

Tea Mosquito Bug

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In news— The United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) has urged the government to immediately intervene and take appropriate steps to control the Tea Mosquito Bug (*Helopeltis theivora*) (TMB) problem in the tea plantations in India.

About the bug-

- **TMB (*Helopeltis Theivora*) is a major sucking pest of tea** in most tea-producing countries.
- The nymphs and adults of the TMB suck the sap from tender leaves, buds and young shoots, which results in heavy crop losses.
- It can be controlled by using synthetic pesticides
- **This pest, considered a wet weather pest, which was earlier restricted to tea plantations in low elevation areas have now spread alarmingly to the high elevation tea plantations also.**
- It is causing severe damage to tea production while, cost of inputs and employee wages are on a significant rise thereby, threatening the sustainability of the industry.

Note:

India has the second largest area under tea in the world with around 6.37 lakhs hectares. The tea area in North India is 5.36 lakhs hectares while South India has an area of 1.01 lakh hectares. Currently, small tea growers contribute 52 percent of India's tea production with around 2.10 lakh growers spread across West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.