

Environment Protection

1. Heritage trees

The Maharashtra government has proposed amendments to **the Maharashtra (Urban Areas) Protection and Preservation of Trees Act of 1975**, to introduce provisions for the protection of 'heritage trees'.

What are heritage trees?

A tree with an estimated age of 50 years or more shall be defined as a heritage tree. It may belong to specific species, which will be notified from time to time.

Why was the concept of heritage tree introduced?

1. A heritage tree will get special protection. **Compensatory plantation**— anyone cutting a heritage tree will need to plant trees in the same numbers as the cut tree's age.
2. The organization planting the compensation trees will also have **to ensure the survival of the plantation for seven years and geo-tag the trees.**
3. In case compensatory plantation is not possible, **the tree feller has to pay compensation for the economic valuation of the trees being felled.**

2. Mangroves

The Odisha government has proposed to raise **mangrove and casuarinas plantation in the coastal belt.**

What are Mangroves?

Mangroves occur worldwide in the tropics and subtropics, mainly between latitudes 30° N and 30° S, with the greatest mangrove area with 5° of the equator.

- A mangrove is **a shrub or small tree** that grows in coastal saline or brackish water.
- Mangroves are **salt-tolerant trees**, also called **halophytes**, and are adapted to live in harsh coastal conditions.
- They contain a complex salt filtration system and complex root system to cope with salt water immersion and wave action.
- They have blind roots which are called **Pneumatophores**. These roots help these trees to respire in anaerobic soils.
- The seeds of Mangrove Forests trees germinate in the trees itself before falling – This is called **Viviparity mode of reproduction.**

Importance of Mangroves:

1. Mangrove roots help to impede water flow and thereby enhance the deposition of sediment in areas (where it is already occurring), stabilise the coastal shores, provide a breeding ground for fishes.
2. Mangroves moderate monsoonal tidal floods and reduce inundation of coastal lowlands.
3. They prevent coastal soil erosion.
4. They protect coastal lands from tsunamis, hurricanes and floods.
5. Mangroves enhance the natural recycling of nutrients.
6. Mangrove supports numerous florae, avifauna and wildlife.
7. Provide a safe and favourable environment for breeding, spawning, rearing of several fishes.
8. They supply woods, firewood, medicinal plants and edible plants to local people.
9. They provide numerous employment opportunities to local communities and augments their livelihood.

3. Green Hydrogen

India hosted a two-day summit on Green Hydrogen initiatives involving the BRICS nations.