



## Current Affairs of the Day

### Kerala did nothing for endosulfan victims: SC

#### What is Endosulphan?

It is an **organochlorine insecticide** – a **Persistent Organic Pollutant**.

It is used in **Cashewnut, Coconut, Rubber Plantation**  
Bioaccumulation

It is an **Bioaccumulant**.

#### Effects of Endosulphan

##### Neurotoxic

Destroys the integrity  
of the nerve cells

##### Endocrine Disruptor



#### Ban on Endosulphan

Globally, use of endosulfan is banned under **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants**

In **2011, SC banned** the production, distribution and use of endosulfan in India.

India has agreed to **phase out** use of endosulfan by 2017

1. The Supreme Court has slammed the Kerala government for doing “virtually nothing” for endosulfan pesticide exposure victims affected by the aerial spraying of endosulfan on cashew plantations in Kasaragod.



- The court said the State's inaction was "appalling" and amounted to a breach of the top court's 2017 judgment, which had ordered it to pay ₹5 lakh each to the victims
- Endosulfan is an off-patent organochlorine insecticide and acaricide that is being phased out globally. It became a highly controversial agrichemical due to its acute toxicity, potential for bioaccumulation, and role as an endocrine disruptor.

**APRIL 29, 2011**

- Global consensus reached on adding endosulfan to list of banned substances and phasing it out as an agrichemical
- Use of endosulfan banned by Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
- Under pressure from pesticide firms, India sought remission on the ban for 10 years

**MAY 13, 2011**

Supreme Court of India issues temporary ban on production, storage and sale of endosulfan

**WHAT IS ENDOSULFAN ?**

It is a widely-banned pesticide with hazardous effects on human genetic and endocrine systems.

**HAZARDOUS EFFECTS**

- Delayed reproductive development (late sexual maturity)
- Sensory Loss
- Neurotoxicity
- Long-range contamination
- Endocrine disruption (stunting of hormones)
- Bioaccumulation (substance does not leave body)
- Autism

**NEUROTOXIC**

"Endosulfan blocks the inhibitory receptors of the CNS, disrupts the ionic channels and destroys the integrity of the nerve cells. – report of fact-finding mission"

**KASARGOD DISASTER**

From the mid-70s, Kerala villages used aerial spraying of endosulfan on 4,600-ha. cashew nut plantation. Locals reportedly experienced illnesses, palsies and deformities

**USES**

Sprayed on crops like cotton, cashew, fruits, tea, paddy, tobacco etc. for control of pests in agriculture such as whiteflies, aphids, beetles, worms etc.

## Report flags risk of fortified rice for some

- Distribution of iron-fortified rice through government schemes as a "silver bullet" to curb anaemia must stop in States such as Jharkhand which have large tribal populations that suffer from sickle-cell anaemia, thalassemia, and tuberculosis, warn activists. For such people, an overload of iron can create adverse health issues, they say.
- Fortified rice is being distributed under Central government-funded schemes such as the public distribution system (PDS); PM-Poshan (erstwhile mid-day meal scheme) at schools; and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS or Anganwadi services), consent is not being obtained from beneficiaries.



3. In a fact-finding exercise, the activists discovered that neither field functionaries nor beneficiaries had been educated about the potential harms, and there were no warning labels despite the food regulator's rules on fortified foods.
4. PDS dealers and frontline workers too have not been informed beforehand about the potentially harmful effects of fortified rice.
5. The fact-finding team discovered that among the beneficiaries who received fortified rice in the State were also patients diagnosed with thalassemia, sickle cell disease, and tuberculosis, and there may be many more who have been not diagnosed yet.

### Challenges:

1. Thalassemia, sickle cell anaemia and malaria are conditions where there is already excess iron in the body, whereas TB patients are unable to absorb iron. Consumption of iron-fortified foods among patients with these diseases can reduce the immunity and functionality of organs.
2. Jharkhand is an endemic zone of sickle cell disorder and thalassemia, with a prevalence of 8%-10%, which is twice the national average. Jharkhand is also an endemic zone for malaria — in 2020, the State ranked third in the country in malaria deaths.

### Way Forward:

1. Focus on diversified diets and locally available food for iron deficiency
2. Monitoring and fine-tuning fortified rice to avoid toxicity
3. Exploring bio-fortification

### Chief of Defence Staff and top-level military reforms

1. The Government's decision in 2019 to create the post of a CDS, a long-pending demand to bring in tri-service synergy and integration, is the biggest top-level military reform since independence.
2. The post of CDS is the rank of a four-star General with salary and perquisites equivalent to a Service Chief and then Army Chief Gen.



3. The CDS would also be the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister and Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC). In addition, the DMA was created as the fifth department in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with the CDS functioning as its Secretary.

### The mandate of CDS:

1. The broad mandate of the CDS includes bringing about jointness in “operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services, within three years of the first CDS assuming office.”
2. He will act as the Principal Military Adviser to Defence Minister on all tri-Service matters. However, the three Chiefs will continue to advise the Defence Minister on matters exclusively concerning their respective Services. Also, the CDS will not exercise any military command, including over the three Service Chiefs.
3. The CDS is also meant to bring about synergy and optimise procurements, training and logistics and facilitate the restructuring of military commands for optimal utilisation of resources by bringing about jointness in operations, including through the establishment of joint/ theatre commands.
4. The CDS will also evaluate plans “for ‘Out of Area Contingencies’, as well other contingencies such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). The specialised tri-service divisions — special operations, defence cyber and defence space — were also brought under the ambit of the CDS.

### 50°C the new normal? Heat stress takes its toll

To be sure, there were exceptional events this year that contributed to the heatwave, but these could have still been caused by the climate crisis. Among these:

- A prolonged dry spell (northwest India and central India recorded 78% and 58% rainfall deficiency during the pre-monsoon season so far that started on March 1)
- Very few western disturbances which normally bring pre-monsoon rain to northwest India, resulting in clear skies and very high solar radiation.



THE HINDU

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- Most experts believe both urbanisation and population density are factors that contribute to the climate crisis.
- During the La Nina years, we do not expect such heatwaves but this year is exceptional. Normally La Nina, a cold current in the Pacific, is associated with relatively cooler summers in India.

## Mercury continues to soar

As parts of northwest India burn with temperatures close to 50°C, experts fear this may be the new normal

**Events that worsened the heatwave:**

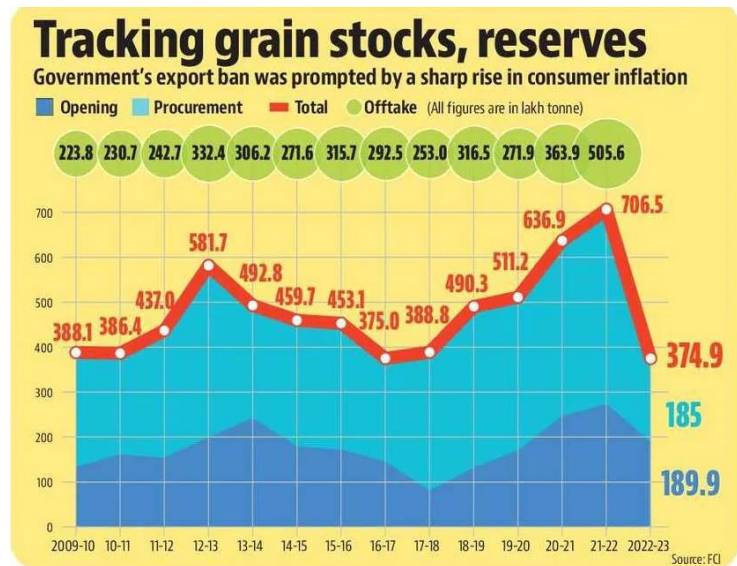
- Prolonged dry spell
- Very few western disturbances that bring pre-monsoon rain to northwest India

**Experts blame climate crisis:**

"We are going to see three things: higher intensity; a rise in duration; a larger impact area," M Rajeevan, former secretary, ministry of earth sciences

## Wheat stocks in India may fall to their lowest level since '16-17

1. India's federally held wheat stocks in 2022-23 may fall to their lowest level since 2016-17, and the second lowest in the past 13 years, with the government's own purchases of the cereal likely being the lowest in 15 years.
2. The staple's offtake, which refers to withdrawal for subsidised distribution and open-market sales, has risen 38% over the last two years, official data show. India in May 2022 said it was suspending exports of wheat to manage its food security which is "at risk".





## Heatwave impact:

1. The food ministry has said it had enough stocks to smoothly run the public distribution system.
2. Of the 37.5 million tonnes of total state-held stocks, the government needs to set aside 7.5 million tonnes due to emergency reserve norms.
3. This means the government has to make do with 30 million tonnes. For the public distribution system, the government needs about 26 million tonnes.
4. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Covid-relief free food scheme that will run till September 2020, will also require 10 million tonnes more.

<b>MAINS DAWP</b>	Q1. Discuss factors responsible for the exceptionally strong heatwave in the 2022 summer in India.
<b>MCQs</b>	Q1. Consider the following statements 1. Endosulfan is a Persistent organic pollutant (POP) 2. It is banned under the Stockholm convention Which of the above statements is/are <i>incorrect</i> ? a. 1 only b. 2 only c. Both 1 and 2 d. Neither 1 nor 2