

Amaranthus

- Efforts are underway way to popularise the inclusion of Amaranthus a wide variety of leafy vegetables as part of mixed cropping among farmers in Mysuru.
- Though known to be highly nutritious and still consumed but in a limited quantity it has economic benefits too and farmers can have mul harvest to supplement their income.
- “Amaranthus refers to a wide variety of leafy vegetables including Kirkire Soppu and Dantina Soppu.
- Amaranthus was an excellent source of calcium, magnesium, potassium, vitamin , A, B and C, and an incredible source of vitamin K and the crop offered the most nutrition per calorie than most foods
- Amaranthus is a cosmopolitan genus of annual or short-lived perennial plants collectively known as amaranths.
- Some amaranth species are cultivated as leaf vegetables, pseudo cereals, and ornamental plants.
- Most of the Amaranthus species are summer annual weeds and are commonly referred to as pigweeds.



THE HINDU

Dobbs vs Jackson case

- The U.S. stands at that fraught juncture now, after its Supreme Court, in a 6-3 majority, overturned the 1973 ruling in Roe vs Wade, and took away the constitutional right to abortion.
- In one blow, on June 24, it withdrew from women anywhere in the country their right to reproductive and bodily autonomy.
- With Roe, as well as the 1992 decision in Planned Parenthood vs Casey that upheld Roe, gone, the court returned “the issue of abortion to the people’s elected representatives”.
- States can now decide whether to ban abortion and at what stage in pregnancy and under what circumstances.
- This Supreme Court decision, Dobbs vs Jackson Women’s Health Organization, has in effect divided the U.S. territorially States where

women have the right to abortion and those where they do not.

- Where they do not, women with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, including possibly in some jurisdictions those that endanger the mother's life or are a result of rape or incest, may have no option but to seek medical assistance in other States.
- This needs resources and support structures, and many women will be left with no option other than clandestine, unsafe abortions nearer home.
- Chillingly, there is fear that miscarriages could be subject to criminal investigations.
- It must also alarm Americans that the logic of Dobbs that abortion is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution and is not covered by the landmark 14th Amendment of 1868 that safeguards liberty and has opened the process for other rights to be taken away.

THE HINDU

MSMEs sector

- Micro-, small and medium enterprises (MSME) actually account for over 99% of businesses. MSMEs are the largest employer in India outside of agriculture, employing over 11.1 crore people, or 45% of all workers.

- It is no exaggeration to call MSMEs privately-owned enterprises with less than ₹50 crores in investments in plant and machinery and turnover below ₹250 crores the backbone of the Indian economy.
- Every year on June 27, World MSME Day provides us with the opportunity to appreciate their valuable contribution to job creation and sustainable development across the world.
- The disruption of the pandemic severely impacted MSMEs, especially those in the services sector.
- Their small size and lack of access to resources meant that many were only beginning to mount a fragile recovery just when renewed war, supply shocks, and soaring fuel, food, and fertilizer prices presented a host of new threats. And all of this comes against the backdrop of the ongoing climate crisis, the greatest disruption multiplier of all
- To leverage this opportunity, India needs to create many jobs, especially for the one million young people entering the labor market every month.

Meeting standards

- While some MSMEs operate at the highest industry standards, most do not meet today's standards on productivity, environmental

sustainability, and the health and safety of workers.

- This is further exacerbated by the high degree of informality in the sector, with many enterprises unregistered, and both employers and workers are lacking awareness of and commitment to complying with labor and environmental laws.
- As a result, informal enterprises cannot access formal MSME support and financing nor participate in global value chains that require full compliance with all applicable regulations
- The Government of India has rightly identified the development of the country's MSME ecosystem as a top priority for achieving Atma Nirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).
- India's ambitious "Make in India" campaign aims to catapult the country up the manufacturing value chain to position itself as a global manufacturing hub.
- Initiatives such as the production linked incentives (PLI) schemes and the recently launched zero effect zero defect (ZED) certification are helping to promote and boost the sector.
- To help accelerate this process, the UN system in India is supporting these and other MSME development initiatives at the local, state, and national levels.
- Agencies such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, IFAD, and others are working with MSMEs as they navigate a rapidly changing post-pandemic economic landscape shaped by large-scale transitions, chiefly digitalization, greening and the reorganization of value chains.
- Firstly digitalization on concerns the integration of digital technologies, such as big data, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, in business processes, also known as Industry 4.0.
- With few exceptions, digitalization into smart manufacturing operations is still in its infancy
- Government initiatives such as the Digital Saksham and the interlinking of the Udyam, e-Shram, National Career Service (NCS), and Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portals show the promise of targeted digitalization schemes.
- Secondly, "greening" reduces the environmental impact of MSME operations and fosters cleantech innovation and entrepreneurship to accelerate the transition to a circular and low carbon economy.

- Energy efficiency provides a case in point as business and climate benefits go hand in hand
- Thirdly, to increase the resilience of supply in response to recent shocks, production locations for global value chains are increasingly shifting and diversifying across countries and regions.
- The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is also creating opportunities for self-employment and micro enterprises, with over 7 lakh micro enterprises assisting in becoming economically viable.
- Similarly, ILO, together with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and corporates, are supporting MSMEs in creating and retaining jobs, with over 150 MSMEs having improved productivity, aligned to international standards, and integrated into the global supply chains, and the Start and Improve Your Business program helping over a lakh young people across five States launch enterprises
- In the rapidly changing global value chain ecosystem and to maximize the demographic dividend, MSME owners need to further commit to formalizing their businesses, investing in improved productivity, compliance, and most of all, decent work and jobs for India's aspiring youth.

India and Vietnam

- The furtherance of India's Act East Policy, maritime multilateralism, maritime security outreach, and the building of stronger networks across the Indo-Pacific are some of the key elements which have made New Delhi and Hanoi natural partners.
- The two countries recently deepened bilateral cooperation with the signing of the Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030.
- The Joint Vision Statement is aimed at boosting the scope and scale of the existing defense cooperation between the two nations.
- Both sides undertook extensive deliberations to expand avenues of effective and practicable collaboration in bilateral defense engagements pertaining to regional and global issues.
- The early finalization of the \$500 million Defence Line of Credit extended by India to the latter along with the implementation of existing projects which would complement India's 'Make in India, Make for the world' and Hanoi's defense capabilities were also discussed.
- The two sides also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Logistics Support.
- This is the first agreement of its kind that Hanoi has entered into with any

other country and elevates the standing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) which Hanoi shares with New Delhi since 2016.

- Because of the volume of maritime trade that passes through sea lanes of communication in the Indo-Pacific and potential as well as estimated energy reserves in these waters, maritime cooperation between countries in the region has expanded exponentially.
- Undoubtedly, for India and Vietnam too, the maritime do, in particular, has occupied a central focus.
- Both countries find convergence in their approaches toward the maintenance of stability and security of the Indo-Pacific which has translated into diplomatic and political support in the context of developments within the region.
- The enhanced geostrategic prominence and attendant uncertainties vis-à-vis China's expanding and often abrasive footprints in the Indo-Pacific have resulted in an overall increase in emphasis on cooperative mechanisms and frameworks across the region
- Vietnam has and continues to be one of the most vocal countries with respect to China's periodic transgressions in the South China Sea.
- In India, Vietnam has found an equally uncompromising partner when it comes to the question of violations of freedom of navigation and threats to sovereign maritime territorial rights as enshrined under international maritime law.
- Indeed, it is believed that Hanoi used the term Indo-Pacific for the first time in 2018 in its Joint statement with India.
- New Delhi has supported Vietnam's position in the South China Sea with respect to Beijing's destabilizing actions and coercive tactics backing the verdict of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the case brought by Manila in 2016 and reiterating the irrefutability of the UNCLOS.
- India has also not backed down from continuing ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL)'s oil exploration project in Block 128 (which is within Hanoi's EEZ) despite China's protests.
- In 2020 China's incursion into Ladakh was quickly followed by the deployment of warships by India to the South China Sea in an instance of asymmetrical warfare and signaling that India will not stand down.

THE HINDU

India's abortion law

- How did abortion laws come about in India?

- In the 1960s, in the wake of a high number of induced abortions taking place, the Union government ordered the constitution of the Shantilal Shah Committee to deliberate on the legalisation of abortion in the country. In order to reduce maternal mortality owing to unsafe abortions, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act was brought into force in 1971.
- This law is an exception to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) provisions of 312 and 313 and sets out the rules of how and when a medical abortion can be carried out.
- Under Section 312 of the IPC, a person who “voluntarily causes a woman with child to miscarry” is liable for punishment, attracting a jail term of up to three years or fine or both, unless it was done in good faith where the purpose was to save the life of the pregnant woman.
- Section 313 of the IPC states that a person who causes the miscarriage without the consent of the pregnant woman, whether or not she is in the advanced stages of her pregnancy, shall be punished with life imprisonment or a jail term that could extend to 10 years, as well as a fine.
- **How has the MTP Act evolved from 1971 to 2021?**
- The latest amendment to the MTP Act was made in 2021. Before that new rules were introduced in 2003 to allow the use of the newly discovered abortion medicine misoprostol, to medically terminate a pregnancy up to seven weeks into it.
- Broader amendments to the original Act were introduced in 2020 and the amended Act came into force in September 2021.
- Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021, abortion is permitted after medical opinion under stipulated circumstances.
- The 2021 Act increased the upper limit of the gestation period to which a woman can seek a medical abortion to 24 weeks from 20 weeks permitted in the 1971 Act.
- But this renewed upper limit can only be exercised in specific cases. Gestational age, calculated in weeks, is the medical term to describe how far along the pregnancy is and is measured from the first day of the woman’s last menstruation or period.
- Another major amendment was that MTP could not be accessed on the opinion of a single registered medical practitioner up to 20 weeks of the gestational age.

- From 20 weeks up to 24 weeks, the opinion of two registered medical practitioners is required. In the previous version of the Act, the opinion of the one registered doctor was required to access a medical abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy, while two doctors were required to endorse the abortion up to 20 weeks.

- **What is the MTP (Amendment) Act, 2021?**

- Under the 2021 Act, medical termination of pregnancy is permitted if it is backed by medical opinion and is being sought for at least one of the following reasons
- If the continuation of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman
- If its continuation would result in grave injury to the woman's physical or mental health
- In the case of a substantial risk that if the child was born, it would suffer from a serious physical or mental abnormality.
- The pregnancy can be terminated up to 24 weeks of gestational age after the opinion of two registered medical practitioners under these conditions
- If the woman is either a survivor of sexual assault or rape or incest

If she is a minor

- If her marital status has changed during the ongoing pregnancy (i.e. either widowhood or divorce)
- If she has major physical disabilities or is mentally ill.
- On the grounds of foetal malformation incompatible with life or if the child is born, it would be seriously handicapped
- If the woman is in a humanitarian setting or disaster, or emergency situation as declared by the government.
- Besides, if the pregnancy has to be terminated beyond the 24-week gestational age, it can only be done on the grounds of foetal abnormalities if a four-member Medical Board, as set up in each State under the Act, gives permission to do so.
- The law, notwithstanding any of the above conditions, also provides that where it is immediately necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman, abortion can be carried out at any time by a single registered medical practitioner.
- Unmarried women can also access abortion under the above-mentioned conditions because it does not mention the requirement of spousal consent. If the woman is a minor, however, the consent of a guardian is required.

Have there been judicial interventions in cases of abortions?

- Despite the fact that existing laws do not permit unconditional abortion in the country, in the landmark 2017 Right to Privacy judgment in the Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India and others, the Supreme Court had held that the decision by a pregnant person on whether to continue a pregnancy or not is part of such a person's right to privacy as well and, therefore, the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- Several women annually approach the apex court and High Courts, when medical boards reject their application to access MTP beyond the gestational upper limit (now 24 weeks), seeking permission to abort a pregnancy, mostly in cases where it is a result of sexual assault or when there is a foetal abnormality.

What are the criticisms against the abortion law?

- According to a 2018 study in the Lancet, 15.6 million abortions were accessed every year in India as of 2015.
- The MTP Act requires abortion to be performed only by doctors with specialization in gynecology or obstetrics.
- However, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's 2019-20 report on

Rural Health Statistics indicates that there is a 70% shortage of obstetrician-gynecologists in rural India.

- As the law does not permit abortion at will, critics say that it pushes women to access illicit abortions under unsafe conditions.
- Statistics put the annual number of unsafe and illegal abortions performed in India at 8, 00,000, many of them resulting in maternal mortality.

THE HINDU

VPN rules

- On April 28, India's cybersecurity agency passed a rule mandating Virtual Private Network (VPN) providers to record and keep their customers' logs for 180 days. It also asked these firms to collect and store customer data for up to five years.
- It further mandated that any cybercrime recorded must be reported to the CERT-In within six hours of the crime.

Who all will be affected by the new rules?

- CERT-In directions are applicable to data centers, virtual private server (VPS) providers, cloud service providers, virtual asset service providers, virtual asset exchange providers, custodian wallet

providers and government organizations.

- Firms that provide Internet proxy-like services through VPN technologies also come under the ambit of the new rule. Corporate entities are not under the scanner.

What is a virtual server, and what are its uses?

- A virtual server is a simulated server environment built on an actual physical server. It recreates the functionality of a dedicated physical server.
- The virtual twin functions like a physical server that runs software and uses the resources of the physical server.
- Multiple virtual servers can run on a single physical server.
- Virtualising servers help reallocate resources for changing workloads. Converting one physical server into multiple virtual servers allows organizations to use processing power and resources more efficiently by running multiple operating systems and applications on one.
- Running multiple operating systems and applications on a single physical machine reduces cost as it consumes less space and hardware.
- Virtualisation also reduces cost as maintaining a virtual server

infrastructure is low compared to a physical server infrastructure.

- Virtual servers are also said to offer higher security than a physical server infrastructure as the operating system and applications are enclosed in a virtual machine.
- Virtual servers are also useful in testing and debugging applications in different operating systems and versions without having to manually install and run them in several physical machines.
- Software developers can create, run, and test new software applications on a virtual server without taking processing power away from other users.

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