



Insurgency in Manipur

For Prelims: Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Rise of Insurgency in Manipur

For Mains: North East Insurgency and its Background, Challenges and Solutions.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Centre Government** has announced that it is ready to **hold dialogue with [insurgency groups in Manipur](#)** to bring lasting peace to the region.

- The emergence of insurgency in **Manipur dates back to 1964** with the formation of the **United National Liberation Front (UNLF)**, which still remains one of the most formidable militant outfits.

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What are the Reasons for Rise of Insurgency in Manipur?

- **Forced Merger:** The **rise of separatist insurgency in Manipur** mainly attributed to perceived discontent over alleged “forced” merger of Manipur with the Union of India and the subsequent delay in granting **it full-fledged statehood**.
 - While the erstwhile Kingdom of Manipur was merged with India on **15th October, 1949**, it became a state only in **1972**.
- **Rise of Militancy:** The later years saw a slew of militant outfits being formed, including the **People’s Liberation Army (PLA)**, **People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)**, **Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)**, and **Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL)**, among others.
 - These valley-based outfits have been demanding an independent Manipur.
- **Spillover Effect of Greater Nagalim Demand:** The **Naga movement** in neighbouring Nagaland spilled over into Manipur’s hill districts with the NSCN-IM controlling most of it while

pressing for **“Nagalim” (Greater Nagaland)**, which is perceived in the valley as a “threat” to Manipur’s “territorial integrity”.

- **Valley-Hills Conflict:** While the hills account for **nine-tenths of Manipur’s geographical area**, they are sparsely populated, with most of the state’s population concentrated in the valley.
 - The Meitei community forms a majority in Imphal valley, while the surrounding hill districts are **inhabited by Nagas and Kukis**.
- **Naga-Kuki Conflict:** In the early 1990s, the ethnic clashes between Nagas and Kukis led to the formation of several Kuki insurgent groups, which have now scaled down their demand from a separate **Kuki state to a Territorial Council**.
 - The further continuance of insurgency led to the formation of smaller outfits like the **Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF), People’s United Liberation Front (PULF) and other splinter groups**.

What are the Steps Taken by the Government?

- **Military Action:**
 - **AFSPA:** In 1980, the Centre declared the entire **Manipur as a “disturbed area”** and imposed the controversial **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** to suppress the insurgency movement, which remains in force till date.
 - **Operation All Clear:** Assam Rifles and the army had conducted **operation “All Clear”** in the hill areas, most of the militants’ hideouts had been neutralised, with many of them having shifted to the valley.
- **Ceasefire Agreement:**
 - The **NSCN-IM** entered a ceasefire agreement with the Government of India in 1997, even as peace talks between them have still been continuing.
 - The Kuki outfits under two umbrella groups, the **Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People’s Front (UPF)**, also signed the **tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO)** pacts with the Governments of India and Manipur on August 22, 2008.
 - Many of their smaller outfits have however entered the SoO agreement with the state government, which has launched rehabilitation programmes for such groups.
 - However, major valley-based militant outfits (**Meitei groups**) such as the UNLF, PLA, KYKL etc. are yet to come to the negotiating table.

What are the Challenges in Restoring Peace in Manipur?

- **Many Conflicting Demands:** The central government’s approach of a **peaceful settlement** with the militant outfits has proved **counterproductive**.
 - Since, the **demands of many of the outfits conflict with each other**, any conventional agreement with one group becomes a cause for agitation by other groups.
- **Proxy Groupings:** Given that peace talks are on with the **insurgents groups**, there has been a tendency for the groups to continue the armed rebellion by another faction, with **merely a change in nomenclature or by forming a new group**.
- **Politician-Insurgents Nexus:** The nexus between the politicians and insurgents and criminals adds to the woes of the state.
 - Some of the outfits operate as criminal gangsters thriving on extortion, kidnapping and contract killings.
 - Nonetheless, miscreants take advantage of the unrest and extort funds, disguising themselves as insurgents.
 - Besides, most of the security issues are **politicised by the political parties to gain mileage** for vote banks by enhancing controversies.
- **Border State: Manipur being a border state**, with a **porous international border** in a hostile jungle environment, the inflow of arms and trans-border movement of insurgent outfits who rely on external countries for training and other required logistics support are continuing.

Way Forward

- **Good Governance:** Good governance needs to be instituted in the state through a **transparent government, fair judiciary system, respect for the rule of law, and the provision of the**

minimum basic amenities like hospitals, schools, police stations, etc.

- There is a need for political sincerity coupled with proper distribution of funds for the development of the state, both in the valley and the hills.
- This should be followed by economic development through government, semi-government and private entrepreneurship participation.

- **Border Management:** Before initiating any kind of counter-insurgency policy/operations, the **Indo-Myanmar international border needs proper management.**
- **Engaging With People:** The connectivity and intermingling amongst the diverse communities of Manipur with mainland India should be made more effective to encourage national integration.
 - For this, [Non-Governmental Organisations \(Ngos\)](#), women's associations, along with games and cultural programmes could be best utilised for restoring confidence among the valley and hill masses.

[Source: IE](#)

India-France External Affairs Ministers Meet

For Prelims: Location of France and the Neighbourhood, South China Sea, Blue Economy, India-France Military Exercises, International Solar Alliance.

For Mains: Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests, India-France Relations

Why in News

Recently, the **External Affairs Minister of India held talks with his French counterpart.**

- The two leaders discussed several regional and global issues including the [India-EU relationship](#), [Afghanistan situation](#), [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), [South China Sea Dispute](#), [Iran nuclear deal](#) and the [Ukraine crisis](#).



What are the Highlights of the Meeting?

- **Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership:** The two Ministers agreed to jointly launch the Indo-French call for an Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership.
 - This partnership aims **to build capacities in the Indo-Pacific region**, in terms of sustainable management of protected areas, by gathering and sharing the experiences and expertise that exist in the region among key Indo-Pacific public & private natural park managers.
- **India-France Roadmap on the Blue Economy and Ocean Governance:** Both sides also adopted the "India-France Roadmap on the [Blue Economy](#) and Ocean Governance".
 - The roadmap aims **to enhance partnership in the field of blue economy** by way of institutional, economic, infrastructural and scientific cooperation.
- **Intensify India-EU Ties:** They also agreed to intensify India-E.U. ties under the French Presidency, and the **need to begin negotiations on the [Free Trade and Investment Agreements](#)** and implement the India-E.U. Connectivity Partnership.
- **Strengthening Multilateralism:** They also agreed to coordinate in the [United Nations Security Council](#) on issues of mutual concern.
- **Deepening Strategic Partnership:** Both Ministers agreed to further deepen the Strategic Partnership, particularly in the areas of trade and investments, defence and security, health, education, research and innovation, energy and [climate change](#).
- **Facilitating People-To-People Contact:** Agreed to soon conclude a Joint Declaration of Intent in the Area of Sports, aimed at further facilitating people-to-people contact.
 - Strengthening the long-standing cooperation on public administration and administrative reforms between the relevant authorities.

What are the Areas of Cooperation in India-France Relations?

- **Background:** France was one of the first countries with which India signed a "strategic

partnership” after the end of the [Cold War](#), in January 1998.

- France was one of the very few countries to **support India’s decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998.**
- Today, France has emerged as **India’s most reliable partner** on issues relating to terrorism and Kashmir.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Both countries have a defence dialogue at the Ministerial level.
 - The three services have regular defence exercises, viz.
 - [Exercise Shakti \(Army\)](#)
 - [Exercise Varuna \(Navy\)](#)
 - [Exercise Garuda \(Air Force\)](#)
 - Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted [French Rafale multi-role combat aircraft.](#)
 - India entered into a contract with a French firm to build [six Scorpene submarines](#) in **India’s Malegaon dockyards** through a **technology-transfer arrangement in 2005.**
 - The two countries also signed the Agreement regarding the **Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support.**
- **Bilateral trade and Economic relations:** The **India-France Administrative Economic and Trade Committee (AETC)** provides an appropriate framework to assess and find ways to further promote bilateral trade and investment as well as to speed up the resolution of market access issues to the benefit of economic operators
- **Global agendas:** Climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, terrorism, cybersecurity and digital technology, etc:
 - There have been joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the [International Solar Alliance.](#)
 - Both countries have agreed on a road map on cybersecurity and digital technology.

Way Forward

- France has opened the pathway for deeper engagement with Europe on global issues, especially after uncertainty in the region due to [BREXIT.](#)
- The **new partnerships with France, Germany and other like-minded countries like Japan would hopefully turn out to be far more consequential for India’s influence** on the global stage.

[Source: IE](#)

Draft Policy Framework for Distributed Renewable Energy

For Prelims: Schemes and programmes for Achieving Renewable Energy Target

For Mains: India's achievements in renewable energy sector, India's renewables energy targets, challenges and initiatives taken to achieve it.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** released a draft policy framework for **DRE livelihood applications.**

- The aim is to achieve the objective of a **decentralised and distributed [renewable energy supply in the country,](#)** particularly for rural populations with little or no access to power.

What are Provisions of the Draft Policy Framework?

- **Committee to Monitor the Progress:**
 - MNRE proposed **forming a committee to monitor the progress of DRE projects**, which will meet at least **once every six months**.
 - Within the committee, each member ministry shall nominate the main point of contact for inter-ministerial collaboration.
 - Depending on the scheme being implemented on DRE livelihood application, the committee **may co-opt additional ministries/departments as members**.
- **Digital Catalogue of DRE-Powered Solutions:**
 - MNRE will make **available a digital catalogue of DRE-powered solutions** to be used by various stakeholders to raise awareness.

What are the main Objectives Outlined in the New Framework?

- Enabling a **market-oriented ecosystem**.
- Increasing the **adoption of DRE-based livelihood solutions** by enabling easy finance for the end-user.
- Encouraging development and management of high-quality products.
- **Developing effective DRE livelihood applications** through innovation as well as research and development.
- **Establishing energy-efficiency standards** for high-potential livelihood products
- Using applications powered by **mini/micro-grids operating in hybrid mode** along with the main grid.

What is the Significance of Distributed Renewable Energy?

- DRE and its downstream applications **offer an opportunity to not only meet India's climate and energy access targets**, but also provide attractive returns to financial investors.
- It also **provides pathways for India to reduce import-dependence** on [crude oil](#) as well as create economic growth and jobs in the long run.
- In addition, addressing existing policy and financing gaps would **not only allow for better targeting and risk-hedging of government spending programs**, but would also **allow capital to be recycled efficiently**, thereby enhancing both the duration and magnitude of the impact.

What are the Issues with DRE?

- **Lack of Technology:**
 - In order to **use renewable energy in their livelihoods**, people need access to technology and financing, which are **not available to most rural households** in India despite the existence of several technology options to deploy small-scale renewable energy-based livelihood applications.
 - **Local communities** in the villages often **find it difficult to pay upfront for these innovations**.
- **Unique Challenge for Women:**
 - **Microbusinesses, under-represented groups and women face unique challenges** when it comes to acquiring assets. As a result, businesses that use operating expense-based financial models, such as pay-as-you-go or leasing, may be eligible for credit facilitation.
- **Others:**
 - **Lack of proper financing channels, consumer awareness, consumer affordability** and quality products/standards are some of the **major challenges facing DRE in India**.

Way Forward

- **End-user and Corporate Financing:** Financial institutions may **consider developing financing options** that do not require collateral. Other **state nodal agencies such as the**

state rural livelihood missions might use their existing institutional architecture to give financial assistance to the members of women self-help groups.

- **Considering both Upstream and Downstream Livelihoods:** Upstream livelihoods affect local manufacturing and technical service providers to design, install and maintain DRE systems. This leads to **differentiating between DRE technologies** to see what can actually be manufactured locally and providing capacity-building services to both newcomers and existing service providers.
- **Promote Awareness: Awareness campaigns will help in increasing trust and adoption** of these products by end-users and financiers, as these technologies are new for many consumers.

[Source: DTE](#)

Annual Frontiers Report 2022

For Prelims: Annual Frontiers Report, United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, wildfires, climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, greenhouse gases, lightning, Savannah ecosystem

For Mains: Role of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in addressing environmental issue, Environmental Pollution & Degradation

Why in News?

Recently, the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) has released its **Annual Frontiers Report** named **Noise, Blazes and Mismatches**.

- The document has been released 10 days ahead of the **UN Environment Assembly**.
- The Frontiers report **identifies and offers solutions to three environmental issues: urban noise pollution, wildfires and phenological shifts** that merit attention and action from governments and the public at large to address the triple planetary crisis of [climate change](#), [pollution](#) and [biodiversity loss](#).

What is the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)?

- **About:** The UNEP is a **leading global environmental authority** established on 5th June 1972.
 - It **works to identify and draw attention to emerging issues** of environmental concern.
- **Functions:** It sets the **global environmental agenda**, promotes the sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for global environment protection.
- **Major Reports:** [Emission Gap Report](#), [Adaptation Gap Report](#), [Global Environment Outlook](#), Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.
- **Major Campaigns:** Beat Pollution, UN75, [World Environment Day](#), Wild for Life.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya.

What is the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)?

- It is the **governing body** of the UN Environment Programme.
- It is the **world's highest-level decision-making body** on the environment.
- It **meets biennially** to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.
- It was created in June 2012, during the [United Nations](#) Conference on Sustainable Development,

also referred to as RIO+20.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Urban Noise Pollution:**
 - The **unwanted, prolonged, and high-level sounds** from road traffic, railways, or leisure activities, impair human health and well-being.
 - Chronic annoyance and sleep disturbance caused by traffic can result in **severe heart diseases and metabolic disorders** with the very young, and mostly affect the elderly and marginalised communities near busy roads.
- **Wildfires:**
 - The trends towards more **dangerous fire-weather conditions** are likely to increase due to **rising concentrations of atmospheric [greenhouse gasses](#)** and the **attendant escalation of wildfire risk factors**.
 - **Climate change can prompt extreme wildfires**, generating **[lightning](#)** that can ignite other fires, far beyond the fire front and creating a so-called hazardous feedback loop.
 - Such extreme events are **disastrous for human health and the environment**.
 - Wildfires have also become more common in the **[Savannah ecosystem](#)**, which has **affected over one-fourth of species** in the Savannah ecosystem.
 - Wildfires are also responsible for **[air pollution](#)**.
 - According to a global study published in September 2021, there is a **link between the impact of wildfire-related pollution and human deaths**
 - Wildfires seldom spread to **humid [tropical forests](#)** in the past. But these forests are now more vulnerable **due to [deforestation](#) and forest fragmentation**.
- **Phenological Shifts:**
 - Plants and animals in terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems use temperature, day length or rainfall as cues for when to bear fruit, migrate or transform in other ways.
 - However, **climate change disrupts these natural rhythms** as plants and animals are being pushed out of sync with their natural rhythms, leading to mismatches, such as when plants shift life cycle stages faster than herbivores.
 - **Phenology is the timing of recurring life cycle stages**, driven by environmental forces, and how species interacting within an ecosystem respond to changing conditions.

What are the Recommendations of the Report?

- Appreciating and adopting **indigenous fire management techniques**.
- A **preventive approach, rather than reactive approach** by engaging vulnerable groups, will help adapt to the wildfires.
- It is important to **enhance fire-fighting capabilities** and strengthen community resilience-building programmes
- It is important to **focus on long-range [weather forecasting](#)**.
- Focus on **remote-sensing capabilities** such as satellites, ground-based radar, lightning detection as well as data handling.

[Source: BS](#)

PM CARES Scheme for Children

For Prelims: PM CARES Scheme for Children, Ayushman Bharat Scheme, PM e-VIDYA, Manodarpan, Bal Swaraj Covid-Care, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Expenditure,

For Mains: Impact of Covid-19 on children, steps taken in this direction, Issues Related to Children, Education, Government Policies & Interventions

Why in News?

Recently, the Centre has extended the [PM Cares for Children Scheme](#) till 28th February 2022, which was earlier valid till 31st December 2021.



Government stands with children **who lost their parents due to COVID-19**



Such children to **get a monthly stipend** once they **turn 18** and a fund of **10 lakh** when they **turn 23** from **PM CARES**



Free education to be ensured for children who lost their parents to COVID-19



Children will be assisted to **get an education loan for higher education & PM CARES will pay interest on the loan**



Children will **get free health insurance of 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat till 18 years** & premium will be paid by **PM CARES**



Children represent the future of the country and we will do everything to support and protect the children: **PM Narendra Modi**



It is our duty, as a society, to care for our children and instil hope for a bright future: **PM Narendra Modi**

What is the 'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme?

▪ About:

- The scheme was **launched on 29th May, 2021** with the aim to support **children who lost both or surviving parent(s)**, legal guardian/adoptive parents or single adoptive parent to **Covid-19**.
 - The status of children in need of care and protection included orphans (10,094), lost either parent (1,36,910) and abandoned (488) taking the total to 1,47,492.
 - In the **gender-wise break-up**, out of the 1,47,492 children, there are 76,508 boys, 70,980 girls and four transgender.
- The objective is to **ensure comprehensive care and protection of children** in a sustained manner, enable their wellbeing through health insurance, empower them through education and equip them for self-sufficient existence with financial support

on reaching 23 years of age.

▪ **Features of the Scheme:**

◦ **Corpus of Rs. 10 Lakh:**

- The scheme offers a **corpus of Rs. 10 lakh to each of these children** from the **PM CARES fund**.
- This corpus will be used to give a **monthly stipend from 18 years of their age**, for the next five years and on reaching the age of 23 years, he or she will get the corpus amount as one lump-sum for personal and professional use.

◦ **Education to the Children:**

- The **education expenses of younger children** are supported by way of admission to [Kendriya Vidyalayas](#) and private schools up to higher secondary level.
- These children are also supported **during their higher education** through either a scholarship equivalent to the tuition fees or educational loans where the interest on the loan will be paid by the PM-CARES fund.

◦ **Health Insurance:**

- All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under [Ayushman Bharat Scheme](#) with a health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh.
- The premium amount will be paid by PM-CARES till a child turns 18.

What is the PM-CARES Fund?

- The government has set up the [Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund \(PM-CARES Fund\)](#) to deal with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Fund is a **public charitable trust** with the Prime Minister as its Chairman. Other Members include Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
- The Fund enables micro-donations as a result of which a large number of people will be able to contribute with the smallest of denominations.
- It will **strengthen disaster management capacities** and encourage research on protecting citizens.
- Contribution to PM - CARES Fund Qualifies as [CSR \(Corporate Social Responsibility\) Expenditure](#).

What are the other Children Related Initiatives Taken by the Government During Covid?

▪ **Bal Swaraj Covid-Care:**

- The [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#) has devised an online tracking portal "**Bal Swaraj (Covid-Care)**" for children in need of care and protection.
- This has been created with a **purpose for online tracking and digital real time monitoring mechanism** of children who are in need of care and protection.

▪ **PM e-VIDYA:**

- On 17th May, 2020, a comprehensive initiative called PM e-VIDYA was initiated as part of [Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan](#) which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education.
- It was launched under the **One Nation One Digital Platform** with the objective of **protecting the education of children during the Covid-19 pandemic**.

▪ **Manodarpan:**

- It is aimed to **provide psychosocial support to students**, family members and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of [Covid-19](#).

[Source: PIB](#)

National Means Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Education has approved the continuation of [National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship \(NMMSS\)](#) over the [15th Finance Commission](#) cycle for a period of five years i.e. from 2021-22 to 2025-26 with financial outlay of Rs. 1827.00 crore.

What are the Key Points?

▪ About:

- It is a [central Sector Scheme](#), launched in 2008-09 to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to **reduce drop-outs in class VIII**.
 - 22.06 lakh scholarships have been sanctioned till 2020-21 involving an expenditure of Rs. 1783.03 crore.
- It also intends **to encourage students to continue the study** at a secondary stage.
- The scheme envisages **award of one lakh fresh scholarships every year to selected students of class IX** and their continuation/renewal in classes X to XII for study in a State Government, Government-aided and Local body schools under the scheme.

▪ Details of the Scholarship:

- **Scholarship of Rs. 12000/- per annum** (Rs.1000/- per month) per student is awarded to selected students every year for study in **classes from IX to XII**.
 - The selection of students awarded the scholarships is made through an **examination conducted by the State Governments**.
 - Scholarships are disbursed by the State Bank of India **directly into the bank accounts of students on a quarterly basis**.

▪ Eligibility Criteria:

- Students whose **parental income from all sources is not more than Rs. 3,50,000/-** per annum are eligible to avail the scholarships.
- The students studying in **Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas**, Residential Schools run by the State Government Institutions and private schools are not eligible for the scholarship under this scheme.
- At the time of selection for the award of scholarship the candidate must have scored at least **55% marks or equivalent grade in Class VIII examination**. There will be 5 % relaxation for SC.

What are the other Related Schemes?

- [National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning](#).
- [Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan \(RUSA\)](#).
- [Prime Minister's Research Fellowship \(PMRF\)](#).
- [Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration \(SPARC\)](#).
- [Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan](#).
- [NEAT](#).
- [PRAGYATA](#).
- [Mid Day Meal Scheme](#).
- [Right To Education \(RTE\) Act, 2009](#).
- [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#).

Similipal Biosphere Reserve: Odisha

Why in News?

Recently the Forest Administration and [SHGs \(Self Help Groups\)](#) have started an awareness Campaign to manage fires in [Similipal Biosphere Reserve](#) this year.

- Earlier, scientists unravelled the mystery behind Odisha's [‘Black Tigers’ in Similipal Tiger Reserve \(STR\)](#).

What are the Key Points?

▪ About:

- Similipal derives its name from **‘Simul’ (silk cotton) tree**.
- It was formally designated a tiger reserve in 1956 and brought under [Project Tiger](#) in the year 1973.
- It was **declared a biosphere reserve** by the Government of India in **June, 1994**.
- It has been part of the [UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserve](#) since 2009.
- It is part of the **Similipal-Kuldiha-Hadgarh Elephant Reserve** popularly known as [Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve](#).
- It is prone to forest fires. In **2021**, the Similipal saw a [major fire](#) between **February-end and early March**.

▪ Location:

- It is situated in the **northern part of Odisha’s Mayurbhanj district**. Geographically, it lies in the eastern end of the [eastern ghat](#).

▪ Coverage:

- The biosphere spread over 4,374 sq. km. has 845 sq. km. of core forest (tiger reserve), 2,129 sq km buffer area and 1,400 sq km of transition space.

▪ Vegetation:

- Similipal has 1,076 flowering species and 96 species of orchids.
- It boasts of having **tropical semi-evergreen forests, tropical moist deciduous forests, dry deciduous hill forests**.

▪ Tribes:

- Two tribes, the Ereng Kharias and the Mankirdias, inhabit the reserve’s forests and practise traditional agricultural activities.

▪ Wildlife:

- Similipal is home to a wide range of wild animals including tigers and [elephants](#), besides 304 species of birds, 20 species of amphibians and 62 species of reptiles.

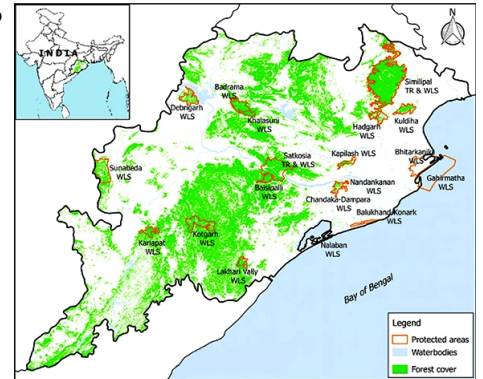
What causes Fires and Mitigation?

▪ Forest Fires:

- **Natural:** Natural causes such as lightning or even soaring temperatures can sometimes result in [forest fires here](#).

- **Man Made Factors:** Instances of poaching and hunting wherein the poachers set a **small patch of forest on fire to divert the wild animals.**
- **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - Forecasting fire-prone days and including community members to mitigate incidents of fire, creating fire lines, clearing sites of dried biomass, and crackdown on poachers.

What are the Other Major Protected Areas in Odisha?



- [Bhitarkanika National Park](#)
- **Badrama WLS**
- [Chilika \(Nalaban island\) WLS](#)
- **Hadgarh WLS**
- [Baisipalli WLS](#)
- **Kotagarh WLS**
- [Nandankanan WLS](#)
- **Lakhari Valley WLS**
- [Gahirmatha \(Marine\) WLS](#)

[Source: IE](#)

Ayush Start-up Challenge

Why in News?

The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in association with [Startup India](#) has launched the ‘**Ayush Start-up Challenge**’.

- [AYUSH](#) stands for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Sidha and Homeopathy.

What are the Key Points?

- **About:**
 - It was launched to encourage **start-ups and individuals working on innovations in the field of Ayurveda and alternative healing.**
 - The winners of ‘Ayush Start-up Challenge’ will receive both a **cash prize and incubation support from the AIIA.**

- Cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh for the winner and Rs. 50,000 for the runner-up.

- **Categories:**

- **3 entry categories** for participating start-ups:
 - Ayush Food Innovations:
 - Ayush Bio-instrumentation (Hardware solutions)
 - Ayush IT Solutions (Software solutions).
- There will be **two winners in each of the 3 categories.**

What is the Status of the AYUSH Market?

- The market size of the AYUSH sector has grown by 17 % in 2014-20 to reach USD 18.1 billion.
- In terms of global share, India has **grown faster in the AYUSH market as compared to the world** and accounts for about 2.8 % of the market, which is likely to hold.
- The Ayush market is currently estimated to be around USD 10 bn and it is projected to see a 50 % increase over the course of the next five years.

What are the other Schemes Related to AYUSH?

- [National Ayush Mission](#)
- [New Portals on Ayush Sector](#)
- [AYUSH Entrepreneurship Programme](#)
- [Ayush Wellness Centers](#)
- [ACCR Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App](#)

Source: IE

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