

## Current Affairs of the Day

### The Western Ghats offer major additions to the flora

Botanical Survey of India says 202 species were discovered across the country in 2020.

#### Highlights:

1. The Botanical Survey of India, in its new publication *Plant Discoveries 2020* has added 267 new taxa/ species to the country's flora.
2. With these new discoveries, the latest estimate of plant diversity in India stands at 54,733 taxa including 21,849 angiosperms, 82 gymnosperms, 1,310 pteridophytes, 2,791 bryophytes, 2,961 lichens, 15,504 fungi, 8,979 algae and 1,257 microbes.
3. An assessment of the geographical distribution of these newly discovered plants reveals that 22% of the discoveries were made from the Western Ghats followed by the Western Himalayas (15%), the Eastern Himalayas (14%) and the Northeast ranges (12%).
4. The west coast contributed 10% while the east coast contributed (9%) in total discoveries; the Eastern Ghats and south Deccan contribute 4% each while the central highland and north Deccan added 3% each.

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### Marginal farmers are wage labourers

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#### Farmer household incomes:

1. An average so-called agricultural household earned a total monthly income of Rs 10,218 during 2018-19 (July-June), of which net receipts





from crop production (Rs 3,798) and farming of animals (Rs 1,582) together contributed hardly 53 per cent. The single-largest income source was actually waged/salary, at Rs 4,063.

2. The average farmer, in other words, was more a wage labourer than a seller of produce from his/her land.
3. Out of the country's estimated 93.09 million agricultural households, over 70 per cent possessed less than one-hectare land.
4. It shouldn't surprise, then, that wages generate up to 60 per cent of their incomes. But the share of agriculture — crop production plus animal husbandry — to total income was higher (about 62 per cent) for households with 1-2 hectares land, rising further to 73, 82 and 91 per cent for those having 2-4, 4-10 and above 10 hectares, respectively.

### **Marginal farmers are wage labourers:**

1. Simply put, if one considers as farmers only those deriving at least 60 per cent of their overall income from cultivation and rearing of animals, India wouldn't have even 30 million such homes, going by the National Statistical Office's Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households report.
2. The 30 million are the ones also possessing one hectare or more land, which is clearly the minimum holding required for agriculture per se to generate a major share of any family's income. It also means that "agriculture policy" should primarily target these 30 million households.
3. Farm incomes can, realistically speaking, be doubled or tripled only for those truly dependent on agriculture and having enough land to productively deploy labour and capital resources.
4. They must be enabled to do so, through improved access to markets, water, electricity, credit and other productivity-enhancing inputs. The whole focus should be to lower their production costs by raising yields, while simultaneously ensuring higher input use efficiency and minimal environmental footprint.

### **Future lies outside the farms**

1. The question that naturally arises is where does this leave the remaining 60-65 million households — those having less than one-hectare land and "agricultural" only in name? The answer is simple: Their future lies outside the farms.
2. Outside doesn't necessarily have to be in large industrial centres or cities. It can even be in aggregation, grading, packaging, transport, processing, warehousing and retailing of produce.



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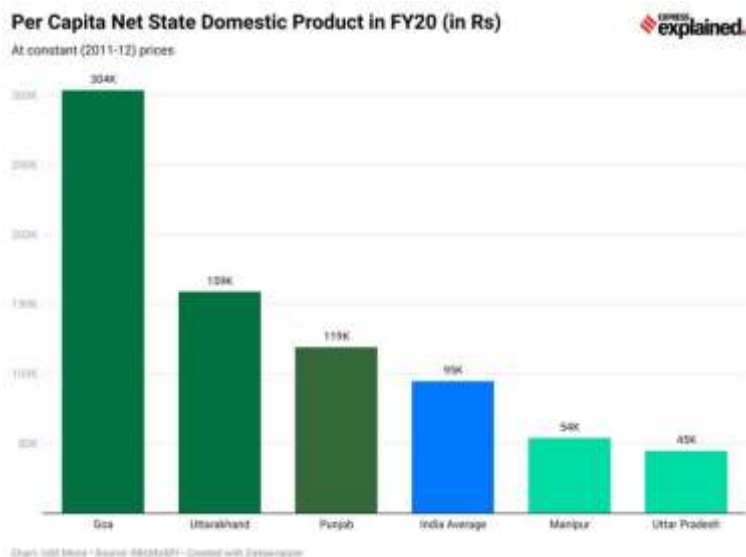
3. These activities — plus a supply of inputs and services to farms — can generate far many more jobs than in the fields themselves. The government should stop obsessing over “marginal farmers”.
4. The limited land with them can, if at all, be put to better use for dairy, poultry, piggery etc. rather than in regular crop agriculture. Farming is best left to those who can do it well. Better fewer, but better.

## From Uttar Pradesh to Manipur, how per capita incomes have grown in the 5 poll-bound states

### Per capita Net State Domestic Product

1. The Reserve Bank of India released the “Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy, 2020-21”.

2. A key variable contained in the RBI’s handbook is the “per capita Net State Domestic Product”. In simple terms, this variable can be used as a proxy for the per capita income in a state. It is, thus, a quick way to ascertain the economic well-being of an average resident in a particular state.



3. It is crucial to note that several academic studies — both in India and elsewhere — have found a strong link between economic indicators such as per capita income and electoral performance. Of course, economic performance isn’t the sole determinant of electoral outcomes.
4. The chart below provides the answer to both these questions. As can be seen, per capita incomes in Goa (Rs 3.04 lakh), Uttarakhand (Rs 1.59 lakh) and Punjab (Rs 1.19 lakh) are higher than the national average (Rs 95,000). Manipur (Rs 54,000) and Uttar Pradesh (Rs 44,600) are barely half of the national average.



<p><b>Practice MCQs</b></p>	<p><i>Q1. Arrange the following states in increasing order in terms of their per capita net domestic state product</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Goa</i></li><li><i>2. Punjab</i></li><li><i>3. Uttar Pradesh</i></li></ol> <p><i>Select the correct answer from the codes given below</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>a. 1, 2, 3</i></li><li><i>b. 3, 2, 1</i></li><li><i>c. 2, 3, 1</i></li><li><i>d. 3, 1, 2</i></li></ol>
<p><b>MAINS DAWP</b></p>	<p><i>Q1. India must shed obsession with 'marginal farmers'. Their future lies outside farms — in dairy, poultry, food retail. Critically discuss.</i></p>