Libex – A New Climate-Resilient Coffee Hybrid

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, Scientists Royal Botanic Gardens, London have identified a new coffee hybrid called Coffea × libex (Libex),

- **Created by** – Crossing *Liberica coffee* and *Excelsa coffee.*
- **Indian contribution** – South India Coffee Company (SICC) and its research division SICC Labs contributed Indian samples and field expertise.
- **Significance** – Grow in warmer temperatures.
- Tolerate a wider range of rainfall patterns than Arabica or Robusta.
- Higher yield and better outturn (higher conversion of fresh cherries into coffee beans).
- Thinner pulp and parchment, making post-harvest processing easier and improving coffee quality.
- **Current Global Coffee Consumption** – The world consumes about 17,000 tonnes of Arabica and 10,000 tonnes of Robusta (pre-roasting) every day.
- These two species account for more than 99.99% of global coffee production.
- **Issues with current varieties** – Both are increasingly vulnerable to rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall.

Coffee production in India

- **Varieties –** India primarily cultivates two main types:
  - **Arabica** (high altitude, high value)
  - **Robusta** (stronger, used in blends).
- **Geographical Distribution –** India is the **7th largest** coffee producer globally.
- **Traditional regions**
  - **Karnataka –** Accounting for roughly 70–71% of India's total coffee production.
  - **Kerala –** The second-largest producer, contributing about 21% of the country's coffee.
  - **Tamil Nadu –** The third-largest traditional producer, making up around 5% of India's yield.
- **Non-traditional areas – Araku Valley** (Andhra Pradesh), Odisha and the North East.

The Coffee Board of India

• **Functions under** – The Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
• It is a statutory body
• **Established under** – Coffee Act of 1942
• **Headquarters** – **Bengaluru**
• **Mandate** – To promote the production, quality, and export of Indian coffee.
• **Role** – Focuses on research, extension services, market intelligence, export promotion, and welfare for growers
• **Composition –** 33 members (including the Chairperson), representing growers, industry, labor, and state governments

Reference

The Hindu| Libex Coffee