Potash

Why in news?

Recently potash reserve has been discovered in the Punjab region which is significant to reduce India's import dependence and bolster the domestic fertilizer industry.

- **Potash** – Refers to potassium-bearing minerals that are primarily used in fertilisers.
- **N-P-K** – Over 90% of potash is used as fertilizer and it is one of the three primary agricultural nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium or N-P-K).
- **Indian Minerals Yearbook for 2021** – According to it, Potash can be used on all plants to boost plant health and nutrition as well as to increase crop yields.
- **Different forms of it** – While all potash fertilizers contain potassium there are a number of different forms in which it exists.
- **Sulphate of Potash (SOP)** – Among these forms is Sulphate of Potash (SOP), a premium potash fertilizer that is free of chloride (a compound considered harmful to plants).
- SOP is used primarily on high-value crops, usually leafy plants, fruits and vegetables.
- **Muriate of Potash (MOP)** – Contains some chloride. MOP is commonly used on carbohydrate-type crops, such as wheat.
- **Potash reserves in India** – Punjab is now the second state after Rajasthan to have significant potash reserves.
- **The three mining blocks** – With potash reserves are:
    - Kabarwala (Muktsar Sahib),
    - Sherewala and Ramsara (Fazilka)
    - Shergarh and Dalmir Khera (Fazilka)
- **In Rajasthan** – Potash deposits were mainly found in the *north-western Nagaur-Ganganagar basin*, including the Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts that border Fazilka and Muktsar.
- **Auctioning rights & royalties** – Although the central government has the auctioning rights for minerals, states receive royalties upon their extraction.

Reference

The indian express - Potash