

World's second-largest refurbished National Gene Bank

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In news- Recently the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare inaugurated the world's second-largest refurbished state-of-the-art National Gene Bank **at the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), Pusa, New Delhi.**

Key updates-

- The refurbished bank will work towards **preserving the seeds of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) for future generations.**
- It has the capacity to preserve about one million germplasm in the form of seeds.
- It also seeks to conserve the diversity of indigenous crops in the country.

The Genesis and purpose of National Gene Bank(NGB)-

- **Established in 1996**, NGB works towards **preserving the seeds of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) for future generations.**
- Presently, the bank is protecting 4.52 lakh accessions, of which 2.7 lakh are Indian germplasm and the rest have been imported from other nations.
- **National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources is meeting the need of in-situ and ex-situ germplasm conservation** through Delhi Headquarters and 10 regional stations across India.
- Primarily, **NGB has four kinds of facilities, namely,**
- Seed Genebank (- 18°C).
- Cryogene Bank (-170°C to -196°C).

- In vitro Genebank (25°C), and
- Field Genebank.
- These facilities help for long-term as well as medium-term conservation of the indigenous crops namely cereals, millets, medicinal and aromatic plants and narcotics, among others.

Global facilities working towards conserving crops-

- The **Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway** houses the **world's largest collection of seeds.**
- **India's seed vault is at Chang La (Ladakh)** in the Himalayas. **Built in 2010** jointly by the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research and the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, this seed bank is the **second largest in the world.**
- Established with the objective of conserving the indigenous livestock biodiversity, **National Animal Gene Bank** is nestled at the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR – Karnal, Haryana), has the objective of conserving the indigenous livestock biodiversity.

National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources

- **Set up in January 1977**, the '**National Bureau of Plant Introduction**' was renamed as '**National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources**' (NBPGR).
- It is one of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institutes.