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1. Rohan Bopanna's Australian Open win

Why in news?

Rohan Bopanna scripted history in Melbourne, as he clinched the Australian Open men's doubles title with partner Matthew Ebden at the Rod Laver Arena. The Indo-Aussie pair defeated Italy's Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori 7-6(0) 7-5 in the final.



Rohan Bopanna of India and Matthew Ebden of Australia

The victory saw Bopanna, at the age of 43 years and 329 days, becoming the oldest man to ever win a Grand Slam title in the Open era. Bopanna also joined an elite list of Indians who have triumphed at the Australian Open.

Here is the list:

1. Leander Paes and Martina Navratilova (USA) in mixed doubles (2003)
2. Mahesh Bhupathi and Martina Hingis (Switzerland) in mixed doubles (2006)
3. Mahesh Bhupathi and Sania Mirza in mixed doubles (2009)
4. Leander Paes and Cara Black (Zimbabwe) in mixed doubles (2010)
5. Leander Paes and Radek Stepanek (Czech Republic) in men's doubles (2012)
6. Leander Paes and Martina Hingis (Switzerland) in mixed doubles (2015)
7. Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis (Switzerland) in women's doubles (2016)
8. Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden (Australia) in men's doubles (2024)

This is also Bopanna's second Grand Slam title after the French Open mixed doubles title in 2018. The Indian has also become the World No. 1 in men's doubles. Bopanna was also

honoured with the Padma Shri by the Indian government while he was playing in the tournament in Melbourne.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Hindustan Times

2. Interim budget mentions blue economy 2.0: What this means

Why in news?

The Interim Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stressed on environment-friendly development through the promotion of 'blue economy'.

"For promoting climate resilient activities for blue economy 2.0, a scheme for restoration and adaptation measures, and coastal aquaculture and mariculture with integrated and multi-sectoral approach will be launched," Sitharaman said in her speech.

What is blue economy?

While the term blue economy can simply refer to economic activities related to the sea and the coasts, it is generally understood to have an element of sustainability in it. Thus, while the European Commission defines it as "all economic activities related to oceans, seas and coasts. It covers a wide range of interlinked established and emerging sectors"; the World Bank says blue economy is the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem."

For a country like India, with a long coastline, diversity in terms of fish and other ocean produce, and multiple tourism opportunities, blue economy is highly significant.

What does the Interim Budget propose to do about blue economy?

As Sitharaman said, "a scheme for restoration and adaptation measures, and coastal aquaculture and mariculture with integrated and multi-sectoral approach will be launched."

Restoration and adaptation will ensure the health of the oceans is not harmed while carrying out economic activities. While aquaculture is a broad term that refers to the farming of aquatic plants and animals, mariculture refers to rearing and harvesting marine creatures in salt water.

The Finance minister also announced the setting up of five integrated aquaparks, and said the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) would be stepped up to "enhance aquaculture productivity from the existing three to five tonnes per hectare; double exports to Rs 1 lakh crore; and generate 55 lakh employment opportunities in the near future."

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economy

Source: The Indian Express

3. In Interim Budget 2024, Sitharaman says use of Nano DAP to be expanded: What is this made-in-India fertiliser?

Why in news?

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting the interim budget announced the expansion of the application of Nano DAP on various crops in all agro climatic zones.

"After the successful adoption of Nano Urea, application of Nano DAP, on various crops, will be expanded in all agro-climatic zones," the finance minister said.

What is Nano DAP — and why does the government want to expand its use?

DAP vs Nano DAP

DAP, or di-ammonium phosphate, is the second most commonly used fertiliser in India after urea. It is high in phosphorus (P) that stimulates root establishment and development — without which plants cannot grow to their normal size, or will take too long to mature. It is thus applied just before, or at the time of sowing.

Home Minister Amit Shah, last April, launched Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative's (IFFCO's) Nano DAP, containing 8% Nitrogen and 16% Phosphorus by volume. Unlike conventional DAP, which comes in granular form, IFFCO's Nano DAP is in liquid form.

IFFCO's website says that this formulation "has [an] advantage in terms of surface area to volume, as its particle size is less than 100 Nanometre (nm)."

This tiny particle size makes Nano DAP more efficient than its conventional counterpart, enabling the fertiliser "to enter easily inside the seed surface or through stomata and other plant openings". Better assimilation of the fertiliser inside the plant system in turn leads to "higher seed vigour, more chlorophyll, photosynthetic efficiency, better quality and increase in crop yields."

Why Nano DAP

In addition to being more efficient than conventional DAP, Nano DAP has a few other benefits. First, it is more pocket-friendly than its conventional counterpart. A 500 ml bottle of Nano DAP, equivalent to a 50-kg bag of conventional DAP, is priced at only Rs 600 (compared to Rs 1,350 for the bag). Since the government provides significant subsidies on DAP, the adoption of a more inexpensive fertiliser will likely be a significant relief to the government's subsidy burden.

Second, for farmers, Nano DAP is also significantly more convenient. Simply put, 500 ml bottles are easier to transport, store, and use than 50kg bags. The fertiliser is sprayed on crops, with a 250-500 ml of DAP, dissolved in water, required per spray, per acre.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Indian Express