Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Why in news?

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Svalbard Global Seed Vault (SGSV) facility in Norway has recently faced a grave existential threat.

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What is SGSV?

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- SGSV facility lies 360 feet inside of the 1,500-foot Platåberget mountain in Nordenskiöld Land on the island of Spitsbergen in Svalbard, Norway.
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- It is a vault that contains humanity’s ultimate food security.
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- Millions of seeds of various crop varieties are locked in airtight boxes at minus 18 degrees Celsius.
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- It is built to withstand manmade and natural disasters.
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- It is theoretically protected against conventional bombs, and sits out of reach of rising sea levels.
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- Norway’s government owns the vault.
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- Depositors retain ownership rights.
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- India has sent around 9.5 crore seeds to Svalbard.
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What is the threat?

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- Permafrost refers to the perennially frozen soil found in the Earth’s higher latitudes.
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- Technically, it is ground that remains at or below a temperature of 0°C for at least 2 consecutive years.
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- The permafrost around the entrance of the vault melted, flooding the access tunnel with water.
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- The thaw in the permafrost around the entrance of the facility is likely the result of consistently rising global temperatures.
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- The builders of the SGSV announced that repairs were under way at the facility, and that water had reached no seeds.
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Source: The Indian Express

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