



Daily Current Affairs



To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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1 Plastic Parks in India: A Step Towards Sustainable Industrial Growth

Context: India's **Plastic Parks Scheme** is playing a transformative role in promoting **industrial development** and ensuring **environmental sustainability** within the nation's plastics sector.

What is a Plastic Park?

A **Plastic Park** is a specially developed **industrial zone** dedicated to **plastic-based industries**. These parks aim to:

- **Synergize and consolidate** the capacities of the domestic **plastic processing industry**
- **Attract investments** and boost **production** and **exports**
- **Generate employment opportunities**
- Promote **sustainable growth** through effective **waste management** and **recycling** systems

**Why Plastic Parks Matter:**

Plastic Parks are central to India's mission of:

- **Efficiently managing plastic waste**
- Encouraging **recycling and reuse**
- Strengthening the **chemical and plastic processing industries**

India is now the **12th largest plastic exporter** globally, with exports rising significantly from **\$8.2 billion in 2014** to **\$27 billion in 2022**, thanks to strategic initiatives like the Plastic Parks Scheme.

Current Status:

So far, **10 Plastic Parks** have received approval across various **states**, acting as **special plastic-industrial hubs** that cater to the growing needs of the industry.

Challenges in the Sector:

Despite being one of the largest industries, India's plastics sector remains **highly fragmented**, largely composed of **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)**. This fragmentation limits the ability to leverage large-scale opportunities in the global market.

Government's Role and Support:

To address these challenges, the Government of India has introduced a robust scheme through the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals. Key highlights include:

- **Development of need-based Plastic Parks** with **modern infrastructure**
- Provision of **common facilities** through a **cluster development approach**
- **Financial support** covering up to **50% of the project cost**, with a ceiling of **₹40 crore per park**

This approach aims to boost **domestic capabilities**, increase **private investment**, enhance **exports**, and encourage **innovation** in the plastics sector.

Conclusion: A Vision for the Future

The **Plastic Parks Scheme** represents a **pioneering initiative** to revamp the **infrastructure** of plastic processing in India. By promoting **innovation**, **sustainability**, and **global competitiveness**, the scheme is ensuring that India's growth in the **plastic trade** is **inclusive**, **responsible**, and **future-ready**.

2 India Ends Transshipment Facility for Bangladesh Exports

Context: India has officially **withdrawn the transshipment facility** that previously allowed **Bangladesh to export goods** to third countries via **Indian ports, airports, and land customs stations (LCSs)**. This move is poised to have considerable implications for **Bangladesh's export logistics** and regional trade dynamics.



What Was the Transshipment Agreement?

Introduced in **2020** by India's **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, the **transshipment agreement** was designed to:

- Strengthen **regional trade connectivity**
- Allow **Bangladeshi cargo** to move through Indian LCSs to international ports and airports
- Facilitate **seamless exports** from Bangladesh to destinations like **Europe, West Asia**, and beyond

Why Was It Revoked?

India cited **logistical bottlenecks** as the main reason behind this decision. Key concerns included:

- **Severe congestion** at Indian ports and airports
- Resulting **delays and increased operational costs**
- Negative impact on **India's own export timelines and efficiency**

The suspension of this facility is likely to **raise costs** and **complicate trade logistics** for Bangladesh, especially for shipments to **Western markets**.

India-Bangladesh Relations: A Snapshot

Historical Ties:

- **1971 Liberation War:** India played a **pivotal role** in Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan, cementing a foundation of strong bilateral ties.

Land Boundary Agreement (LBA):

- Signed in **2015**, this historic agreement:
 - Resolved **decades-old border disputes**
 - Enabled the **exchange of enclaves**
 - Simplified the **international boundary**

Connectivity and Infrastructure:

- **Five pre-1965 rail links** have been restored.
- Operational trains include:
 - **Maitri Express**
 - **Bandhan Express**
 - **Mitali Express**
- The **Akhaura-Agartala rail link** has significantly improved connectivity between **northeastern India** and Bangladesh.

Economic Ties:

- Bangladesh is **India's largest trading partner in South Asia**.
- In **FY24**, bilateral trade reached **US\$ 12.90 billion**.
 - **India's exports**: US\$ 11.06 billion
- Both countries participate in multiple trade agreements:
 - **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)**
 - **SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA)**
 - **South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA)**

Strategic and Regional Cooperation:

- Active membership in **SAARC** and **BIMSTEC**.
- Regular **joint military exercises**:
 - **Sampriti** (Army)
 - **Milan** (Navy)
- Bangladesh imports approximately **2,000 MW of electricity** from India, highlighting energy interdependence.

Challenges in the Bilateral Relationship:

1. **Border Issues**: Despite the LBA, sporadic **border security incidents** and **illegal crossings** continue to pose challenges.
2. **Water Sharing Disputes**: **Teesta River sharing** remains unresolved, causing diplomatic strain.
3. **Trade Imbalance**: A persistent **trade surplus in India's favor** has triggered calls for a more balanced trade structure.
4. **Cross-Border Migration**: **Undocumented migration** into Indian states like **Assam** and **West Bengal** remains a politically sensitive topic.
5. **Security Concerns**: Issues like **smuggling**, **extremist activities**, and **border vulnerabilities** demand constant vigilance.
6. **China's Influence**: **China's growing footprint** in Bangladesh, especially in **infrastructure and defense**, is viewed by India as a strategic challenge.

The Way Forward:

India and Bangladesh share not just a **border**, but a deep-rooted bond forged by **history**, **culture**, and **geographical proximity**. With the **longest land boundary** between any of India's neighbors, Bangladesh remains a **key partner** in regional stability and growth.

Moving forward, both nations should focus on:

- **Strengthening dialogue**
- **Enhancing inclusivity in trade**
- **Balancing strategic partnerships**
- Promoting a **resilient and forward-looking relationship**

3 Naxalmukt Bharat Abhiyan: From Red Zones to Growth Corridors

Context: India has made remarkable progress in countering Left Wing Extremism (LWE), with a significant decline in violence, reduction in affected districts, and a visible shrinking of Naxalite influence across the country.

What is the Naxalite Movement?

Origins:

- Began in 1967 in Naxalbari, West Bengal.
- Initiated as a radical leftist uprising, advocating for the rights of tribals and landless farmers.

Geographical Spread:

- Expanded across the so-called Red Corridor, including:
 - Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala.

Tactics Used:

- Operate through guerrilla warfare, targeting state institutions.
- Engage in extortion, child recruitment, and violence in the name of justice for the marginalized.

Consequences of Naxalism:

Political Impact:

- Undermines state authority and disrupts democratic processes.
- Creates administrative vacuums and weakens law enforcement.

Economic Impact:

- Disrupts agriculture, mining, and infrastructure projects.
- Leads to higher security spending, reducing focus on development.
- Deters private investment in affected regions.

Social Impact:

- Spreads fear and alienation among local communities.
- Interrupts education and healthcare, causing long-term human development setbacks.

India's Progress in Combating Naxalism:

- **Reduction in Affected Districts:** From 126 in 2010 to just 38 in 2024.
- **Violence Down by 81%:** From 1,936 incidents in 2010 to 374 in 2024.
- **Over 8,000 Naxalites Surrendered:** In the last 10 years.
- **Mainstream Integration:** Improvements in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and governance in previously LWE-dominated areas.

Key Government Initiatives:

1. Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme:

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- Part of the 'Modernization of Police Forces' umbrella.
- Central government reimburses security expenses in LWE-affected districts.

2. SAMADHAN Strategy:

A comprehensive 8-point approach:

- Smart Leadership
- Aggressive Strategy
- Motivation and Training
- Actionable Intelligence
- Dashboard-based KPIs & KRAs
- Harnessing Technology
- Action Plans for Each Theatre
- No Access to Financing

3. **Fortified Police Stations:** 612 police stations constructed in vulnerable districts over the past decade.

4. **Aspirational Districts Programme:** 35 LWE-affected districts included for focused development monitoring under Ministry of Home Affairs.

5. Special Central Assistance (SCA):

- 30 crore annually for the most affected districts.
- 10 crore for Districts of Concern to bridge infrastructure and development gaps.

The Way Ahead:

1. Community Participation

- Implement confidence-building initiatives.
- Strengthen tribal governance and grassroots institutions.

2. **Education & Employment:** Offer vocational training, job opportunities, and educational access to youth in remote areas.

3. **Tech-Driven Security:** Leverage modern surveillance, communication, and intelligence tools to monitor and counter threats efficiently.

Conclusion:

The Government of India is committed to achieving a **Naxalism-free India** by 31st March 2026, recognizing extremism as a **major obstacle to tribal and rural development**.

The success of **Naxalmukt Bharat Abhiyan** lies in a balanced approach that **combines strong security measures with inclusive development**. With **political determination, administrative efficiency, and community engagement**, a **peaceful and prosperous future** free from **Left-Wing Extremism** is not only possible—it is within reach.

4 India-Italy: Strengthening Strategic Ties for a Future-Ready Partnership

Context: The Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, Antonio Tajani, visited India with the aim of boosting **bilateral cooperation** and expanding engagement across key sectors like **trade, defence, clean energy, and technology**.

Deepening Bilateral Cooperation:

The dialogue between the two nations emphasized:

- Strengthening ties under the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)**
- Advancing the **Joint Strategic Action Plan (JSAP) 2025-29**
- Building on the momentum of the **2023 Strategic Partnership**

**India-Italy Relations: An Overview****Historical Ties:**

- Italy's ancient **port cities** were vital points in the **spice trade route**, linking **India to the Mediterranean**.
- **Marco Polo's 13th-century journey** to India stands as a testament to early cultural and commercial links.

Diplomatic Milestones:

- **Diplomatic relations established in 1947**, grounded in shared values and civilizational heritage.
- In **2023**, the relationship was elevated to a **Strategic Partnership**.
- The launch of the **Joint Strategic Action Plan (2025-29)** in 2024 aims to consolidate and expand collaboration.

Economic and Trade Cooperation:

- **Bilateral trade** reached **\$13.22 billion** in 2023-24.
- India exported goods worth **\$7.94 billion** to Italy.
- **Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner** in the EU and ranked **17th in FDI inflows** from 2000 to 2023.

Defence and Maritime Collaboration:

- **INS Sumedha** and **ITS Morosini** conducted a **PASSEX exercise** near Sardinia in 2023.
- Italy's navy participated in **MILAN 2024**, India's premier multinational naval exercise.
- Defence collaboration is gaining momentum amid shared interests in maritime security and Indo-Pacific stability.

Multilateral and Green Convergence:

- Italy is an active participant in:
 - **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**
 - **Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)**
 - **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)**



These initiatives reflect a shared commitment to **climate action** and **sustainable development**.

Cultural Diplomacy and People-to-People Ties:

- **Cultural exchange** thrives through food, fashion, yoga, and design.
- The **Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation (2023–27)** promotes art, heritage, and educational ties.
- Around **200,000 Indians** live in Italy, fostering deeper social and economic links.
- The **Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (2023)** enables smoother migration for workers, professionals, and students.

Challenges in the Bilateral Relationship:

1. Trade and Regulatory Hurdles: Non-tariff barriers, regulatory bottlenecks, and logistical constraints limit potential trade growth.

2. The Italian Marines Case (2012): A diplomatic flashpoint that temporarily strained defence cooperation and tested legal frameworks.

3. Divergent Defence Policies: Italy's military exports to Pakistan raise concerns for India, impacting strategic trust.

Way Forward: A Roadmap for Enhanced Engagement

- 1. Effective Implementation of JSAP 2025–29:** Prioritize **trade, innovation, education, defence, and sustainability**.
- 2. Foster Innovation Ecosystems:** Set up **joint incubation centres and technology parks** in AI, space, green energy, and biotech.
- 3. Streamline Investment Norms:** Reform **FDI policies and regulatory frameworks** to encourage mutual investments.
- 4. Sectoral Diversification:**
 - Explore collaborations in:
 - **Fashion and luxury goods**
 - **Pharmaceuticals and food processing**
 - **Green technology and tourism**
 - **Advanced manufacturing**

Scientific and Technological Synergy:

During the **Italy–India Business, Science, and Technology Forum**, both sides emphasized:

- Cooperation in **AI, supercomputing, space technology, and defence innovation**.
- Exploring synergy in **fashion, clean energy, and digital transformation**.

Conclusion:

India and Italy are charting a new path toward a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, rooted in **shared values, mutual interests, and global challenges**. By leveraging their strengths in **innovation, culture, trade, and sustainability**, the two nations are well-positioned to become **pillars of cooperation** in a multipolar world.

5 Reviving Roots: Preserving Traditional Seed Varieties for a Sustainable Future

Context: In the aftermath of the **Green Revolution** and the expansion of **modern agricultural practices**, **traditional seed varieties** are rapidly vanishing. These native seeds, which once thrived in diverse ecological and cultural settings, are now being replaced by **high-yielding hybrid varieties**.

**What are Traditional Seeds?**

Also known as **indigenous** or **heirloom seeds**, these are naturally evolved over generations and passed down through farming communities. Their unique features include:

- **Open-pollinated** and reusable by farmers
- Rich in **genetic diversity**
- Well-adapted to **local climatic and soil conditions**
- Deeply **rooted in traditional knowledge systems and culture**

Benefits of Traditional Seeds:**1. Climate Resilience:**

- Naturally **tolerant to droughts, floods, and extreme weather conditions**
- Require **less irrigation** and fewer chemical inputs

2. Biodiversity Conservation: Help preserve **agro-biodiversity**, which is essential for **ecosystem health** and **future crop improvement****3. Nutritional Value:** Traditional grains like **millets and pulses** are rich in **fiber, protein, and micronutrients**, offering healthier alternatives to polished grains**4. Economic Sustainability:**

- Lower **input costs** due to **seed saving practices**
- Reduce dependency on **commercial seed markets and agrochemicals**

5. Cultural & Heritage Significance:

- Integral to **local festivals, rituals, and culinary traditions**
- Example: **Navara rice** from Kerala, used in **Ayurvedic medicine** and temple offerings

Why Are Traditional Seeds Declining?**1. Policy Prioritization of HYVs:**

- The **Green Revolution** emphasized high-yielding varieties (HYVs) of wheat and rice
- **Government incentives, MSP, and procurement programs** mainly support HYVs

2. Market and Consumer Bias:

- Public distribution systems and urban markets focus on **polished grains**
- **Low consumer awareness** limits demand for indigenous varieties

3. Weak Institutional Support:

- Limited presence of **community seed banks** and conservation efforts

- Inadequate **research and development** for traditional seed improvement

4. Commercialization of Agriculture:

- Rise of **agribusinesses** and input-heavy farming has pushed **GM and hybrid seeds**
- Mechanization and intensive input use have **displaced low-input traditional practices**

Key Initiatives and Success Stories:

1. Odisha Millet Mission:

- Focuses on **reviving millets** in tribal districts
- Ensures **nutritional security, market access, and farmer empowerment**

2. Community Seed Banks:

- Active in **Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Karnataka**
- Facilitate **seed conservation, exchange, and revival of native crops**

3. **M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation:** The Tribal Agrobiodiversity Centre in Jeypore, Odisha conserves over **1,200 rice varieties**

4. **Global Contributions:** **FAO and Bioversity International** lead efforts to **document and protect agricultural biodiversity**

5. **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):** Promotes **organic farming** based on **traditional seed systems and local wisdom**

The Road Ahead:

1. Policy Shift:

- Integrate traditional grains into **MSP, PDS, and midday meal schemes**
- Include **climate-resilient crops** in the **National Food Security Mission**

2. Strengthen Seed Sovereignty:

- Scale up **community seed banks** and **regional conservation hubs**
- Encourage **Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB)** involving **farmers and scientists**

3. Branding & Market Access:

- Launch **awareness campaigns** promoting health and environmental benefits
- Promote **GI tags, organic certification, and online marketplaces** for indigenous crops

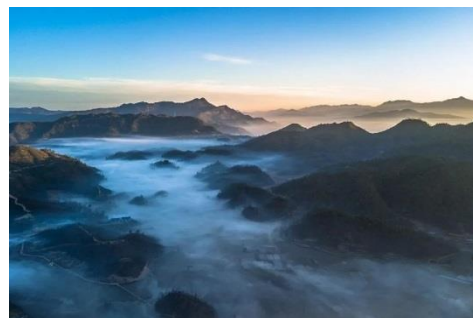
4. Education and Research:

- Revamp **agricultural education** to include **traditional ecological knowledge**
- Allocate **research funding** for improving **yields and resilience** of native varieties

Conclusion: Saving traditional seeds is not just about preserving the past—it's about **securing the future**. These seeds embody **resilience, nutrition, and sustainability**, offering solutions to climate challenges and food security. A holistic approach blending **policy, community participation, innovation, and awareness** can bring traditional seeds back to the heart of India's agricultural landscape.

6 Phawngpui National Park: Jewel of the Blue Mountains

Context: In a concerning development, **forest fires** have recently ravaged parts of **Phawngpui National Park** in Mizoram, impacting **nearly one-ninth of the park's total area**. According to state forest officials, the fires have posed a serious threat to the region's rich biodiversity and ecological balance. Rapid response efforts are underway to control the damage and prevent further destruction.

**About Phawngpui National Park:**

Also known as the **Blue Mountain National Park**, Phawngpui is a breathtaking natural sanctuary nestled in the **southeastern corner of Mizoram**, close to the **India-Myanmar border**. With its stunning elevation of **2,157 meters above sea level**, it is the **highest peak in Mizoram**, offering panoramic views of the **Chhintuipui River** and distant **Myanmar hill ranges**.

Size and Significance:

- **Area:** 50 sq. km
- **Cultural Importance:** Regarded as a **sacred site** by the **Mizo community**, who believe it is inhabited by the **spirits of their ancestors**.
- Often shrouded in mist, the park **appears blue from afar**, lending it its poetic name.

Rich Flora: A Montane Marvel

Phawngpui is a treasure trove of **Montane Subtropical forests**, featuring:

- **Lush oak and rhododendron forests**
- Rare and endemic species of **bamboo**
- Picturesque grassy glades adding to its scenic beauty

Incredible Fauna: A Wildlife Haven

The park supports a remarkable array of wildlife, including:

- **Birds:**
 - **Blyth's Tragopan** (rare)
 - **Dark-rumped Swift**
 - **Mrs. Hume's Pheasant** – the **state bird of Mizoram**
- **Mammals:**
 - **Endangered species** such as the **Slow Loris, Tiger, and Leopard**
 - **Leopard Cat, Serow, Goral, Asiatic Black Bear**
 - **Primates** like the **Stump-tailed Macaque** and **Capped Langur**

Did You Know? – Fascinating Facts

- **Phawngpui** is part of the **Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot**, one of the most biologically rich but threatened ecosystems in the world.
- The park is a hotspot for **birdwatchers**, particularly during the migratory season.



- It falls under the **Eastern Himalaya Endemic Bird Area**, attracting ornithologists from across the globe.
- The region's high-altitude climate and varied elevation provide unique microhabitats for flora and fauna.

Call to Action:

With climate change and human activity increasing the frequency of **forest fires**, it's crucial to support **conservation efforts** and promote **sustainable tourism** to protect this ecological and cultural treasure.

