




Expansion of Litchi Cultivation Across India

Why in News?

The cultivation of **Litchi**, traditionally restricted to Muzaffarpur Bihar, has witnessed a significant expansion **across 19 Indian states, highlighting the Horticulture boost in India.**

- This development stems from the efforts of the **National Research Centre on Litchi (NRCL)** based in Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

What are the Key Facts about Litchi?

- **Botanical Classification:** Litchi belongs to the Sapindaceae family and is known for its delicious, juicy, translucent aril or edible flesh.
- **Climatic Requirements:** Litchi thrives in **sub-tropical climates and prefers moist conditions.** It grows best in regions with low elevation, up to an altitude of around 800 meters. 
- **Soil Preference:** The ideal soil for litchi cultivation is **deep, well-drained loamy soil** rich in organic matter.
- **Temperature Sensitivity:** Litchi is sensitive to extreme temperatures. It does not tolerate temperatures above 40.5 degrees Celsius in summer or freezing temperatures in winter.
- **Rainfall Impact:** Prolonged rain, especially during flowering, can interfere with pollination and affect the crop adversely.
- **Geographical Cultivation:** In India, the commercial cultivation was traditionally restricted to the north in the foot hills **of Himalayas from Tripura to Jammu & Kashmir** and plains of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
 - But due to increased demand and viability, cultivation has expanded to states **like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.**
 - Bihar alone accounts for nearly **40% of India's litchi production.** Bihar is followed by West Bengal (12%) and Jharkhand (10%).
- **Global Production:** India ranks as the **second largest producer of litchi globally,** following China. Other significant litchi-producing countries include Thailand, Australia, South Africa, Madagascar, and the United States.

Horticulture

- **About:**
 - Horticulture refers to **the science, art, and practice of cultivating fruits, vegetables, flowers, ornamental plants, and other crops.**
 - It encompasses a broad spectrum of activities **related to plant cultivation, management, propagation, and improvement** for human use and enjoyment.
- **Initiatives for Horticulture:**
 - **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):**
 - **MIDH** is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables and other areas.
 - Under MIDH, Government of India contributes 60% of the total outlay for developmental programmes in all the states (except North Eastern and Himalayan

states where GOI contributes 90%) & 40% is contributed by State governments.

◦ **Horticulture Cluster Development Programme:**

- It is a **central sector programme** aimed at growing and developing identified horticulture clusters to make them globally competitive.
- Horticulture cluster is a regional/geographical concentration of targeted horticulture crops.

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