Cyclone Tauktae

What is the issue?

- The recent Cyclone Tauktae has left a trail of death and destruction before making landfall in Gujarat.
- This reminds again that accurate forecasts and resilience-building hold the key to handling severe cyclones.

How severe was Cyclone Tauktae?

- Cyclone Tauktae swelled into an extremely severe cyclonic storm.
- It led to dumping enormous volumes of water all along the west coast.
- The cyclone caused loss of life in Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat, before weakening overland.
- The twin crises of the cyclone and COVID-19 have strained the capacities of multiple States, especially the coastal ones.

What are IMD's recent measures?

- In 2020, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) launched an impact-based cyclone warning system.
- This was designed to reduce economic losses by focusing on districts and specific locations.
- It incorporates such factors as population, infrastructure, land use and settlements.
- The IMD also claimed that its accuracy of forecasts, for instance, in plotting landfall location, is now better.
- Together with ground mapping of vulnerabilities, this is a promising approach to avoid loss of life and destruction of property.

What are the priorities now?

- Developing greater expertise in forecasting and disaster mitigation is essential.
- Crafting policies to increase resilience among communities is another priority.
- Arabian Sea has emerged as a major source of severe cyclones.
- Their intensity is aggravated by long-term rise in sea surface

temperatures linked to pollution over South Asia and its neighbourhood.

- So importance of precise early warnings is high now than before.
- Climate-proofing lives and dwellings is also a high priority now.
- This calls for a multi-sectoral approach:

i. to build sturdy homes of suitable design
ii. create adequate storm shelters
iii. provide accurate early warnings
iv. ensure financial protection against calamities through insurance for property and assets

Source: The Hindu

