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Mangroves

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Why is in news? Union Minister for Environment Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav speaks at the Launch of the Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC) at COP 27, Egypt

Highlights of the speech:

MAC initiative brings the world together to advance the global cause of Mangroves.

India's extensive experience in mangrove restoration to contribute to global knowledge base.

Integration of mangroves into the national REDD+ programs need of the hour.

Mangroves:

Mangroves are distributed in the **tropical and sub-tropical region** of the world and are **found in 123 countries**.

A Mangrove is a **small tree or shrub that grows along coastlines**, taking root in salty sediments, often underwater.

The word 'mangrove' may refer to the habitat as a whole or to the trees and shrubs in the mangrove swamp.

Mangroves are among the **most carbon-rich forests in the tropics**. They **account for 3% of carbon sequestered by the world's tropical forests**.

Mangroves are the economic foundations of many tropical coastal regions.

To **sustain the blue economy**, it is imperative to ensure the sustainability of coastal habitats, particularly mangroves for tropical nations, at the local, regional, and international levels.

With notable adaptive features, mangroves are **natural armed forces of tropical and subtropical nations**.

They are the best option to fight against climate change consequences like sea levels rise and increasing frequency of natural calamities like cyclones and storm surges.

India has committed in its **NDC – to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030**.

Studies have shown that mangrove forests can **absorb four to five times more carbon emissions than landed tropical forests**.

It has also been revealed that mangroves **can act as buffer for Ocean acidification** and act as sink for micro-plastics.

Creating new carbon sink from mangrove afforestation and reducing emissions from mangrove deforestation are two feasible ways for countries to meet their NDC targets and achieve carbon neutrality.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

According to the **India State of Forest Report, 2019**, the mangrove cover in India is 4,975 sq km, which is 0.15% of the country's total geographical area.

West Bengal has the highest percentage of area under total Mangrove cover followed by **Gujarat and Andaman Nicobar Islands**.

Sundarbans in West Bengal are the **largest mangrove forest regions in the world**. It is listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The forest is home to the Royal Bengal tiger, Gangetic dolphins and Estuarine crocodiles.

The **second largest mangrove forest in India** is Bhitarkanika in Odisha created by the two river deltas of River Brahmani and Baitarani. It is one of the most significant **Ramsar wetlands** in India.

All the coastal states and UTs in India have mangrove forest coverage.

