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Current Affairs - 10 August 2025

WHAT IS PARTHENIUM?



- Parthenium hysterophorus L., commonly known as **carrot weed, white top, or congress grass** in India, is an **herbaceous, erect, and annual plant** belonging to the family Asteraceae (compositae).
- It is a **poisonous, pernicious, problematic, allergic, and aggressive weed** posing a serious threat to human beings and livestock.
- In India, this weed has been considered as one of the greatest **sources of dermatitis, asthma, nasal-dermal and nasal-bronchial types of diseases**.
- Besides ill effects, it **also causes** several other problems, like **blockage of common pathways, and reduces the aesthetic values of parks, gardens, and residential colonies**.
- It is a **nuisance on roadsides** and railway tracks, vacant **lands, wastelands**, industrial areas, and on the sides of open drainage systems and irrigation canals, besides **invading agricultural crops, orchards, and forest areas**.
- It is most **popularly known as gajar ghas** due to its appearance like a carrot plant.

The **origin** of parthenium is considered to be from **Mexico, America, Trinidad, and Argentina**.

- After the noticeable **occurrence of parthenium in Pune (Maharashtra) in 1955**, it has **spread like a wildfire throughout India**.
- At present parthenium has invaded about **35 million hectares of land in India**.

It mainly **spreads through seeds**.

- A **single plant can produce about 5000 – 25000 seeds**.
- The seeds are very small in size and light in weight.



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KEY FACTS ABOUT POBITORA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:



- It is located in the eastern region of Guwahati, **Assam**.
- It was established in 1998 and covers an area of 48.81 square kilometres.
- The Sanctuary consists of the **Rajamayong Reserve Forest and Pobitora Reserve Forest**.

Flora:

- **72%** of Pabitora consists of the **wet savannah** of *Arundo donax*, *Erianthus ravennae*, *Phragmites karka*, *Imperata cylindrica*, and *Saccharum spp*.
- **Water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) is a major problem**, especially to waterfowl, as it forms thick mats on the water surface.

Fauna:

- Pobitora is mainly famous for its great Indian One-horned rhinoceros.
- It is known for holding the **highest density of Greater One Horned Rhinoceros in the country**.
- Besides rhinoceros, the other animals are **leopard, wild boar, Barking deer, wild buffalo**,
- It is also home to more than 2000 migratory birds and various reptiles.

NATIONAL ORGAN AND TISSUE TRANSPLANT ORGANIZATION (NOTTO)



National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization
DGHS, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GOI

- It is a **national-level organization** set up under the **Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in New Delhi**.
- The establishment of NOTTO is **mandated as per the Transplantation of human Organs and Tissues (Amendment) Act of 2011**.



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- It functions as the **apex centre for all India** activities of coordination and networking for:
 - **procurement and distribution of organs and tissues; and**
 - **registry of Organs and Tissues Donation and Transplantation** in the country
- It has the following **two divisions**:
 - **National Human Organ and Tissue Removal and Storage Network**
 - **National Biomaterial Centre**

The **following activities are undertaken at National Level** by NOTTO to facilitate Organ Transplantation in the safest way in the shortest possible time and to collect data and develop and publish National Registry.

- **Lay down policy guidelines and protocols** for various functions.
 - **Network with** similar regional and state-level **organizations**.
 - All **registry data from States** and regions would be **compiled and published**.
 - **Creating awareness and promotion** of deceased organ donation and transplantation activities.
 - **Co-ordination** from procurement of organs and tissues to transplantation **when organs are allocated outside the region**.
 - Dissemination of information to all concerned organizations, hospitals, and individuals.
 - **Monitoring of transplantation activities** in the regions and States and **maintaining a data-bank** in this regard.
 - To **assist the states** in data management, organ transplant surveillance & Organ transplant and Organ Donor registry.
 - **Consultancy support on the legal and non-legal aspects** of donation and transplantation
 - Coordinate and **organize training** for various cadres of workers.
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DECLINE OF MAOISTS IN THE RED CORRIDOR

- Left Wing Extremism (LWE), or Naxalism, is among India's most serious internal security challenges.
- Rooted in **socio-economic inequalities and guided by Maoist ideology**, it has historically targeted security forces, infrastructure, and democratic institutions.
- Emerging from the **Naxalbari movement in 1967**, it spread across the "Red Corridor," affecting states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and others.
- While claiming to fight for marginalized tribal communities, Maoists have engaged in armed violence, extortion, infrastructure destruction, and recruitment of civilians, including children.

Decline of Maoist Influence in India

- Once a formidable internal security threat, the Maoist insurgency has shrunk from nearly 180 districts in the late 2000s to just 18 today.
- Incidents of Left-Wing Extremism have fallen by over 50% between 2004–14 and 2014–23, with fatalities dropping nearly 70%.
- Naxal violence peaked in 2010 with 1,936 incidents and 1,005 deaths but declined to 374 incidents and 150 deaths by 2024.

Key Reasons Behind the Decline

- **Targeted Development and Security Operations**
 - Government-led development schemes, along with sustained counterinsurgency efforts, have weakened Maoist control in their former strongholds.
 - Landmark security operations, such as the 21-day offensive in Narayanpur, have significantly reduced their operational capacity.
- **Leadership Crisis and Strategic Missteps**
 - The resignation of long-time leader Muppala Lakshmana Rao (Ganapathy) in 2018 marked a turning point.



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- His successor, Basava Raju, relied heavily on military offensives over political outreach, alienating the support base.
- Raju's death in 2025, reportedly due to internal betrayal, deepened the leadership vacuum.
- **Internal Rifts and Political Isolation**
 - Internal divisions, highlighted by surrendered members, have fragmented the organisation.
 - The CPI (Maoist) Politburo is now believed to have only four active members, further eroding decision-making strength.
- **Loss of Public Support**
 - In areas like Dandakaranya, Maoists prioritised military preparedness over local development, causing the very communities they claimed to protect to suffer.
 - Younger tribals and peasants increasingly favour education, jobs, and mainstream integration over armed struggle.

Challenges Ahead

- Critics claim that the persistence of Naxalism is the result of a systemic “**protection ecosystem**”:
 - political patronage enabled its rise;
 - state inaction allowed entrenchment, and
 - intellectual advocacy granted moral cover.
 - Reducing it to a fight for tribal rights concealed its violence, coercion, and extortion, allowing political forces to appear humanitarian while enabling terror.
 - As the Centre targets **elimination of the insurgency by 31 March 2026**, the real challenge lies in confronting those in politics, academia, and activism who enabled and legitimised Naxalism.
 - Without this reckoning, security forces may win operational battles, but the war of narratives will remain unresolved.
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HOW AI IS TRANSFORMING INDIA'S IT INDUSTRY

- While often portrayed as AI “cutting jobs,” the current upheaval in India’s IT sector reflects a deeper, AI-led transformation.
- According to industry experts, AI is reshaping software development and IT services by driving unprecedented efficiencies, prompting a rethinking of business models, talent strategies, and the nature of work itself.
 - AI’s ability to boost efficiency across the entire software development lifecycle lies at the core of this change.

AI’s Rising Role in Driving IT Efficiency

- With cost-optimisation dominating new deals, AI is helping companies showcase efficiency and win investor confidence.
- Experts note that AI-powered coding assistants, code generators, and intelligent debuggers are boosting productivity by over 30%.
- Its impact is especially strong in testing and maintenance, where AI reduces human error and improves accuracy through data-driven insights, making software testing faster and more reliable.

AI’s Growing Influence on Jobs and Work Structures

- AI is rapidly integrating into global enterprises, with over \$1 trillion expected to be spent on its development in 2025.
- From generative chatbots to intelligent automation, it is reshaping customer service, decision-making, and organisational structures.
- Automation and low-code platforms enable fewer employees to accomplish more, impacting hiring trends.
- This mirrors cases like **Wells Fargo in the U.S.**, where workforce reductions have been ongoing for years, driven by efficiency gains.

AI Era Opens New Opportunities for Indian IT



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- Global firms face hurdles like outdated infrastructure, poor data quality, and fragmented systems when adopting AI at scale.
- With regulations such as the EU's AI Act requiring responsible and compliant AI, Indian IT companies can step in to clean and organise data, modernise systems, and build compliant solutions.
- This positions Indian firms not as AI's victims, but as key enablers helping global clients adopt it effectively.

TCS Signals Shift Towards an AI-Driven Future

- With over 6,07,000 employees, TCS's recent moves serve as a signal to markets, clients, and staff.
- **For investors**, it reflects disciplined cost optimisation and market adaptation; **for clients**, a commitment to efficient, AI-powered solutions; and **for employees**, the need for continuous upskilling.
- Industry leaders note that India's IT era built on large coding teams for legacy systems is ending.
- The future will belong to lean, AI-native firms tackling complex challenges in sectors like healthcare, defence, fintech, sustainability, and education, where small teams can outperform massive workforces.

Indian Tech Sector Shifts from Scale to Specialisation

- India's IT industry remains a global leader, backed by skilled talent, government digitisation efforts, and a thriving startup ecosystem.
 - While it continues to attract multinational corporations for GCCs, the focus is shifting from sheer scale to specialised expertise and advanced technologies like AI.
 - This transition offers a chance to shed its traditional image and lead in intelligent automation and digital innovation.
 - As AI reshapes workflows and expectations, the sector's core strengths—people, processes, and predictability—face a crucial test.
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FAO FOOD PRICE INDEX

- The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index is a **measure of the monthly** change in international prices of a basket of food commodities.
- It consists of the average of **five commodity group price indices** (cereal, vegetable, dairy, meat and sugar), weighted with the average export shares.
- **Base year:** 2014-16

Key Facts about the Food and Agriculture Organization

- It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.
- Its goal is to **achieve food security** for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
- **Members:** It consists of 195 members – 194 countries and the European Union, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.
- Its sister bodies are **the World Food Programme (WFP)** and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
- **Headquarter:** Rome (Italy)

MANAS HELPLINE



MANAS
मदक पदार्थ निषेध आसूचना केंद्र
National Narcotics Helpline

- **Madak-Padarth Nished Asoochna Kendra (MANAS)** Helpline was launched on 18th July 2024 by the Government of India.
- **Objective:** It empowers **citizens to fight against the drug menace** and to function as a secure, citizen-centric platform to enable anonymous reporting of drug trafficking, illicit cultivation, and related offences.
- **Features of MANAS Helpline:**
 - It also extends support for **counselling and rehabilitation**, thereby strengthening the participation of citizens in combating the drug menace.



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- It is developed as a **unified, secure and bilingual digital platform**, MANAS offers citizens a seamless, confidential and multi-channel interface to report drug-related issues and access rehabilitation resources.
- **Citizens can utilize the MANAS Helpline for:**
 - **Anonymously report any information** related to drug trafficking, storage, manufacturing or cultivation.
 - **Seek counselling and rehabilitation guidance** through integrated transfer to Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE) Helpline 14446.
 - Access awareness resources (posters, videos, brochures) via the MANAS web portal for public outreach.
 - **Engage in awareness activities**, through quizzes, poster-making, and reel-making contests on the MyGov platform, amplifying the Drug-Free Bharat campaign.

S.H.I.N.E. INITIATIVE



- **SHINE** stands for **Science, Health and Innovation for Nextgen Explorers** which is a nationwide **student outreach Program**.
 - This is a unique initiative of **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** to ignite scientific curiosity, foster innovation and **inspire the next generation of health researchers**.
 - The **initiative aimed** to introduce students to the field of health and biomedical research, highlight ICMR's contributions to improving the nation's health, and motivate young learners to pursue careers in science and public health.
- The event drew more than 13,000 students in grades 9-12 from over 300 schools across 39 districts in 16 states and union territories to various ICMR institutes in the country
- The programme included a range of interactive activities such as **guided laboratory tours, research exhibitions, poster walks**, video presentations, and live demonstrations of ongoing scientific work.
- To make the experience more engaging, a mascot named Dr. Curio was introduced as a friendly and relatable guide for the students.