playing field** vis-à-vis other exporting nations.
  - ➔ Improves **liquidity** for exporters, especially MSMEs.
  - ➔ Ensures **WTO-compatibility** (not a direct subsidy, but tax remission).
- **Challenges:**
  - ➔ **Limited coverage:** Certain sectors excluded initially (steel, chemicals, pharma).
  - ➔ **Low rebate rates:** Exporters demand higher rates to match actual embedded taxes.
  - ➔ **Budget constraints:** Allocation often less than industry expectations.
  - ➔ **Complexity in rate fixation:** Lack of transparency in calculation methodology.
- **Way Forward:**
  - ➔ Expand coverage to **all sectors** with realistic refund rates.
  - ➔ Periodic review of **rates and sectors** in consultation with exporters.
  - ➔ Strengthen digital systems for faster credit issuance.
  - ➔ Integrate with broader **National Trade Facilitation Action Plan**.

3. Philippines

- **Prelims -** Location of Philippines
- **Mains -** GS 1 - Geography

Philippines

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Why in the news?

- A Strong Earthquake took place in Central Philippines causing loss of 22 lives and damage to properties.

Philippines

- **Location**: It is an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia which is situated in the western Pacific Ocean
- **Capital:** Manila
- **Bordering Waterbodies**: South China Sea, Philippine Sea, Celebes Sea.
- **Maritime Border Countries**: Taiwan, Japan, Palau, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and China.
- **Highest mountain:** Mount Apo
- **Geographical Significance:** Situated on the western fringes of the **Pacific Ring of Fire** and it is a seismically active zone
- **Climate:** T**ropical maritime climate** that is usually hot and humid.

- **International Cooperation**
  - Philippines is a **founding member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)**, and is a member of the East Asia Summit, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Group of 24, and the Non-Aligned Movement.
  - The Philippines has claims in the Spratly Islands which overlap with claims by China, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam

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4. Polar Geoengineering

- **Prelims -** Polar Geoengineering
- **Mains -** GS 3 - Environment

Why in the news?

- Researchers and Scientists opined that Polar Geoengineering projects can lead to severe environmental damage with far-reaching global consequences.

Polar Geoengineering

- **What is it?:**
  - ➔ **Geoengineering:** Deliberate large-scale interventions in Earth's climate system to counteract global warming.
  - ➔ **Polar Geoengineering:** A sub-set of geoengineering strategies specifically targeting the **Arctic and Antarctic regions** to slow ice melt, preserve permafrost, and regulate polar climate feedback.
- **Rationale behind:**
  - ➔ Polar regions are warming **4 times faster** than the global average (Arctic amplification).
  - ➔ Melting of ice sheets (Greenland, Antarctica) contributes to **sea-level rise**.
  - ➔ Permafrost thaw releases **methane & CO_2**, accelerating climate change.
  - ➔ Loss of sea ice reduces **albedo effect**, causing further warming.
- **Key Techniques of Polar Geoengineering:**
  - ➔ **Solar Radiation Management (SRM):**
    - ★ **Marine Cloud Brightening:** Spraying sea salt into clouds to reflect more sunlight.
    - ★ **Stratospheric Aerosol Injection:** Releasing reflective particles (sulfates, calcium carbonate) into the stratosphere above poles.
    - ★ **Ice Brightening:** Spreading reflective microbeads or powders on ice surfaces to increase albedo.
  - ➔ **Cryosphere Preservation:**
    - ★ **Artificial Ice Thickening:** Using pumps to spray seawater over ice sheets during winter to refreeze.
    - ★ **Glacier Stabilisation:** Building underwater walls or berms at glacier grounding lines (e.g., Thwaites Glacier, Antarctica).

★ **Geoengineering Permafrost:** Covering tundra with reflective materials or reintroducing grazing animals to compact snow and slow thaw.

➔ **Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) in Polar Regions:**

★ Enhancing **ocean fertilization** (e.g., iron fertilization in Southern Ocean) to stimulate phytoplankton growth and carbon sequestration.

- **Potential Benefits:**
  - ➔ Slows **ice sheet collapse** and **sea-level rise**.
  - ➔ Reduces **methane emissions** from thawing permafrost.
  - ➔ Restores **albedo effect** and reduces global heat absorption.
  - ➔ Acts as a **temporary climate emergency measure** while mitigation continues.
- **Challenges and Risks:**
  - ➔ **Environmental Risks:** Unintended side effects on polar ecosystems, marine chemistry, or weather patterns.
  - ➔ **Moral Hazard:** Reduces incentive for emission cuts.
  - ➔ **Uneven Impacts:** SRM could alter monsoons, precipitation, and global climate systems.
  - ➔ **Governance Vacuum:** No international legal framework to regulate geoengineering.
  - ➔ **Technical Feasibility:** Large-scale deployment remains untested and costly.
- **Way Forward:**
  - ➔ More **scientific research** and small-scale field trials with strict safeguards.
  - ➔ Establish a global **governance framework** under the UN or IPCC.
  - ➔ Integrate geoengineering as **supplementary**, not a substitute, to emission reduction.
  - ➔ Foster **international collaboration** through the Arctic Council, Antarctic Treaty, and Paris Agreement frameworks.

5. Farmers' suicide in India

- **Prelims** - Farmers' suicide in India
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Indian Society, GS 3 - Economy

Why in the news?

- The latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau recorded 10786 farmer suicides in 2023, most of which occured in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Farmers' suicide in India

- **Causes for Farmers' suicides:**
  - ➔ **Economic Factors:**
    - ★ **Indebtedness** due to dependence on informal moneylenders, high interest rates.
    - ★ **Crop failure** due to droughts, floods, pest attacks, climate change.
    - ★ Volatile **market prices** & inadequate MSP coverage.
    - ★ Rising **input costs** (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) vs. low crop prices.
  - ➔ **Institutional factors:**
    - ★ Inadequate **institutional credit** penetration.
    - ★ Insurance schemes (e.g., PMFBY) often fail to provide timely compensation.
    - ★ Lack of effective extension services and support mechanisms.
  - ➔ **Socio-Cultural Factors:**
    - ★ Pressure of **family responsibilities**, dowry, education expenses.
    - ★ Lack of alternate employment opportunities in rural areas.
    - ★ **Social stigma** of indebtedness causing psychological stress.
  - ➔ **Policy and Structural Issues:**
    - ★ Skewed focus on **cash crops** (cotton, sugarcane): High risk of failure.
    - ★ Poor irrigation coverage causing overdependence on monsoon.
    - ★ Weak implementation of **land reforms** and marginalisation of small farmers.
- **Government Initiatives:**
  - ➔ **Credit & Debt Relief:**
    - ★ Kisan Credit Card (KCC).
    - ★ Agricultural Debt Waiver & Debt Relief Scheme (2008).

★ Interest subvention schemes.

➔ **Insurance & Risk Mitigation:**

★ Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY, 2016).

★ National Crop Insurance Programme.

➔ **Income & Support:**

★ Minimum Support Price (MSP).

★ Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN).

★ Soil Health Card, PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).

➔ **Welfare Schemes:**

★ Atal Pension Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, National Social Assistance Programme.

- **Judicial & Committee Observations:**
  - ➔ **M.S. Swaminathan Committee (2006):** Recommended MSP = C2 (comprehensive cost) + 50%.
  - ➔ **Supreme Court (2017):** Expressed concern over high farmer suicides; urged better credit and insurance coverage.
  - ➔ **NCRB classification:** Helps identify vulnerable states/districts for policy targeting.
- **Challenges in Addressing the Issue:**
  - ➔ Debt waivers are **short-term relief**, not structural reform.
  - ➔ Insurance schemes face **delays, low awareness, high premiums**.
  - ➔ MSP benefits are concentrated in a few **crops & states**.
  - ➔ Mental health support in rural areas is negligible.
- **Way Forward:**
  - ➔ **Economic Support:** Diversify cropping patterns, strengthen MSP coverage, promote Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).
  - ➔ **Institutional Credit:** Expand cooperative and rural banking reach, reduce dependency on moneylenders.
  - ➔ **Insurance Reform:** Timely claim settlement, farmer-friendly premium structure.
  - ➔ **Mental Health Services:** Helplines, counselling, community-based support.
  - ➔ **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Drought-resistant seeds, micro-irrigation, watershed management.

6. Amazon Rainforests

- **Prelims -** Amazon Rainforests
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- A new study revealed that the trees in Amazon rainforests are getting bigger owing to the climate change phenomenon.

Amazon Rainforests

- **Location:** Spans across 9 countries in South America (largest portion in Brazil, ~60%).
- **Size:** ~6.7 million sq. km; largest tropical rainforest in the world.
- **Rivers:** Drained by the Amazon River
- **Ecological Significance:**
  - ➔ **Biodiversity Hotspot:** Home to ~10% of world's known species; includes jaguars, pink dolphins, anacondas, harpy eagles, and countless endemic plant species.
  - ➔ **Carbon Sink:** Absorbs ~2 billion tonnes of CO_2 annually, crucial for climate regulation.
  - ➔ **Oxygen Production:** Produces ~20% of the world's oxygen (called "Lungs of the Earth").
  - ➔ **Hydrological Cycle:** Generates 50–75% of its own rainfall via evapotranspiration, influencing global weather systems.
- **Socio-Economic Importance:**
  - ➔ **Indigenous Communities:** ~400 indigenous groups rely on forest resources for livelihood and culture.
  - ➔ **Economic Uses:** Timber, medicinal plants, fruits, nuts, fisheries, and eco-tourism.
  - ➔ **Global Trade:** Source of rubber, cocoa, and other commodities.
- **Threats:**
  - ➔ **Deforestation:** Agriculture (soybean, cattle ranching), logging, mining, and infrastructure projects.
  - ➔ **Climate Change:** Risk of "tipping point" - transition from rainforest to savanna ecosystem.
  - ➔ **Fires:** Human-induced and climate-driven forest fires.
  - ➔ **Illegal Activities:** Gold mining, wildlife trafficking.

- **Conservation Initiatives:**
  - ➔ **Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO, 1995)** – regional collaboration among Amazonian countries.
  - ➔ **UN-REDD+ Programme** – incentivises reducing emissions from deforestation.
  - ➔ **Brazil's Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Amazon (PPCDAm)**.
  - ➔ **International Pressure** – G7 pledges, EU deforestation-free trade rules, etc.