

India gets elected to the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

(GS Paper 1, Culture)

Why in news?

- Recently, India has been elected as a member of the **Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** for the **2022-2026 cycle**.
- In the past, India has served two terms as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee of this Convention. One from 2006 to 2010 and the other from 2014 to 2018.



Background:

- The elections for the Intergovernmental Committee took place during the 9th General Assembly of the 2003 Convention held at UNESCO headquarters, Paris.
- Against the four seats falling vacant within the Asia-Pacific group, six countries, namely, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand had presented their candidature. India received 110 votes from the 155 State Parties that were present and voting.

About Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention:

- The Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention **consists of 24 members** and is **elected in the General Assembly of the Convention** according to the **principles of equitable geographical representation** and rotation.
- States Members to the Committee are **elected for a term of four years**.

Functions:

- Some of the core functions of the Intergovernmental Committee include **promoting the objectives of the Convention**, providing guidance on best practices, and making **recommendations on measures for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage**.

- The Committee also examines requests submitted by States Parties for the inscription of intangible heritage on the Lists as well as proposals for programmes and projects.

India's ratification:

- India ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in September 2005.
- With **14 inscriptions on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**, India also ranks high in the listing of intangible cultural heritage.
- After the **inscription of Durga Puja in 2021**, India submitted the nomination for Garba of Gujarat to be discussed in 2023.

Opportunities for India:

- As a member of the intergovernmental committee, India will have the opportunity to closely monitor the implementation of the 2003 Convention.
- With the aim of strengthening the scope and impact of the Convention, India seeks to mobilize the capacity of different actors worldwide in order to effectively safeguard intangible heritage.
- Also noting the imbalance in the inscriptions on the three lists of the Convention, i.e., Urgent Safeguarding List, Representative List and Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, India shall endeavour to encourage international dialogue within the State Parties to the Convention in order to better showcase the diversity and importance of living heritage.

Guidelines for Mission Vatsalya Scheme

(GS Paper 2, Social Justice)

Why in news?

- Recently, the Ministry of Women and Child Development issues guidelines for Mission Vatsalya Scheme.



About:

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme “Mission Vatsalya” erstwhile Child Protection Services (CPS) Scheme, since 2009-10 for the welfare and rehabilitation of children.

Objective:

The objective of Mission Vatsalya is to

- a) **secure a healthy and happy childhood for each and every child** in India,
 - b) ensure opportunities to enable them to discover their full potential and assist them in flourishing in all respects, in a sustained manner,
 - c) foster a sensitive, supportive and synchronized ecosystem for development of children,
 - d) assist States/UTs in delivering the mandate of the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 and
 - e) achieve the SDG goals.
- Mission Vatsalya promotes family-based non-institutional care of children in difficult circumstances based on the principle of institutionalization of children as a measure of last resort.

Components under Mission Vatsalya include

- Improve functioning of statutory bodies;
- Strengthen service delivery structures;
- Upscale institutional care/services;
- Encourage non-institutional community-based care;
- emergency outreach services;
- Training and capacity building.

Implementation:

- All the States/UTs have signed the Memorandum of Undertaking (MoU) with the Ministry for implementation of the Scheme. Mission Vatsalya will be implemented as a centrally sponsored scheme as per prescribed cost sharing ratio between the Centre and State/UT Governments.
- The ministry has issued detailed guidelines of the Mission Vatsalya Scheme and State Governments/UT Administrations have been asked to prepare their financial proposal and plans for the year 2022-23 under Mission Vatsalya Scheme on the basis of financial norms of Guidelines.
- The norms of Mission Vatsalya scheme will be applicable from 01 April, 2022.

Monsoon getting hotter than summer: study

(GS Paper 1, Geography)

Why in news?

- The monsoon has usually meant respite from the heat, but temperatures during June to September are seeing a rise, says an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).
- At an all-India level, average temperatures during the season are **0.3 degrees Celsius higher than** the average summer temperatures (March to May) when compared from 1951 to 1980. In the past decade, 2012-2021, this anomaly has risen to 0.4 degrees Celsius.

Rising temperature even post monsoon:

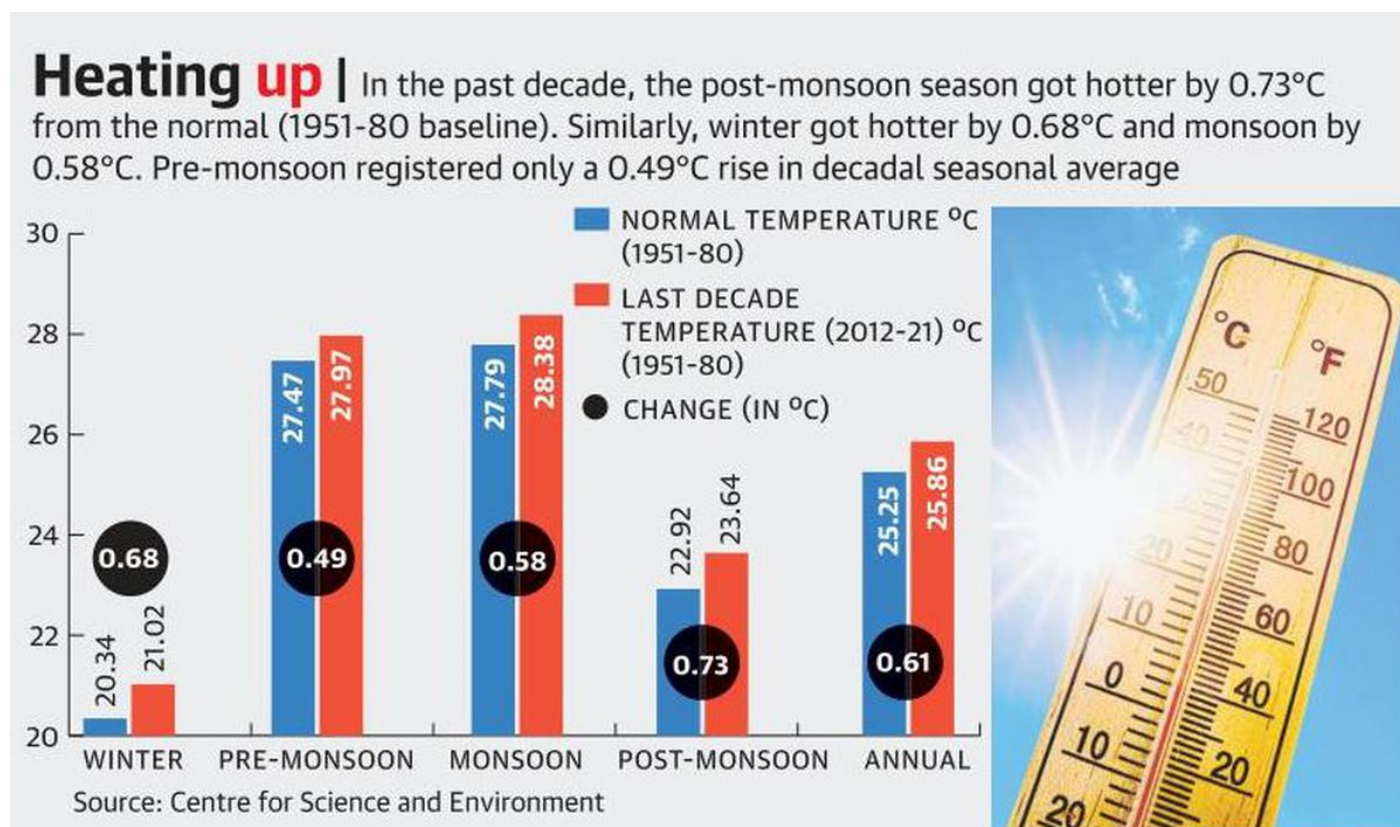
- **India's average temperature has risen 0.62 degrees Celsius from 1901 to 1920.**
- However, in a breakdown of this rise, the CSE analysis shows it has translated to summer **temperatures rising slower than not only monsoon but even post-monsoon** (October-December) and winter (January and February) temperatures.
- The increase in these two seasons are 0.79 degrees and 0.58 degrees, respectively, whereas summer temperatures has risen only 0.49 degrees. This year, India saw record pre-monsoon temperatures in northern and western regions, in the absence of rain.

North-Western States:

- The **average daily maximum temperature for March and April** for Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand as per IMD classification was almost 4 degrees Celsius above normal (compared to its baseline of 1981-2010).
- This is almost twice as much as the anomaly observed at an all-India level, and it holds true for even average daily minimum, daily mean and land surface temperatures. Temperatures became closer to normal during May.

Conditions in other parts of India:

- The average daily maximum for north-western States for March was 30.7 degrees Celsius, whereas the all-India average was 33.1 degrees Celsius, or 2.4 degrees Celsius hotter. The average daily minimum temperature showed an even larger (4.9 degrees Celsius) difference.
- Central India (Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha) and the southern peninsular region (Andaman & Nicobar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana) had higher normal temperatures than in the northwest during the pre-monsoon or summer season.
- Central India's normal maximum was 2-7 degrees Celsius higher, while **south peninsular India's normal minimum was 4-10 degrees Celsius higher** than temperatures in northwest India.



Deaths due to heat waves:

- These numbers had a bearing on heatwave deaths. From 2015 to 2020, 2,137 people had reportedly died of heat stroke in the States in northwest but the southern peninsula region had reported 2,444 deaths due to excess environmental heat, with **Andhra Pradesh alone accounting for over half the reported casualties**.
- Delhi reported only one death for the period.
- Most deaths have been reported among working age men (30-60 age group).

Effect of heat wave:

- The years, 2016 and 2017 reported twice the number of hazardous heat wave events compared to 2015, but reported deaths caused were less than a quarter of the 2015 toll. The urban heat island effect contributed to heat stress.
- In terms of absolute air temperature, Hyderabad, with a 7.1 degrees Celsius variation, had the most pronounced heat islands, while Kolkata, had just 1.3 degrees Celsius.

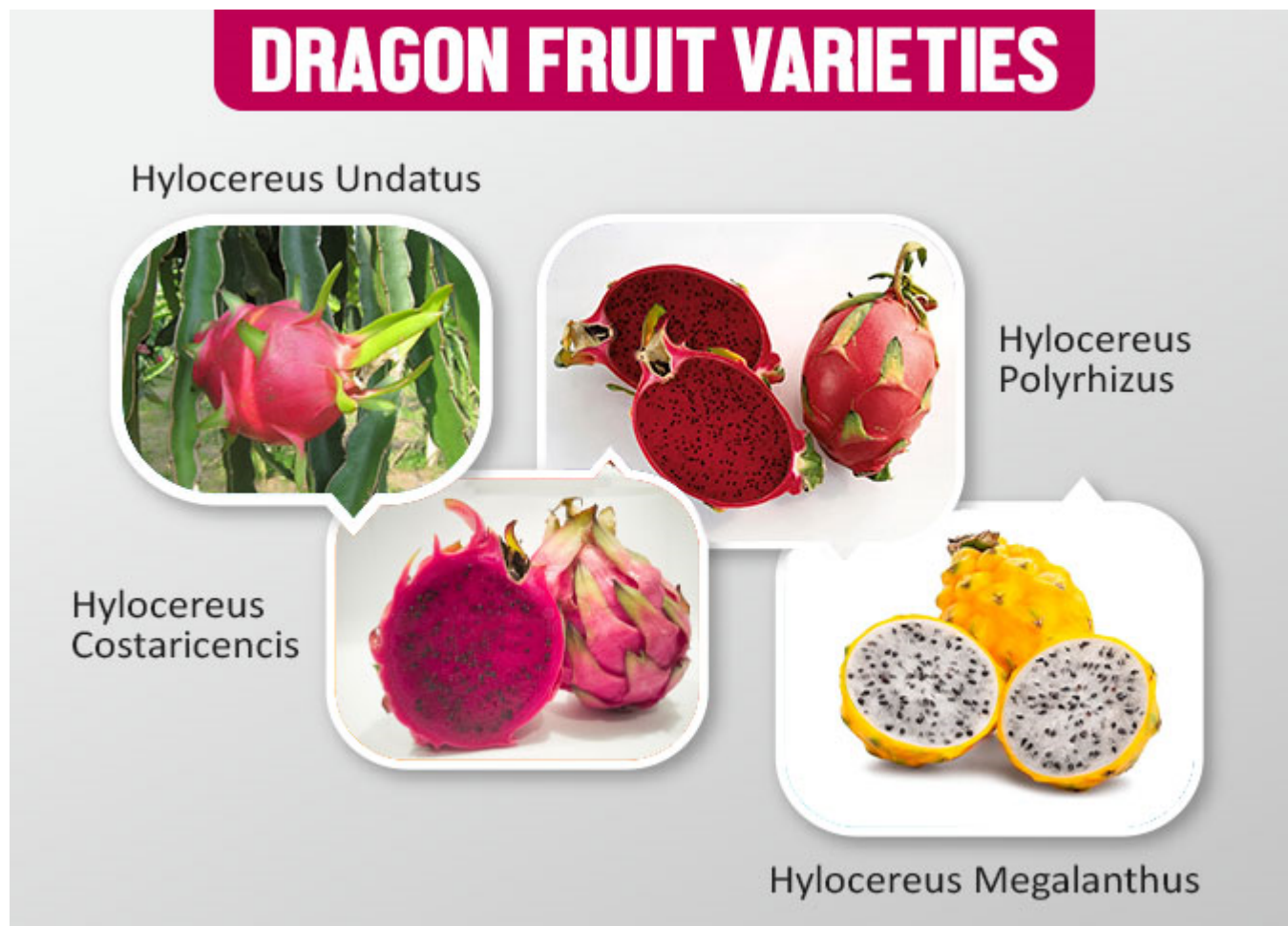
Centre to promote dragon fruit cultivation (GS Paper 3, Economy)

Why in news?

- Following in the footsteps of the **Gujarat and Haryana governments**, the Centre has decided to promote the **cultivation of dragon fruit**, known as a “super fruit” for its health benefits.

Details:

- The Centre feels that considering the cost effectiveness and global demand for the fruit due to its nutritional values, its cultivation can be expanded in India.
- At present, this exotic fruit is cultivated in 3,000 hectares; the plan is to increase cultivation to 50,000 hectares in five years.



Cultivation in Indian States:

- The Gujarat government recently renamed dragon fruit as kamlam (lotus) and announced an incentive for farmers who cultivate it.
- The Haryana government also provides a grant for farmers who are ready to plant this exotic fruit variety.

Nutritional value:

- The fruit is considered good for diabetic patients, low in calories and high in nutrients like iron, calcium, potassium and zinc.

Assistance:

- This fruit can be cultivated in degraded and rainfed land.
- The Centre will assist States in providing good quality planting materials to farmers.
- The Centre can also provide specific target-based help to States and farmers under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).
- Processing infrastructure can also be developed with the help of the Food Processing Ministry. Its cultivation will be beneficial for farmers and consumers.

What's next?

- The dragon fruit is now sold at a price of Rs. 400 per kg and the effort is to make it available to consumers for Rs. 100 per kg.

Derecho, a storm that turned the sky green in the US

(Miscellaneous)

Why in news?

- Recently, the States of Nebraska, Minnesota and Illinois in the US were hit by a storm system called a derecho.
- As the storm hit, it turned the skies green.



What is a derecho?

- A derecho is “**a widespread, long-lived, straight-line windstorm**” that is associated with a “band of rapidly moving showers or thunderstorms”.
- The name comes from the **Spanish word ‘la derecha’ which means ‘straight’**.
- Straight-line storms are those in which thunderstorm winds have no rotation unlike a tornado. These storms travel hundreds of miles and cover a vast area.
- Being a warm-weather phenomenon, a derecho generally **occurs during summertime beginning May**, with most hitting in June and July. However, they are a rare occurrence as compared to other storm systems like tornadoes or hurricanes.
- For a storm to be classified as a derecho it **must have wind gusts of at least 93 km per hour**; wind damage swath extending more than 400 km.

Why did the sky turn green during the derecho that hit US recently?

- Severe thunderstorms result in a ‘green sky’ due to **light interacting with the huge amount of water they hold**.
- It is believed that the big raindrops and hail scatter away all but the blue wavelengths due to which primarily blue light penetrates below the storm cloud.
- This blue then combines with the red-yellow of the afternoon or the evening sun to produce green.

Are there different types of derechos?

- They fall into three categories – progressive, serial and hybrid.
- A progressive derecho is associated with a short line of thunderstorms that may travel for hundreds of miles along a relatively narrow path. It is a summer phenomenon.
- A serial derecho, on the other hand, has an extensive wide and long line sweeping across a large area. It usually occurs during spring or fall.
- Hybrid ones have the features of both progressive and serial derechos.

Where do derechos usually occur?

- They mostly occur across central and eastern parts of the United States.
- Derechos have also been documented elsewhere across the world.
- In 2010, Russia witnessed its first documented derecho. They have also swept through Germany and Finland, and more recently in Bulgaria and Poland.