UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelimbits 18-07-2025

Chhattisgarh Forest Control Battle

Prelims : *Current events of National and International Importance*

Why in News?

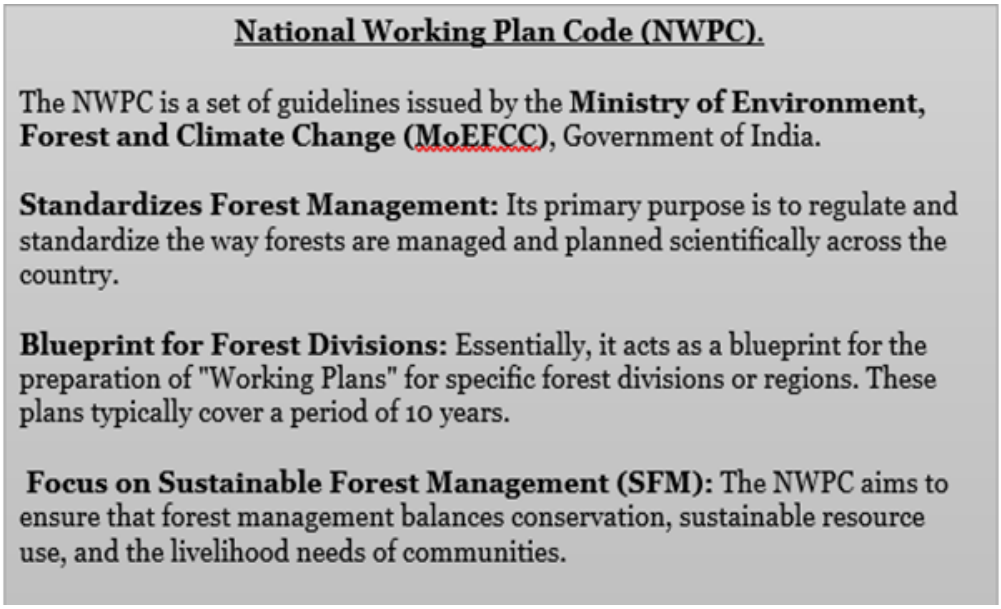
Recently, Chhattisgarh Forest department attempted to control over community forest management, contradicting the provisions of Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, leading to widespread protests.



- **Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) -** It is a transformative provision of the FRA, recognizes the right of gram sabhas to manage their customary forests.
- It seeks to rectify the injustices of colonial forest consolidation which dispossessed local communities and supplanted their traditional management institutions with centralised state control.
- **Issues with centralized control –** Chattisgarh Forest Department Attempting to declare itself the nodal agency for CFR management, usurping the role of Gram Sabhas.
- Gram Sabhas should follow a specific plan from Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA).
- It means Gram Sabhas should follow the ***National Working Plan Code (NWPC).*** Thus, undermines local autonomy.
- **Prohibition -** It also prohibited other departments or NGOs from supporting gram

sabhas in CFRR management planning.

- **Resistance -** Strong resistance from GS, local political representatives & Adivasi rights groups forced the forest department to retract its decision.
- The letter was withdrawn after a spirited grassroots mobilisation by gram sabhas, local elected representatives, and Adivasi rights groups.
- **Historical context -** Forests under government control were traditionally managed through "working plans" rooted in colonial-era "scientific forestry."
- Aims to maximizing timber extraction by disregarding local ecosystems and community needs, leading to forest degradation and conflicts with forest-dwelling communities.
- **Challenges in FRA Implementation -** Despite over 10,000 GS receiving CFR titles nationwide, fewer than 1,000 have successfully developed their management plans due to persistent resistance from forest departments.
- **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** - A Central government program, offers a flexible framework for community forest management plans, which can be further improved.
- MoTA must firmly uphold the autonomy of GS under the FRA and resist pressures to impose NWPC on community forest management.
- Forest departments need to transit from timber-focused "scientific" approach to a people-centric forest management model, providing necessary financial and protective support to GS.



Reference

The Hindu | Future of forest governance

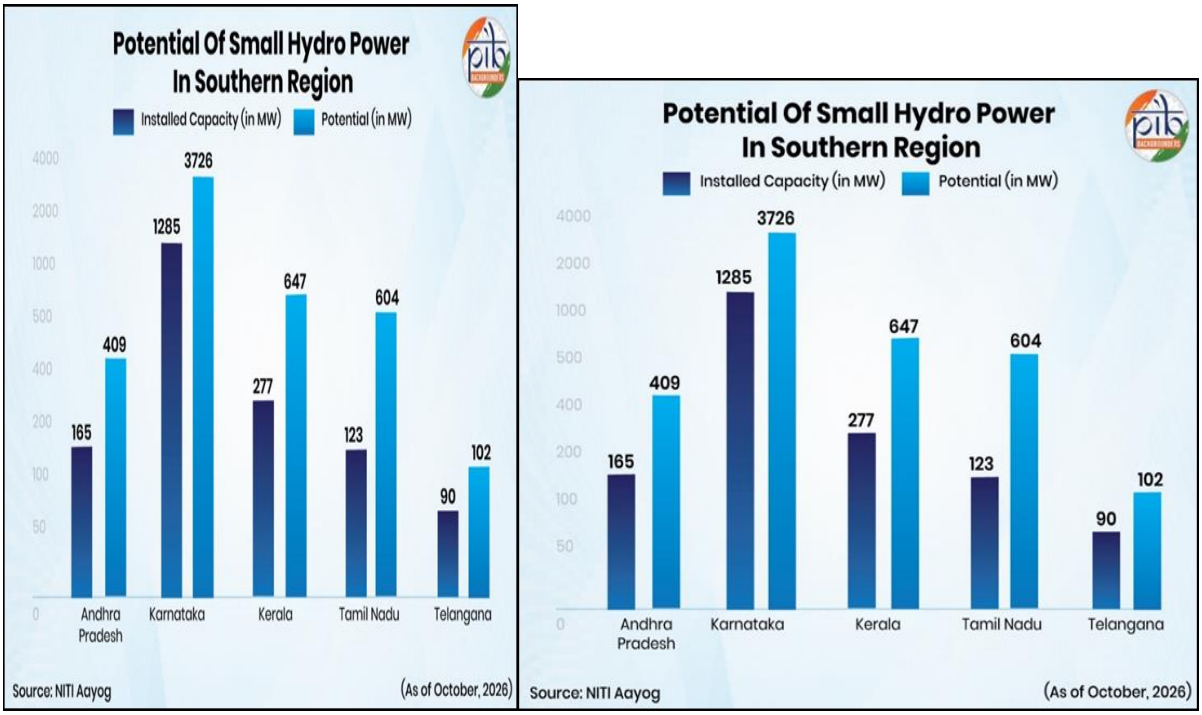
Display of Sugar and oil Boards

Prelims: *Current Events of National and International Importance*

Why in the news?

The Health Ministry has asked all government departments to display such information in their cafeterias, lobbies, and meeting rooms, in a bid to highlight the health risks of popular Indian snacks.

- **Sugar and Oil Boards initiative –** It is to promote healthier dietary habits in various settings.
- **Objective** - These Display boards serve as visual behavioural nudges in ***schools, offices, public institutions etc*** displaying key information about hidden fats and sugars in everyday foods.
- The goal is *not to restrict but to encourage* moderate consumption and more mindful eating habits.
- **Pilot initiative** - The Health Ministry has launched a health awareness campaign *at AIIMS Nagpur* as the first location.
- **Office guidelines** - Government officials are encouraged to include health messages on official stationery and publications to promote wellness consistently.
- **National rollout** - The campaign will expand to other Indian cities later this year after initial implementation and feedback.



- **Nutrition awareness** - Government departments are instructed to display boards showing oil, sugar, fat, and trans-fat content in popular Indian snacks like samosas, jalebis, pakoras, vada pav, and chai biscuits.
- **Visual nudges** - These boards aim to serve as visual behavioral nudges *to help people make more informed dietary decisions*.
- **Health alerts** - Cafeterias and food counters in government settings will feature posters with clear warnings on the health risks of frequent snack consumption.
- **Healthy choices** - Departments must offer nutritious food options, like fruits, vegetables, and low-fat items, while limiting sugary drinks and fried snacks.
- **Active lifestyle** - Offices *should promote physical activity* through practical initiatives

like using stairs, walking breaks, and organized exercise sessions.
- **Obesity concerns** - A Lancet study highlights that 450 million Indians could be overweight or obese by 2050, placing India second globally after China.
- **WHO perspective** - It states many everyday foods are ultra-processed and cheap, this unhealthy environment making it harder for people to choose healthy diets.
- **Disease link** - Poor eating habits are linked to major health issues such as *obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and even cancer.*

Reference

The Hindu| Sugar Boards of Indian Snacks

Annual Estimate of Global Vaccine Coverage

> **Prelims:** *Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in News?

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF released their annual estimates of global vaccine coverage.

Recent Findings

- **Zero-dose children -** More than 14 million children did not receive a single vaccine last year, about the same number as the year before.
- **Geographic concentration -** 9 countries accounted for over half of these unvaccinated children, including Nigeria, India, Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Angola.

Sudan has the lowest reported coverage against diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough.

- **First dose of vaccines** - **89%** of children under one year old got a first dose of the diphtheria, tetanus, and Whooping cough vaccine in 2024, the same as in 2023.
- About **85%** completed the three-dose series, up from 84% in 2023.
- **Coverage against measles** - Rose slightly, with 76% of children worldwide receiving both vaccine doses.

Issues Associated with vaccination

- **Collapse of international aid** - Due to ongoing conflicts and worldwide tensions.
- **Withdrawal of assistance** - U.S. President Trump withdrew the country from the WHO, *froze nearly all humanitarian aid,* and later moved to close the U.S. AID Agency.
- **Misinformation -** About the safety of vaccines, threaten to unwind decades of progress.
- **Unequal access** - Vaccine access remained “deeply unequal” and that conflict and

humanitarian crises quickly unravelled progress.

- **Measles outbreak** - 60 countries reported big measles outbreaks in 2024.
- **Cases of measles** - U.S. is now having its worst measles outbreak in more than three decades.
- It has also surged across Europe, with twice as many as the previous year.
- **Need for measles vaccine coverage** - Need to reach 95% to prevent outbreaks of the extremely contagious disease.
- Even an adult can get vaccinated. It is the only way to stop measles spreading.
- **Safety of vaccines** - The diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough vaccine has proven to be *safe and effective* after years of study and real-world use.
- **Significance of Vaccines -** It *prevents 3.5 million to 5 million deaths* a year, according to U.N. estimates.

Quick facts

Measles
• It is an ***RNA viral disease.***
• **Infection** - Virus infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body.
• **Transmission** - Through direct contact and air.
• **Symptoms** - High fever, runny nose, cough, red and watery eyes, rash erupts after several days, usually on the face and upper neck.
• **Treatment** - No specific antiviral treatment exists for measles.
• **Prevention** - Measles can be prevented through a two-dose vaccine.
• **Global Initiatives**
- The Measles & Rubella Initiative
- Measles-Rubella (MR) Vaccination

Reference

The Hindu| WHO- Global Vaccine Coverage

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