



Eradication of Vilayati Babool

Why in News?

The **Panchayati Raj Minister** of Rajasthan directed officials from the **Panchayati Raj** and **Forest Department** to **conduct a study** and issue guidelines for the complete removal of Vilayati Babool (*Prosopis Juliflora*), including its roots.

Vilayati Babool (*Prosopis juliflora*)

- **About:** Locally known as Vilayati Kikar or Gando Baval, it is an **invasive alien plant species** native to Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean, now prevalent in India's arid and **semi-arid regions**.
- **Impact:**
 - The rapid spread of *Prosopis Juliflora* **hampers vegetation growth** and depletes **soil fertility**, reducing agricultural productivity.
 - Its expansion **destroys pasturelands**, creating difficulties for livestock grazing and facilitating the spread of more plants.

Invasive Alien Species

- **About:** Invasive Alien Species are **non-native organisms** (plants, animals, fungi, or even microbes) introduced beyond their natural range, forming self-sustaining populations.
 - They outcompete native species, disrupt ecosystems, and cause **significant ecological**, economic, and social impacts.
 - According to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, IAS are species that can "arrive, survive, and thrive", often outcompeting native species for resources.
 - In India, the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** defines IAS as non-native species that threaten wildlife or habitats.
- **Other Invasive Alien Species in India:** Animal species like African catfish, Nile tilapia, red-bellied piranha, alligator gar, **Red-eared Slider** (a North American turtle) and plants like Lantana and **Water Hyacinth** are among the most widespread invasive species in India.