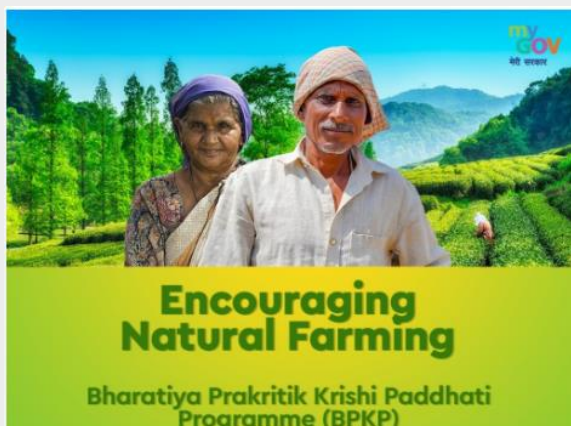


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### 1. Should India focus on natural farming?

What are the concerns on yields? What have been the findings on the ground? How did two studies on the yield potential of natural farming differ? What happened when Sri Lanka decided to ban chemical fertilizers, substituting it with natural ones?



#### Why in News?

In her Budget proposals for 2024-25, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that in the next two years, one crore farmers across the country will be initiated into natural farming supported by certification and branding. Implementation will be through scientific institutions and gram panchayats, adding that 10,000 need-based bio-input resource centres will be established.

#### What is the mission?

As part of the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), the government intends to motivate farmers to adopt chemical-free farming and draw them towards adopting natural farming willingly on the system's merit. The government believes that the success of the NMNF will require a behavioural change in farmers to shift from chemical-based inputs to cow-based, locally-produced inputs. The natural farming scheme under the 'Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati' has a total outlay of ₹4,645.69 crore for six years (2019-20 to 2024-25).

#### What is natural farming?

In natural farming, no chemical fertilizers and pesticides are used. It promotes traditional indigenous practices which are largely based on on-farm biomass recycling with a stress on biomass mulching, use of on-farm cow dung-urine formulation; managing pests through diversity, and exclusion of all synthetic chemical inputs directly or indirectly.

Those advocating natural farming believe that it holds the potential to enhance farmers' income while delivering many other benefits, such as restoration of soil fertility and environmental health, and mitigating and/or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### What are the challenges and concerns?

Agriculture and food experts have their reservations surrounding a large-scale transition from chemical farming to natural farming in a country like India, which has a huge population.

Catering to its food-growing needs isn't an easy task, they point out. There are mixed results on Natural farming.

For instance, a study has found that in the case of a variety of crops, lower cost of biological inputs suggested under ZBNF has led to improved yields of crops and farmers' incomes, thus increasing the food and nutritional security of farmers practising ZBNF. However, findings of agro-scientists of the ICAR-IIFSR, a government institute, show a 59% decline in wheat yields and a 32% decline in basmati rice yield compared to integrated crop management, adversely impacting food supply.

### **What are the lessons from Sri Lanka?**

It's vital that before launching a large-scale transition from chemical to natural cultivation, extensive studies and assessments are conducted. A couple of years ago, neighbouring Sri Lanka went through economic and political turmoil after it decided to turn completely organic, and banned the import of chemical fertilizers. The government's policy shift had severe consequences with farmers struggling to get natural fertilizers; they faced a reduction in yields of key crops including rice, the staple, putting the country's food security at risk. A sharp price escalation was witnessed in the country, resulting in huge protests and unrest.

### **What is the way forward?**

Noted economist and former professor at the Ludhiana-based Punjab Agricultural University, M.S. Sidhu, asserts that natural farming could be beneficial at a localised level, but in a populous country like India, adopting natural farming at a large scale may not be a successful model

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Hindu

## **2. SC to examine acquitted man's 'right to be forgotten': What is the right, and how have courts ruled earlier?**

### **Introduction**

Last week, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a case whose outcome will likely shape the contours of the "right to be forgotten", known in European information privacy regulation as the "right to erasure", in India. The top court now has to decide whether the right to be forgotten is a fundamental right and, if so, how it relates to other fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud will hear a challenge against a Madras High Court ruling that on February 27 directed legal search portal Indian Kanoon to take down a judgment in a 2014 rape and cheating case. The acquitted man had moved the Madras HC in 2021, saying that he had been denied the citizenship of Australia because his name appears in the judgment that is publicly available on the legal portal.

### **What is the right to be forgotten?**

The right to be forgotten can be loosely described as the right to remove one's digital footprint (from Internet searches, etc.) where it violates the right to privacy. In May 2014, the

Luxembourg-based Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), the highest court in matters concerning the application and interpretation of EU law, affirmed that there exists a right to be forgotten.



In what is commonly referred to as the “Google Spain case”, the court ruled on the plea of Spanish lawyer Mario Costeja González to have Google remove information from 1998 regarding the forced sale of his property due to social security debt.

Citing Articles 7 (respect for private and family life) and 8 (protection of personal data) of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, the CJEU ruled that search engines must cater to individual requests to remove data that “appear to be inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant or excessive in the light of the time that had elapsed”.

Informational self-determination — an individual’s right to control and limit her personal information — is now widely recognised in EU law. Article 17 of the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) describes the right to erasure. From victims of so-called “revenge porn” to individuals whose personal cases are on the Internet, the right to be forgotten is a crucial remedy.

### **How is the right interpreted in India?**

In India, there is no statutory framework that prescribes the right to be forgotten. However, not all constitutional rights need to be written in black and white. Until the 2017 judgment in Justice K S Puttaswamy v Union of India — in which the apex court explicitly recognised the right to privacy as a fundamental right, placing it as a facet of the right to life, right to equality, and the right to freedom of speech and expression — there were also questions on the right to privacy.

A concurring opinion in the Puttaswamy ruling by Justice S K Kaul mentions the right to be forgotten. Justice Kaul said that this right “does not mean that all aspects of earlier existence are to be obliterated... It would only mean that an individual who is no longer desirous of his personal data to be processed or stored, should be able to remove it from the system where the personal data/ information is no longer necessary, relevant, or is incorrect and serves no legitimate interest”.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

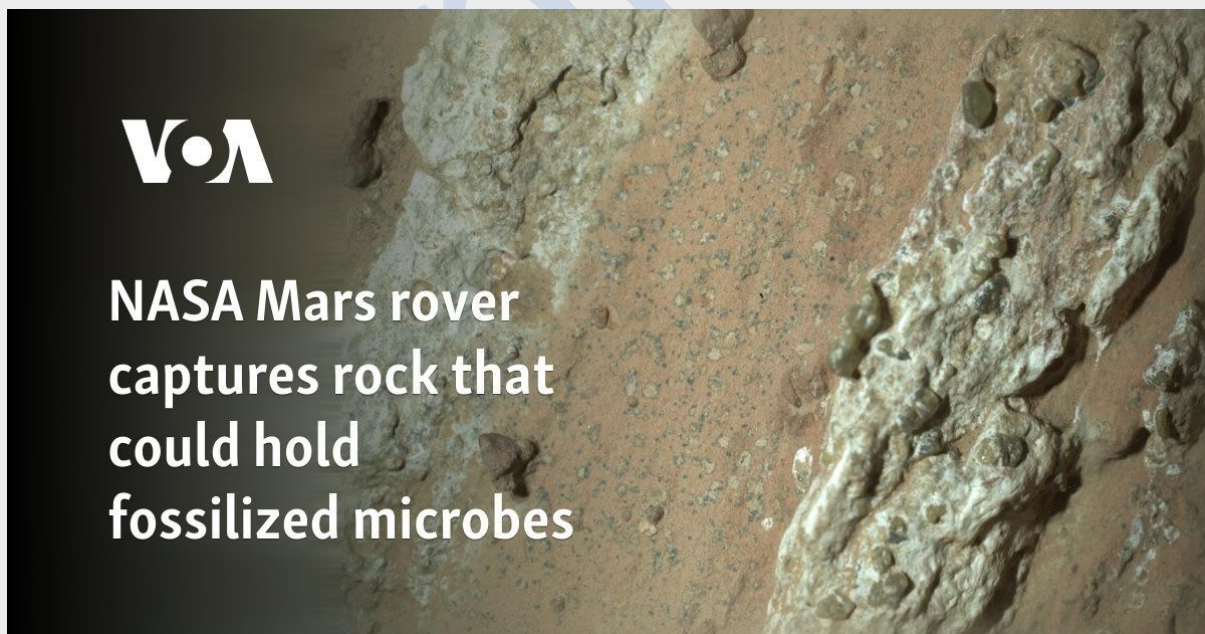
Source: Indian Express

### **3. NASA did not say it found life on Mars but is very excited about the discovery of a rock.**

Scientists working with NASA’s Perseverance rover state emphatically that they are not claiming to have discovered life on Mars.

But many would regard a rock that the rover just finished studying as “Most Likely to Contain Fossilized Microbial Martians.” The rover has drilled and stashed a piece of the rock, which scientists hope can be brought back to Earth in the coming years for closer analysis and more definitive answers.

“What we are saying is that we have a potential biosignature on Mars,” said a scientist. She describes a biosignature as a structure, composition or texture in a rock that could have a biological origin.



#### **What the Perseverance rover found**

The rock, which scientists named Cheyava Falls, possesses features that are reminiscent of what microbes might have left behind when this area was warm and wet several billion years ago, part of an ancient river delta. The scientists clarified that they did not spot anything that they thought might be actual fossilized organisms.

Scientists have wondered if life could have arisen on early Mars when it possessed a dense atmosphere and flowing water. Martian rocks could hold important clues.

Within the rock, Perseverance's instruments detected organic compounds, which would provide the building blocks for life as we know it. The rover also found veins of calcium sulfate — mineral deposits that appear to have been deposited by flowing water. Liquid water is another key ingredient for life.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

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