**Syllabus subtopic:** Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Prelims and Mains focus:** about the CRZ regime and its significance

**News:** As many as 2,130 backwater islands of Kerala, including Maradu, have been brought under the **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) regime** thereby imposing **curbs on development activities.**

**Background**

The provisions of the **CRZ 2011 notification** made **special provisions for Kerala** considering the **unique coastal systems of backwaters** and backwaters islands along with the space limitation in the coastal stretches of the State of Kerala.

**CRZ 2011 notification**

- **Within the 50 metre CRZ area** of these islands, **only the repair and reconstruction of existing dwelling units of local communities will be permitted.**

- **Beyond the 50 metre limit**, **the local communities could construct new dwelling units with the permission of the local body.**

**Changes made by CRZ 2019 notification**

- The CRZ area of these islands has been **reduced to 20 metres** in the subsequent CRZ notification issued in 2019, **allowing more land for construction towards the water body.** One may have to wait for some more time for availing of the benefits of the CRZ 2019 notification, as it is yet to come into force.

- **Till the 2019 notification comes into effect, the 2011 notification will hold good.**
What is the CRZ area?

- No new development activity will be permitted in these islands in an area between High Tide Line (HTL) and 50 metres towards the landward side, which is the CRZ area of these islands.

- The HTL is the line on the land up to which the highest water line reaches during the spring tide.

Islands on the CRZ list

- The islands of Mulavukad, Chendamangalam, Kothad, Pizhala and Kadamakudy of Ernakulam where some major CRZ violations have been reported are there in the list of 1,068 islands of the district.

- The 474 islands of Alappuzha and the 184 of Kollam are also in the list. Thiruvananthapuram has the least number of islands, 43.

- This is for the first time that the list of the Kerala islands is being drawn up.

- The list of the islands was prepared by the National Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, for the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority (KCZMA).