



SAIME Initiative

Why in News?

In Sundarbans, a new shrimp farming initiative offers hope for [mangrove restoration](#).

What is the SAIME Initiative?

- Under Sustainable Aquaculture In Mangrove Ecosystem (SAIME) initiative, **farmers have taken up cultivation of shrimp at 30 hectares** in West Bengal.
 - Additionally, they are **restoring mangroves**.
- Started in 2019, the community-based initiative of sustainable shrimp cultivation is being conceived by **NGOs- Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) and Global Nature Fund (GNF)**, Naturland, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS).
- The mangrove ecosystem is **integrated with shrimp cultivation**, but when fisheries were expanded inwards, the mangrove ecosystem was excluded.
 - Fishing, particularly shrimp cultivation, is **one of the key occupations of the people of Sundarbans**, which is a complex network of rivers and low-lying islands that face a tide surge twice a day.
- Shrimp cultivation is **practised in about 15,000 to 20,000 hectares of the unique ecosystem** in India.

What is the Significance of the Sundarbans Delta?

- The Sundarbans hosts the **largest mangrove forests in the world**, lying on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal.
 - Mangrove ecosystem is a **very specialised environment occurring in between the land and the sea** in the tropical and subtropical regions.
- Sundarbans is the natural abode of many groups of animals and a large number of species are known to feed, breed, and take shelter in this ecosystem.
 - It is home to many rare and globally threatened wildlife species such as the [estuarine crocodile](#), water monitor lizard, [Gangetic dolphin](#) and [olive ridley turtle](#).
- 40% of Sundarbans lies in India and the rest in Bangladesh. Sundarbans was designated a [UNESCO World Heritage site](#) in 1987 (India) and 1997 (Bangladesh).
- Sundarbans Wetland, India was recognised as the **'Wetland of International Importance'** under the [Ramsar Convention](#) in January 2019.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. The 2004 Tsunami made people realize that mangroves can serve as a reliable safety hedge against coastal calamities. How do mangroves function as a safety hedge? (2011)

(a) The mangrove swamps separate the human settlements from the sea by a wide zone in which people neither live nor venture out

(b) The mangroves provide both food and medicines which people are in need of after any natural disaster

(c) The mangrove trees are tall with dense canopies and serve as an excellent shelter during a cyclone or tsunami

(d) The mangrove trees do not get uprooted by storms and tides because of their extensive roots

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Discuss the causes of depletion of mangroves and explain their importance in maintaining coastal ecology. **(2019)**

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