

Topics

Chabahar port .

Forest fire

Coffee production

Zhongnanhai

Iberian lynx

Quema River

Essay topic



By saurabh Pandey



Target Mains -2024/25

Essay

“Unresponsive and unethical AI is bane to society “

"अनुत्तरदायी और अनैतिक एआई समाज के लिए अभिशाप है"

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Stay invested

India should not tailor its ties with Iran to U.S. foreign policy changes

By signing a 10-year agreement with Iran to develop and operate the Chabahar port, India has taken its infrastructure and trade partnership with the Islamic Republic to the next level despite tensions in West Asia. India will invest \$120 million and offer a credit facility of \$250 million to further develop the terminal it operates in Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port and related projects. However, after the deal was signed, the U.S. State Department said entities considering business deals with Iran "need to be aware that they are opening themselves up to and the potential risk of sanctions". In the past, American sanctions on Iran had delayed the project. Conceived in 2003, the project did not take off for years after the U.S. and the UN imposed sanctions on Tehran over its nuclear programme. India signed a memorandum of understanding in 2015 after Washington eased sanctions on Iran following that year's nuclear agreement, and in 2016, the contract was executed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Iran visit. The U.S.'s unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018 and reimposition of sanctions on Iran raised questions on India's continued cooperation with Tehran. But India managed to win a carve-out from U.S. sanctions that allowed it to operate the port through ad hoc measures.

The Chabahar port is critical for India's connectivity plans. First, it offers an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia by bypassing Pakistan, allowing better trade with Central Asia. And, Chabahar is expected to be connected to the International North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC), bringing India closer to Europe through Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia. An alternative to the Suez route, a fully operational NSTC would reduce the time and money spent on inter-continental trade. The port, roughly 200 km from Pakistan's Gwadar, where China is developing a port as part of its BRI, would also help India expand its geopolitical influence in Central Asia. But the U.S. seems to have taken a narrow view of the project over its hostility with Iran. America's interests in the region have also changed. In 2018, when U.S. forces were backing the Islamic Republic government in Afghanistan, it gave a sanctions waiver to India as Kabul also stood to benefit from the port project. Today, U.S. troops are out of Afghanistan, the Taliban has replaced the Islamic Republic, and the U.S.'s focus is on containing Iran. India, in the past, had taken U-turns in its Iran engagement depending on the policy changes in Washington DC. It should not do that any more. It should stay invested in Chabahar and seek to improve its trade and connectivity projects with Central Asia, which is essential for India's continued rise.





AFGHANISTAN

KABUL

IRAN

PAKISTAN

NEPAL

CHABAHAR
PORT

GWADAR

INDIA

Myanmar

Saudi Arabia

Oman

Yemen

MUMBAI

Arabian
Sea

Bay
of
Bengal

72 KM

Distance
between the
Chabahar &

Chabahar Port



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A forest fire in Haridwar district in Uttarakhand on May 10, 2023. Since November 2022, when forest fires began to rage, there have been 1,200 incidents in the State, mostly in westernmost

The burning hills of Uttarakhand

The people were killed in May in forest fires that have been raging in Uttarakhand since last November. The forest department attributes the fires to over-irrigation, high-tension wires, and the abundance of pine trees, while the State government has said in the Supreme Court that the fires are completely man-made. **Uttara Mishra** travels across the State and finds that villagers, mostly women, are helping extinguish the blazes

In May 2, Omni Chalan and his wife **Shantam** travelled up the hills in Sonwar village in the scenic district of Almora in Uttarakhand to collect resin from the chir pine trees in the forest. The couple had moved from Nepal to Uttarakhand just last year for a better life and education for their three children. The temperature that morning was above 30°C. They wanted to extract the resin, called resin in the hills, for Kamakhai, a contractor. They earned ₹50,000-60,000 if they worked for a day for six months.

As they were getting ready to leave, the couple heard a scream. They saw a man running on the hilltop, desperately trying to climb a fence that had collapsed. They realised with horror that he was Deepak Puriya, a friend of their son, who they took a green branch of a nearby tree and began hitting Puriya, even as they doused the fire. Before anyone could help them, the four victims were severely hurt. All of them succumbed to injuries in hospital.

Kanak did not have the courage to break the news to Chalan's children for days. "They have been playing in the forest for 10-15 years. They have the heart to tell them that you happened," says Kanak, who is a motherly person who will no longer work for him. The children now live under the care of their mother's Hinduism priest, from where they came.

Five people were killed and two injured in forest fires in Uttarakhand this year. According to a 2007 report of the forest surveying Uttarakhand has a recorded forest area of 38,000 square kilometres, which is 71.6% of its geographical area. Since November 2022, when forest fires began to rage, there have been 1,200 incidents that have burnt 1,28.5 hectares that of forest land till May 31. While authorities have dismissed these as "natural affairs" in the hills, the cost of these fires has been borne by the people whose lives depend on the mountains.

Flame of the forest
A booklet on the Uttarakhand forest department website says increasing migration of people from here to other States, which has led to the hill farmers' high-tension wires, and the abundance of chir pine trees, which are highly inflammable in nature, are the main reasons for forest fires. While the youth don't know how to tackle forest fires because the current academic curriculum does not educate them about the environment, older generations, who predominantly populate the hills, are unable to climb the hilltops to control the fires, the booklet says.

"People in [the] hills are now getting cooking gas under [the] umbrella [Law] scheme of Central government and hence, villagers have stopped going to forests in [the] hills to collect wood for cooking, which is also a reason for increasing forest fires," it adds.

Dhanraj Mohan, who is in charge of the Head of Forest Force in Uttarakhand, says the fires have become drier because of an excessive dry spell and less snowfall than usual this year. This has caused fires to spread faster in the forests, which are full of trees, according to the State.

Rest department website, Uttarakhand has 3,04,28,384 ha of chir pine forests. Chir pine trees constitute 8% of the 13 varieties of trees in the State.

"In this environment, always conducive to fires, forest fires spread quickly when villagers burn stubble in the fields. Villagers and forests are interposed in the State. Forest fires also occur when people lose burnt cigarettes in the forest or set fires on the fire to clear the land in the belief that it will boost the growth of fodder," he says.

Dousing fires for a mango drink, located in May 6, in Almora's Siddhar, located 1,000 metres above sea level in the Kumaon Himalayas, the hills, laden with tall trees, which were once green, are now visible from the balconies of houses in the villages; they have disappeared under a thick cover of ash.

The trees are now black, and the ashes of burnt pine leaves cover the forest floor. The mountains, which always promise clean and cool air, radiate heat, instead of the aroma of flowers, the smell of burnt wood lingers in the air.

Around 20 women from Sitabkhal and the nearby Bhabar village come down from a hilltop to douse the forest fire using green bushes, their only weapons against the towering flames, which are burning hot. Their clothes are soaked in soot and ash, they look exhausted.

The women belong to the Hinduism group in Siddhar called 'Jungle ke Dost' (friends of the forest). Their names are Gajendra, Pankaj, a pharmacist in a local healthcare centre who brought them to the forest, and a community initiative but they to tackle forest fires, he calls the members of the group. Most women, set out to put out fires.

In return for their efforts, the women of Angla in Deot, a community-led initiative to extinguish forest fires, are offered a 125 millilitre tins pack of

Forest, a popular, mango-flavoured drink, and some biscuits. Pankaj has ordered these, and the forest ranger, Manoj Lakhotia, has paid for them. The women in the packets in the corner of their dresses take home for their children.

One of them, Indumati, a housewife, is desperate to go home. "I'll please take me," she says to Pankaj, who is with them. "My six-month-old child must be hungry," bawled him in 30 a.m. before coming here. Pankaj, in a row, the soap, as she wipes her forehead.

Pankaj opens a jeep passing by and asks the women to sit inside. Letting go a few of the women a gardening cake before they climb into the vehicle. They use this to clear the forest line so that fires can be suppressed.

"These women are the reason you see some greenery around. Otherwise, the forest fires would have razed everything. It is sad that we are not in a position to do anything for them. They risk their lives to save our mountains," says Pankaj, who feels that the government must provide life insurance for the people of the State who help mitigate forest fires.

On being asked why there are more women than men in the group, Indulal Bhatt, 65, says, "I'd ask him to join me in the forest, but he is not on the fire. How will they do the work?"

Sitabkhal, in a forest village of natural district, Small Kaurav says he has helped extinguish more than 20 forest fires since April 15. "Sitabkhal is not the only place where this happens. Villagers across the State come in large numbers to support the forest department, which has no men in the forest, but they do have some women. They risk their lives to save our mountains," he says.

The Forest Force officer of Nainital, Chandra Shekhar Joshi, says the forest department has started a process of the State government asking for remuneration for the villagers who help mitigate forest fires. Nainital district, which has largest forest area (70.87%) in the State, has around 1,000 forest fire watchers on the hills. Half of them are women. Of the recorded forest area of 38,000 sq km in Uttarakhand, the forest department manages 26,534 ha of reserved forests where human is either forbidden or banned, or non-purchasable community forest managers, manage 7.32 lakh ha. As per a forest department bulletin, there is greater damage to reserved forests than in the non-managed by the government.

After the recent fires, the State government announced employees of the forest department in 2017. It has 11 lakh 4,000 employees in total.

Playing politics
On May 8, the Uttarakhand government said in the Supreme Court that all the instances of forest fires are man-made. It informed the court that 388 criminal cases had been registered

GAENSHA PATIL
Head of forest fire

across the State against those found setting the forests on fire. In most cases, people who were accused had attempted to burn stubble, but had failed to control the fires which spread due to strong winds, the government said.

The 200-page interim status report submitted by the government to Court said that a section of the media had reported that 40% of Uttarakhand was burning, which was "misleading," and that only 0.1% of forest cover was affected by fires. The State informed the Court that the State Disaster Response Force and the National Disaster Response Force had been deployed to tackle the forest fires. The Indian Air Force was using Bambi Buckets (inflammable containers that have from a helicopter and release large amounts of water in targeted areas to control the fires), it said.

The government added in the report that the Uttarakhand Forest Fire Mitigation Project 2023-28 was pending with the Central government. The report also said that forest fires were not "new" in the State and that there was no longer an "emergency" situation.

The government informed the Court that it is trying to get ITI workers to employ the species of cloud seeding to increase precipitation and mitigate rainfall. Emphasising this solution, the Court said "cloud seeding or depending on [the] rain pack is not the answer" to forest fires.

The next day, after rains, the government claimed credit for having "controlled" the forest fires completely, but fires have raged on. On May 6, alone, 11 forest fires were reported.

On the same day, the Court adjourned the case to September 2024 after expressing satisfaction with the State's response on the measures it was taking to tackle the problem. The State said that it had used the entire Compensatory Afforestation Fund for Reafforestation and provision was being filling vacant posts in the field level in the forest department, among other things.

The Congress was quick to use this issue in its Lok Sabha election campaign to target the State government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "While fires continued to burn the forests in April, Chief Minister Bhaskar Singh Dhawan was busy travelling to other States to campaign for BJP candidates. Even the forest Minister, Sitabkhal, was campaigning in Assam," said Gaurav Dutt, the spokesman of Congress.

After completing his campaign, Dhant met with officials and ordered the police to target those found setting the forests on fire with the Congress Party and the Uttarakhand Public Private Property Damage Recovery Act, 2024.

Where solutions lie
Pankaj believes that great injustice is being done to the chir pine tree, which many people in Uttarakhand hold as the main element of the forest. "This tree, which has to make maintenance, a lot of money, but it is not used to make anything, it is used to make furniture. Its leaves are used for medicinal purposes, and its wood is used for making pens, and coal and iron are not just used by villagers, but also used to make money," he says. There are any other tree which goes as so man-made?"

The State has developed a plan to generate electricity from pine needles, which fall from the trees and are used to generate electricity of around 100 kilowatts every year. But the low price offered for the electricity has not been in the besting.

This year, Dhant announced the start of a scheme. First, the State will give pine leaves and get money, under which the State purchases leaves of around 100 kg for much higher than the 12 per kg, which has been the rate so far. Pankaj says that the government must focus more on community participation to mitigate forest fires. He says he believes that the National Response (NRR) technique should be adopted across the State. This method involves the use of vegetation management techniques such as prescribed burning, which involves the controlled burning of vegetation to reduce the risk of large fires by providing favourable conditions for the growth of indigenous tree species. It also involves a range of techniques such as the removal of inflammable species, the creation of firebreaks, establishing seedlings, and the protection of natural regeneration areas. "We are not even close to what the government is doing," he says. And finally, what we see of the government's initiative is not even 10% of what is being done. Establishing a fire line across the mountains is a considerable task, he adds.

The forest fires in Uttarakhand have also ignited communal tensions. After a video emerged of young men celebrating, even so fires raged behind them. Some people accused Mahila of setting the forests on fire to "take revenge" on the State government, which introduced a Uniform Civil Code and established an "anti-overseasment drive" in Jharkhand in February, which expelled them. The police arrested the men, who hailed from Bihar and claimed to have recorded the video to gain some "likes" on Instagram.

While the fires are being doused, Hemant Dhanraj, from Gangi Anshu, an NGO which works to save the river Ganga, worries about the loss of habitat of occurring forest fires. "Forest get burnt in fires. This reduces the strength of the mountains and the soil. When it rains, the loose soil falls to retain water and impacts ground water regeneration, causing flash floods. As the loose boulders erode and water gullies down, landslides occur," he explains.
Ravi Chopra, an environmentalist from Uttarakhand, the forest department in the State has "very few or no capabilities" to control forest fires. "Nothing can be done to mitigate forest fires unless they empower the local people and take their own control," he says.



In return for their efforts, the women of Angla in Deot, a community-led initiative to extinguish forest fires, are offered a 125 millilitre tins pack of



SAURABH PANDEY
Editor in Chief, CSE

FROM BANGS TO EPIC RESILIENCE

Forest Fire

Causes of Forest Fire

Forest fires are caused by Natural causes as well as Man made causes

- **Natural causes** - Many forest fires start from natural causes such as lightning which set trees on fire. However, rain extinguishes such fires without causing much damage. High atmospheric temperatures and dryness (low humidity) offer favorable circumstance for a fire to start.
- **Man made causes** - Fire is caused when a source of fire like naked flame, cigarette or bidi, electric spark or any source of ignition comes into contact with inflammable material.



Classification of Forest Fire

Forest fire can broadly be classified into three categories;

- **Natural or controlled forest fire.**
- **Forest fires caused by heat generated in the litter and other biomes in summer through carelessness of people (human neglect) and**
- **Forest fires purposely caused by local inhabitants**

Types of Forest Fire

The types of forest fire are as follows

- **Surface Fire** - A forest fire may burn primarily as a surface fire, spreading along the ground as the surface litter (senescent leaves and twigs and dry grasses etc) on the forest floor and is engulfed by the spreading flames.
- **Underground Fire** - The fires of low intensity, consuming the organic matter beneath and the surface litter of forest floor are sub-grouped as underground fire. In most of the dense forests a thick mantle of organic matter is found on top of the mineral soil. This fire spreads in by consuming such materials. These fires usually spread entirely underground and burn for some meters below the surface. This fire spreads very slowly and in most of the cases it becomes very hard to detect and control such type of fires. They may continue to burn for months and destroy vegetative cover of the soil. The other terminology for this type of fire is Muck fires.

●



- **Ground Fire** - These fires are fires in the sub surface organic fuels, such as duff layers under forest stands, Arctic tundra or taiga, and organic soils of swamps or bogs. There is no clear distinction between underground and ground fires.
- The smoldering under ground fires sometime changes into Ground fire.
- This fire burns root and other material on or beneath the surface i.e. burns the herbaceous growth on forest floor together with the layer of organic matter in various stages of decay.
- They are more damaging than surface fires, as they can destroy vegetation completely. Ground fires burn underneath the surface by smoldering combustion and are more often ignited by surface fires.

●



- **Crown Fire** - A crown fire is one in which the crown of trees and shrubs burn, often sustained by a surface fire.
- A crown fire is particularly very dangerous in a coniferous forest because resinous material given off burning logs burn furiously.
- On hill slopes, if the fire starts downhill, it spreads up fast as heated air adjacent to a slope tends to flow up the slope spreading flames along with it.
- If the fire starts uphill, there is less likelihood of it spreading downwards.



- **Firestorms** - Among the forest fires, the fire spreading most rapidly is the firestorm, which is an intense fire over a large area.
- As the fire burns, heat rises and air rushes in, causing the fire to grow.
- More air makes the fire spin violently like a storm.
- Flames fly out from the base and burning ember spew out the top of the fiery twister, starting smaller fires around it.
- Temperatures inside these storms can reach around 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Vulnerability

- The youngest mountain ranges of Himalayas are the most vulnerable stretches of the world susceptible to forest fires.
- The forests of Western are more frequently vulnerable to forest fires as compared to those in Eastern Himalayas.
- This is because forests of Eastern Himalayas grow in high rain density. With large scale expansion of chirr (Pine) forests in many areas of the Himalayas the frequency and intensity of forest fires has increased.



- **During the British period, fire was prevented in the summer through removal of forest litter all along the forest boundary.**
- **This was called "Forest Fire Line" This line used to prevent fire breaking into the forest from one compartment to another.**
- **The collected litter was burnt in isolation. Generally, the fire spreads only if there is continuous supply of fuel (Dry vegetation) along its path.**



Precautions

The followings are the important precautions against fire:

- To keep the source of fire or source of ignition separated from combustible and inflammable material.
- To keep the source of fire under watch and control.
- Not allow combustible or inflammable material to pile up unnecessarily and to stock the same as per procedure recommended for safe storage of such combustible or inflammable material.
- To adopt safe practices in areas near forests viz. factories, coalmines, oil stores, chemical plants and even in household kitchens.
- To incorporate fire reducing and fire fighting techniques and equipment



Not in memory Without a permanent place to stay, a single source of income, and knowledge of the local language, migrant workers in Hyderabad live on the edge while the bricks they lay become landmarks in cities, but also...

The death and disappearance of migrant workers

Lacks of marginalised people, often from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal come to Hyderabad every year to do the out a living at construction sites. They live hard lives, and are the unseen workers of a city driven by money and power. **Inds Siddharth Kumar Singh**

In May 18, Usha Yadav, a 27-year-old migrant worker, sat outside the memory of the government-run Gandhi Hospital in Secunderabad. He was waiting for the post-mortem results of his relatives, who were victims of a constructionist wall collapse at Bachupally in Hyderabad, after the recent rains.

Seven people, including a four-year-old child, died on May 12, after the wall collapsed on the migrant workers' settlements. All of them hailed from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal. It has put the spotlight on the risks that migrant workers are forced to take, when they leave their homes and come to work, supported by State or employers, in their urban centres.

"It has been some days since the accident, yet the building owners were not employed, has not reached out with any assistance. I am 1800 daily, but today, I could not work as I have been here at the hospital. I am not sure how will make out on this," Yadav says.

By 9 p.m., the doctors handed over the bodies to the police, who in turn gave them to the friends and families of the deceased. Transporting the bodies to their hometowns would take three to four months. "It takes one to six months, this is all I will be able to save," The families and fellow workers of the victims were unable to proceed and transport a single body due to the exorbitant transportation expenses.

While the workers engaged in dialogue with the police, a man approached them and handed over a letter written by the building owner. Unable to understand Telugu, the workers sought assistance from the police to translate its contents.

According to the letter, on behalf of the 'The Owners' Contractors' Association, the building owner offered his condolences and proposed a compensation of ₹1.5 lakh per victim.

"Immediate assistance of ₹50,000 will be provided to facilitate the transportation of bodies to their native villages, with the remaining ₹1 lakh to be disbursed via cheque upon presentation of a family members' identity proof," a policeman said, while reading the letter aloud.

Finally, after spending almost 10 hours outside the mortuary, the workers left.

This is not the first time that migrant workers had died in Hyderabad. In March 2022, up to it from Bihar were killed in a collapse at a timber de-

In the Bachupally accident, the deceased workers were not registered with the TS Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board.

A contractor becomes a home for the next few years as these projects usually take two to three years and completion.

However, the issue of wages persists. Ameen says his role as a Flator of Para (PW) work, while integral to the site, is not directly paid on his earnings 1500 per day. "My work comprises of site maintenance - clean water, sanitation, and electricity - are missing, leaving them vulnerable to disease and accidents. Falling with a hammer, they cannot afford a single day off from work can mean a missed meal for their families. At a construction site, where babies lie in the sun, dust and debris is everywhere."

According to Telangana's Department of Labour, Employment Training and Fractures, there are an estimated 1.5 to 1.8 lakh migrant workers currently employed in different parts of the State. The number was eight to 10 lakh before the COVID-19 pandemic, and an official.

On the Westoddis Madhura Nagar road, hand-drawn labourers converge along the road while, hopeful of a concrete offering them some work, among a day's sustenance. These labour-

ers not only include construction workers but also individuals skilled in carpentry, painting, and plumbing.

"I live in Krishna Nagar with my husband and his two brothers. We come here daily hoping for work, but, not every day brings us joy," shared Santu, a labourer hailing from Samastipur, Bihar. "In this relentless heat, we endure hours of waiting until someone approaches us with work."

She highlighted the challenges faced by women: "It's a difficult for everyone, but men have the advantage of diversifying into painting and carpentry. In contrast, women like us are often given the repetitive task of transporting materials from one location to another. Also, we are paid less than men."

Ameen Shah, who hails from Bahadurpur in Uttar Pradesh, is presently employed as a worker at a 40-storeyed residential project at Ahids. "If we work on such sites and don't have alternative accommodation, we are especially provided shelter within the premises," he explained. "For us, it becomes a home for the next few years as these projects usually take two to three years and completion."

Ameen currently lives in a rented accommodation at Himrao Nagar with his wife and their five-year-old child. "I have always considered staying at the construction site, but I can't expose my wife and child to the constant dust and pollution there," he explained. "Our house rent is ₹2,000 per month." Initially, his wife too worked at a construction site, but with no one to take care of their child, the two-site home with him.

On his last visit to his hometown, Ameen's 23-year-old cousin, Salman, joined him in Hyderabad to work together at the Ahids site. "I arrived in Hyderabad only six months ago, and since I am currently working as a site helper, my daily wage is 1,000," Salman said.

Salman finished school in his hometown, but was unable to pursue higher studies due to financial constraints. Prior to arriving in Hyderabad, he engaged in various odd jobs in small towns near his village. "Initially, I stayed with Ameen, but later, being single, I opted to move into the accommodation provided at the construction site," he said.

Most of these workers do not visit their hometowns to vote for the Lok Sabha elections, citing the impracticality of such a decision when it comes to their livelihoods. The primary problems were the long travel time and logistical challenges. For instance, workers from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar would need to endure a two-day train journey to reach cities like Gokulnagar or Patna, and then proceed to their hometowns, before reporting to the same suburban journey back to Hyderabad. "Moreover, with peak travel seasons, even those who made reservations in advance, struggled to secure tickets," a worker said.

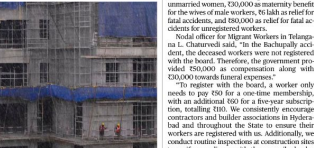
Welfare moves

In 2018, the Telangana Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board (TBOCW) was established by the state government in accordance with Section 8 (i) of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Welfare) Act, 1946. The primary objective of the board is to advocate for the welfare of construction workers, ensuring they are provided with safe working conditions and essential facilities. Additionally, the board also tends support for healthcare services and offers assistance in cases of accidents or emergencies.

The board has classified 54 types of workers under the umbrella term "construction workers," whereby registration with the board renders them eligible for various welfare schemes. A total of 14 such schemes are offered to these workers. These include financial assistance such as ₹20,000 under the Maternity Grant Scheme for unmarried women, ₹30,000 as maternity benefit for the wives of male workers, ₹4 lakh in relief for fatal accidents, and ₹80,000 as relief for fatal accidents for unorganised workers.

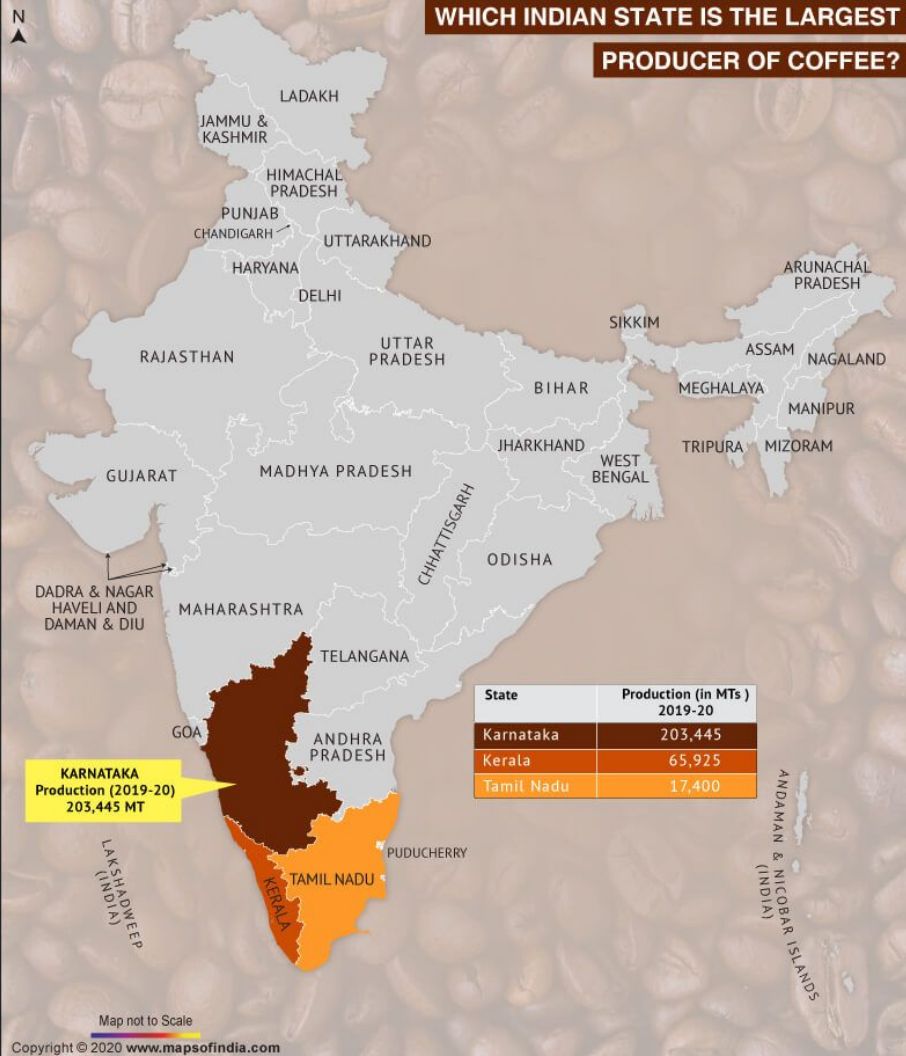
Not all offer for Migrant Workers in Telangana is. Chattervedi said, "In the Bachupally accident, the deceased workers were not registered with the board. Thus, the government provided ₹50,000 as compensation along with ₹20,000 towards funeral expenses.

"To register with the board, a worker only needs to pay ₹50 for a lifetime membership, with an additional ₹60 for a five-year subscription, totalling ₹110. The committee encourage contractors and builder associations in Hyderabad and throughout the State to ensure their workers are registered with it. Additionally, we conduct inspections to ensure that construction sites to verify compliance with the prescribed rules and regulations," said the officer.



WHICH INDIAN STATE IS THE LARGEST

PRODUCER OF COFFEE?

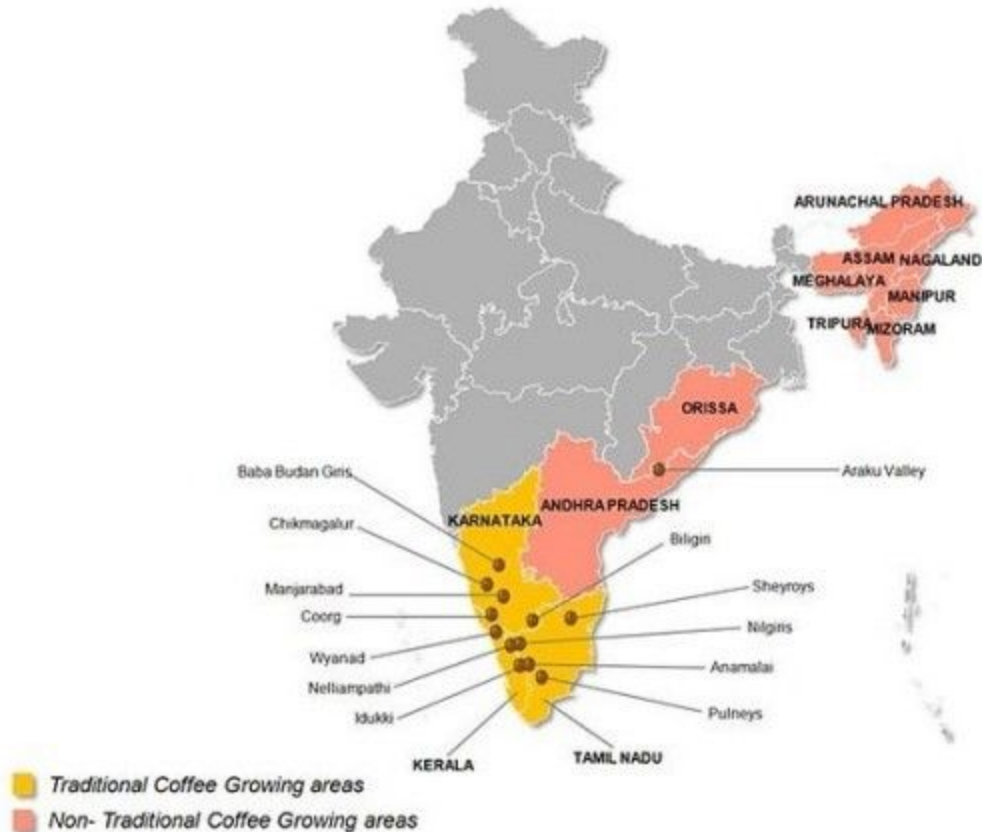


KARNATAKA
Production (2019-20)
203,445 MT

Map not to Scale



Coffee Producing Areas of India



Coffee growing regions in India can be grouped under three distinct categories:



Traditional areas representing the southern states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.



Non-traditional areas comprising Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in the Eastern Ghats of the country.



Traditional areas representing the southern states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The plantations in the south are the cradle of Indian coffee. They include the Bababudangiris in Karnataka, known as the birthplace of coffee in India. The Eastern Ghats and the North Eastern states are newly developed areas of coffee.

Factors	Arabica	Robusta
Soils	Deep, fertile, rich in organic matter, well drained and slightly acidic (Ph6.0-6.5)	Same as Arabica
Slopes	Gentle to moderate slopes	Gentle slopes to fairly level fields
Elevation	1000-1500m	500-1000m
Aspect	North, East and North- East aspects	Same as Arabica
Temperature	15 ^o C – 25 ^o C ; cool, equable	20 ^o C – 30 ^o C; hot, humid
Relative humidity	70-80%	80-90%
Annual rainfall	1600-2500 mm	1000-2000 mm
Blossom showers	March- April (25-40mm)	February – March (25-40 mm)
Backing showers	April-May (50-75 mm) well distributed	March-April (50-75 mm) well distributed

'China-Russia partnership is not directed against anyone'

An emerging multipolar world is now taking shape before our eyes, says Russian President Vladimir Putin as he concludes his two-day visit to China; he praises talks with Xi as substantive

Associated Press

BEIJING

Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded a two-day visit to China on Friday, emphasising the countries' burgeoning strategic ties as well as his own personal relationship with Chinese leader Xi Jinping as they sought to present an alternative to U.S. global influence. Mr. Putin praised the growth in bilateral trade while touring a China-Russia Expo in the northeastern city of Harbin. He met students at the Harbin Institute of Technology, which is said to work closely with the People's Liberation Army.

Harbin, capital of China's Heilongjiang pro-



Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping holding an informal meeting at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing on Thursday. AFP

vince, was once home to many Russian expatriates and retains some of that history in its architecture, such as the central St. Sophia Cathedral, a former Russian Orthodox church.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Putin thanked Xi and praised their talks as “sub-

stantive,” saying he spent “almost a whole day, from morning till evening” with the Chinese leader and other officials in Beijing the previous day.

The partnership between China and Russia “is not directed against anyone,” Mr. Putin said in a

veiled reference to the West. “It is aimed at one thing: creating better conditions for the development of our countries and improving the well-being of the people of China and the Russian Federation.”

Rebuke for U.S.

But he still had a backhanded rebuke for the U.S., and others who oppose the Moscow-Beijing relationship, saying an “emerging multipolar world ... is now taking shape before our eyes”.

“And it is important that those who are trying to maintain their monopoly on decision-making in the world on all issues ... do everything in their power to ensure that this process goes naturally,” he said.

Zhongnanhai



- Zhongnanhai is a compound that houses the offices of and serves as a residence for the leadership of the **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** and the **State Council**.
- It was a former imperial garden, and is located adjacent to the **Forbidden Palace** in **Beijing**.
- The term *Zhongnanhai* is often used as a **metonym** for China's central government and its leadership at large.
- The **state leaders**, including the president, general secretary of the CCP, and other top party and state **leadership figures** carry out many of their day-to-day administrative activities inside the compound, such as meetings with foreign dignitaries.



Back there: A lynx released during the first experimental reintroduction of two Iberian lynxes in Spain. AFP

Endangered Iberian lynx population doubles in 3 years

Agence France-Presse
MADRID

The number of endangered Iberian lynx in the wild in Spain and Portugal has nearly doubled since 2020 to surpass 2,000 last year, the Spanish government said on Friday.

A total of 722 lynx were born in 2023 bringing their total number in the two countries to 2,021, a record high since monitoring of the species began and up from 1,111 just three years earlier, Spain's environment Ministry said in a statement. This rise "allows us to continue to be optimistic about the reduction of the risk of extinction of the Iberian lynx," it added.

Known for its pointy ears, long legs and leopard-like spotted fur, the species was on the brink of extinction just two decades ago due to poaching, road accidents, as well as a dramatic decline due to disease in wild rabbits numbers, the lynx's main prey. When the first census of the spotted nocturnal cat was carried out in 2002, there were fewer than 100 specimens in the Iberian Peninsula.

The Ministry party attributed the boom in lynx numbers to the success of a captive breeding and reintroduction programme launched in 2011. "The recovery of the Iberian lynx population in Spain and Portugal constitutes one of the best examples of conservation actions for endangered species in the world," it said. The Ministry said the Iberian lynx population had continued to rise since 2015 when the International Union for Conservation of Nature downgraded the threat level to "endangered" from "critically endangered" – its highest category before extinction in the wild.



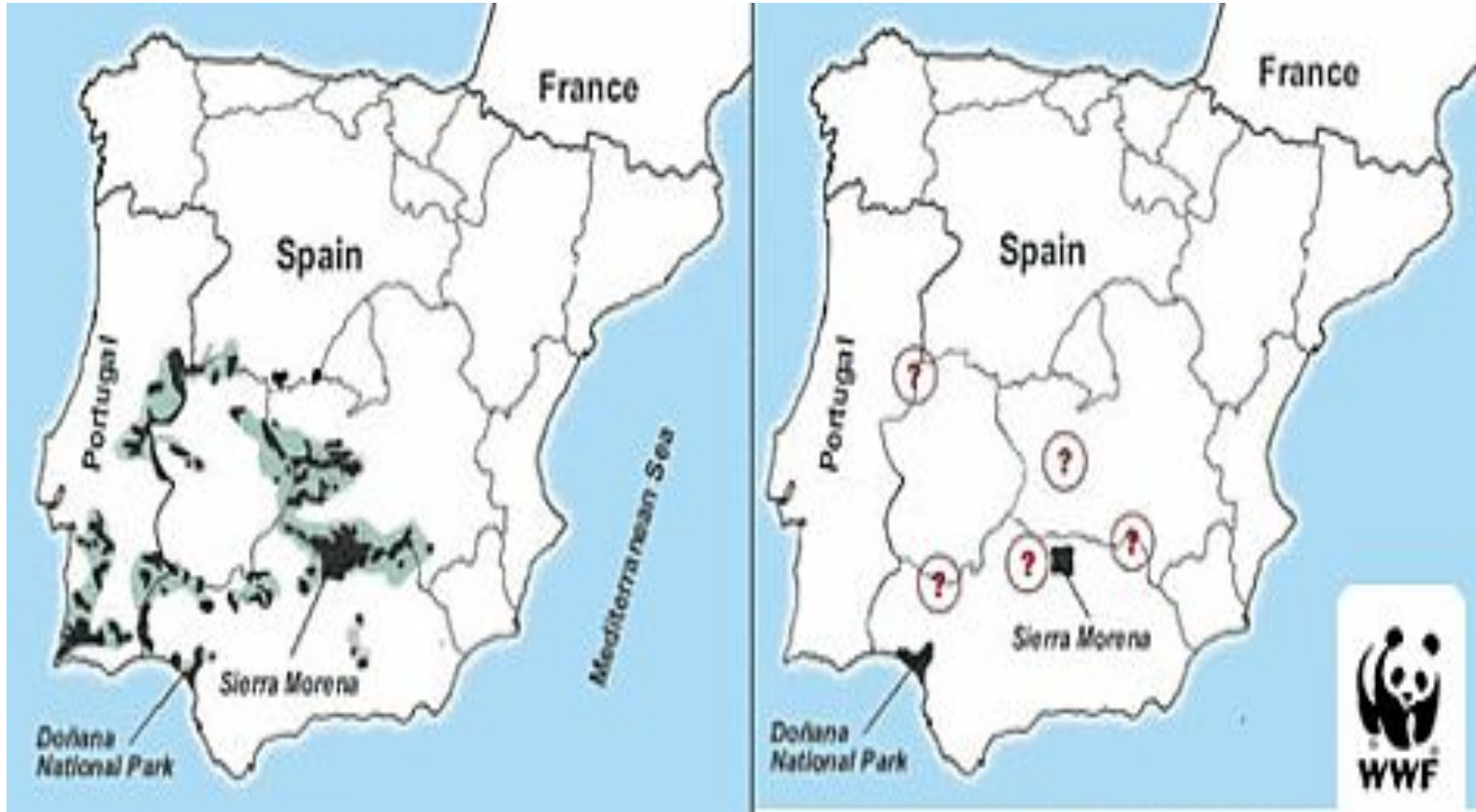
Iberian lynx

- **The number of endangered Iberian lynx in the wild in Spain and Portugal has nearly doubled since 2020 to surpass 2,000 last year, the Spanish government .**
- **Known for its pointy ears, long legs and leopard-like spotted fur, the species was on the brink of extinction just two decades ago due to poaching, road accidents, as well as a dramatic decline due to disease in wild rabbits numbers, the lynx's main prey**



Physical Description

The Iberian lynx is heavily spotted and weighs about half as much as the Eurasian species, with long legs and a very short tail with a black tip. Its coat is tawny with dark spots and it bears a characteristic "beard" around its face and prominent black ear tufts.





The Iberian lynx has been brought to the brink of extinction because of a combination of threats:

- **Decreasing food base**
- **Car hits**
- **Habitat loss and degradation**
- **Illegal Hunting**

Pilgrims' progress



Pilgrims of the Triana brotherhood gather prior to crossing the Quema river in Villamanrique, Spain, on their way to the village of El Rocio for the pilgrimage. Thousands gather in traditional outfits as they make their way on horseback and on board decorated carriages. AFP

Quema River

- Pilgrims cross the Quema River on their way to the shrine of El Rocio in Villamanrique, southern Spain 2009 during the annual pilgrimage in which hundreds of thousands of devotees of the Virgin del Rocio converge in and around the shrine.

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James Webb Telescope Vs Hubble Space Telescope

Location of operation
JWST: 1.5 million km away from Earth
HST: 570 km away from Earth

Primary mirror
JWST: 6.5 meter
HST: 2.4 meter

Mission Duration:
 5 - 10 years

Proposed Launch Date:
 Webb will be launched in 2021

Launch Vehicle:
 Ariane 5 ECA

Focal length:
 131.4 meters

Optical resolution:
 ~0.1 arc-seconds

Orbit:
 1.5 million km from Earth

No of mirror segments
JWST: 18 segments
HST: 1 segment

Mission objective
JWST: Look back 13.5 bn years and watch the birth of new galaxies
HST: Look back 12.5 bn years and peer into young galaxies

Service conditions
JWST: Not serviceable
HST: Can be repaired

Wavelengths
JWST: Explore near-infrared and mid-infrared light
HST: Explores into ultraviolet, visible, parts of near-infrared light

Diameter of primary Mirror:
 6.5 m (21.3 ft) approximately

Primary mirror material:
 beryllium coated with gold

JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE
 A window into cosmos

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104. The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference was held at

(a) Dhaka

(b) New Delhi

(c) Malé

(d) Perth

Saurabh pandey upsc

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar address the 7th Indian Ocean Conference in Australia's Perth that gets underway today with the theme "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean."
- The Indian Ocean Conference is a flagship consultative forum for countries in the Indian Ocean Region, organized annually by the Ministry of External Affairs, in association with the India Foundation..

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61. Which of the following were objectives of the G20 Summit, 2023 under India's Presidency?

1. Green development
2. Accelerating progress on SDGs
3. Women-led development

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

64.

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