

Topics

- **Himalayan region vs development**
- **India and maldive**
- **The island of Great Nicobar vs development project**
- **Religious practices**
- **PESA**
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By saurabh Pandey



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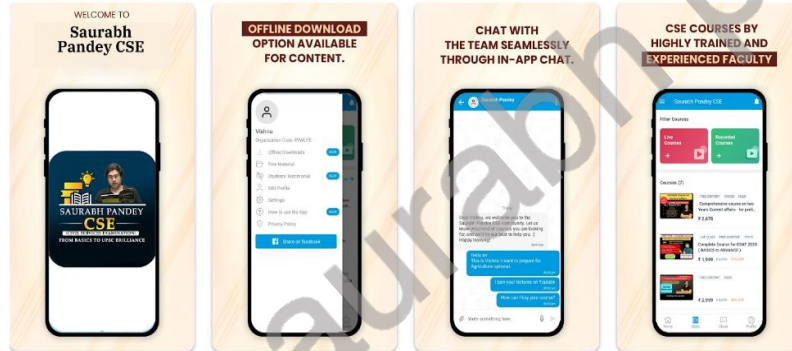
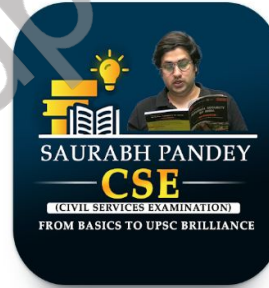
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The Court spells the way in Himalaya's development



It is a well-established fact that the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) is both India's water tower and also the critical provider of invaluable ecosystem goods and services. Despite this understanding, there has always been dissonance between the special development needs and the development model being pursued in the IHR. As the economy of the region is dependent on the health and the well-being of its natural resources, plundering the same in the name of development will inevitably and surely lead the IHR towards its economic ruin.

In view of some of the recent judgments of the Supreme Court of India, we seem to be headed towards a more robust rights-based regime where sustainable development would be a fundamental right. The tone and tenor of the Court's judgments highlighting the competing rights of people and nature are a clear sign of the direction in which the development versus environment debate in India is headed. In *State of Telangana and Others vs Mohd. Abdul Qasim (Died) Per Lrs*, the Court had said that the need of the hour is to adopt an ecocentric view of the environment, where nature is at the core. The Court said, "Man being an enlightened species, is expected to act as a trustee of the Earth...The time has come for mankind to live sustainably and respect the rights of rivers, lakes, beaches, estuaries, ridges, trees, mountains, seas and air... Man is bound by nature's law."

A model of destruction

According to this approach, nature is not an object of protection but a subject with fundamental rights, such as the right to exist, to survive, and to persist and regenerate vital cycles. The current development model being pursued in the IHR is in total contravention of this approach. We are witnessing a 'bumper crop' of hydroelectric power stations on the rivers and streams in the IHR, without any care for the rights of these rivers and streams. There is a reckless widening of existing hill roads to four lanes in the name of development – in any case, these roads are getting washed away in many places in the IHR every time a river is in spate.

A post-disaster need assessment report by the National Disaster Management Authority on the floods in 2023 in Himachal Pradesh identified, unsurprisingly, rampant construction in violation of norms, regulations (and even court orders in many cases) right on river beds and flood plains, on the steep slopes, in seismic zones, in landslide-prone areas and the loss of green cover as the reasons for the disaster. The Teesta dam breach in Sikkim and the monsoon floods and landslides in Himachal Pradesh – both events in 2023 – are a stark reminder of the havoc our



Archana Vaidya

a natural resource management/ environmental law consultant and a Governing Council member of the Sustainable Development Forum, Himachal Pradesh

Aspirations for growth and development in the Indian Himalayan Region need to be aligned with science and the rights of people and nature

development model is causing to the environment, ecology and communities, especially in the mountains. The mountains, climate, forests, rivers, air and land all are crying for their right to survive in the IHR. In whatever approach we choose to adopt, whether ecocentric or anthropocentric, there is a need to align aspirations for growth and development in the IHR with the science and the rights of both people and nature.

Intersectionality of rights

In another matter of public interest litigation (PIL) titled *Ashok Kumar Raghav vs Union of India and Ors.*, the Supreme Court asked the central government and the petitioner to suggest a way forward so as to enable the Court to pass directions on the carrying capacity of the Himalayan States and towns. In the case of the Great Indian Bustard, the Court has recognised the right of the people of this country to be free from the adverse impacts of climate change. Unfortunately the Court's verdict in the Great Indian Bustard case is being interpreted in a very narrow sense – as if the Court has given a clean chit to all renewable energy projects over and above the concerns for biodiversity or any other right that might get compromised. The Court is not only cognisant but also committed to the conservation of species and has underscored the importance of taking proactive measures "not reactive" to protect the Great Indian Bustard. The Court modified the previous order where a blanket ban was imposed on a very large area despite the report of the Wildlife Institute of India, which had identified 13,663 square kilometres as the "priority area", and the rest as "potential areas" and as "additional important areas" for the Great Indian Bustard. The Court has explained in the judgement the non-viability of underground power transmission lines.

In fact, the Court has explained in detail, with examples of many international and national obligations, to explain the intersectionality between the fundamental rights enshrined in Articles 14 and 21, specifically, and human rights which include the right to development and the newly minted right to be able to adapt to climate change. The top court went on to say: "without a clean environment which is stable and unimpacted by the vagaries of climate change, the right to life is not fully realised... The inability of underserved communities to adapt to climate change or cope with its effects violates the right to life as well as the right to equality. The right to equality under Article 14 and the right to life under Article 21 must be appreciated in the context of the decisions of this Court, the actions and commitments of the state on the national and international level, and scientific consensus on

climate change and its adverse effects".

It is a given that unless infrastructure is sustainable and dependable, it cannot become the foundation for people's pursuit of their developmental goals. Sustainability of infrastructure necessarily means that it is resilient to the adverse impacts of climate change and consequent disasters. This is essential to ensure equality, equity and equal access to people, to various opportunities all across the country – as is the mandate of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. Disasters are also known to amplify social inequality as the poor are the worst hit and the most inadequately equipped to deal with the consequences. To pursue a path of sustainable development can also be said to be a fundamental right, as a natural corollary or an integral part or a sub-set of the right to be free from the adverse impacts of climate change. The state must honour this. Hopefully, the Court's judgment is a much-needed nudge and serves as the basis for a legal framework for necessary course correction for development in general and in the IHR in particular.

Development and disaster resilience

While there is no denying that as we are a lower-middle income country with a large and young population, rapid development is India's destiny. The interconnection between disasters and unregulated development has become increasingly pronounced and visible. The only way forward is for disaster management to be incorporated in development planning, both from a perspective of prevention and resilience. Our actions in the name of development, in total disregard of nature in most cases, is to be blamed for these unnatural disasters resulting from natural hazards. The development plans, policies and laws that underpin them too play a pivotal role in the making of these disasters. There is an urgent need for planning stage convergence of different authorities so that when there is a plan for any development, all concerns about disaster and climate resilience are also factored in, and the project reaches implementation stage only after the green signal in these areas. We need both development and disaster resilience. We also need science, policy and action to be in conformity with each other, in an integrated approach with the involvement of all including policymakers, planners, the scientific fraternity and communities.

In view of these judgments of the Supreme Court and also the new fundamental right to be free from the adverse impacts of climate change, it is now a fundamental right for people in general and of IHR in particular to have a development model that is sustainable and in sync with the carrying capacity of the IHR.

Himalayan region vs development

- . In State of Telangana and Others vs Mohd. Abdul Qasim (Died) Per Lrs, the Court had said that the need of the hour is to adopt an ecocentric view of the environment, where nature is at the core.
- The Court said, “Man being an enlightened species, is expected to act as a trustee of the Earth...The time has come for mankind to live sustainably and respect the rights of rivers, lakes, beaches, estuaries, ridges, trees, mountains, seas and air

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- **According to this approach, nature is not an object of protection but a subject with fundamental rights, such as the right to exist, to survive, and to persist and regenerate vital cycles.**
- **The current development model being pursued in the IHR is in total contravention of this approach.**
- **We are witnessing a ‘bumper crop’ of hydroelectric power stations on the rivers and streams in the IHR, without any care for the rights of these rivers and streams.**
- **There is a reckless widening of existing hill roads to four lanes in the name of development —**

- **The Teesta dam breach in Sikkim and the monsoon ☐ floods and landslides in Himachal Pradesh — both events in 2023 — are a stark reminder of the havoc our development model is causing to the environment, ecology and communities, especially in the mountains.**
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From China tilt to a balancing with Beijing and Delhi



From calling India a “bully” to visiting New Delhi as an invitee to the swearing-in of Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India for a third term, in June 2024, Mohamed Muizzu’s India policy is one of blowing hot and cold. Ever since his swearing-in in November 2023 as the President of the Maldives, Mr. Muizzu has embraced a “pro-Maldives” policy that reduces his country’s dependence on India, increases relations with China, and diversifies its foreign policy with others. More than six months after his swearing-in and impairing Male’s ties with India, his foreign policy is now seeing some recalibration.

Mr. Muizzu’s foreign policy is shaped by domestic and external factors. Coming to power through a party that has led the “India Out” campaign, the leader has used anti-Indian rhetoric and diversification from India to further nationalist and religious sentiments and voter base in the Maldives. Both he and his party also enjoy close ties with China and deem it as a “pro-efficient” partner that would fund their ambitious projects. Further, owing to the increasing geostrategic importance of the Maldives and Male’s interest in reducing ties with India, he hopes to deepen the Maldives’s relationship with Japan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Male’s economic difficulties

However, economic difficulties at home in Male, extra-regional powers falling short of expectations, and India’s accommodative policy are now compelling Mr. Muizzu to rethink his strategy. First, the economy of the Maldives continues to be in deep trouble – there are increasing debt maturities, low revenues, and a decline in foreign reserves. It has a debt-to-GDP ratio of 110% and a foreign reserve of \$622 million, while its annual debt servicing accounts for \$512 million for 2024 and 2025, and around one billion in 2026. With its heavy dependence on imports, food and fuel inflation, and a low production base, the government is struggling to maintain its foreign reserves. It has even



Harsh V. Pant

Vice President –
Studies and Foreign
Policy, Observer
Research Foundation



**Aditya Gowdara
Shivamurthy**

Associate Fellow,
Neighbourhood
Studies, Observer
Research Foundation

With Male facing increasing domestic and foreign policy challenges, Mohamed Muizzu is possibly aiming at a reconciliation with India

convinced its top import partners, India and China, to pay for imports in local currency.

Ties with China and India’s policy

Second, China is falling short of Male’s expectations. Mr. Muizzu’s visit to China in January 2024 saw both countries signing over 20 Memorandum of Understanding. There was also agreement to revive the Belt and Road Initiative projects and free trade agreement with China. The Maldives also signed a defence pact with China in March 2024, has agreed to explore implementing the Global Security Initiative, has upgraded the relations to a ‘China-Maldives Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership’ from 2024 to 2028, and even permitted a Chinese ‘spy’ ship to dock in Male. On its part, besides a few strategic investments, Beijing is hesitant to invest in the country’s mega-infrastructure. China’s focus is on community development and housing projects, and capacity-building initiatives.

Reports estimate that the Maldives owes China around \$1.5 billion. While China promised a five years’ debt relief earlier, it is now disclosed that debt relief would complicate the prospects of future borrowing. The Chinese Ambassador has also expressed wariness in offering new loans because of Male’s increasing debt burden, declaring that Beijing would assist in the form of grants. This has fractured Mr. Muizzu’s hopes of attracting funds and investments from China, which happens through commercial loans, and not grants. Similarly, other countries have also been slow to reciprocate to his demands of economic partnerships and have primarily focused on capacity building and maritime security due to their other strategic preoccupations and commitments.

Third, India’s accommodative policy and fulfilment of Mr. Muizzu’s demands and requests have facilitated this rapprochement.

First, India has maintained high-level engagements despite Male’s anti-Indian rhetoric and close relations with China. India’s Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar has met his Maldivian counterpart on multiple occasions. In

addition, India replaced its 76 military personnel with civilian experts at the request of the new Maldivian government. It has increased its development assistance from ₹400 crore to ₹600 crore (a 50% increase) for 2024, and its export quota of food products to the Maldives by 5%, and construction items by 25%.

The signal from New Delhi

Amid these economic hardships and China’s lacklustre response, the Maldivian Foreign Minister, Moosa Zameer, visited India in May, marking the first high-level visit of the government. India expressed to him the need to uphold “reciprocal sensitivities” and responded to the Maldives’ request by extending a \$50 million treasury bill for a year on zero interest (through the State Bank of India). This visit also saw India inviting Mr. Muizzu to Mr. Modi’s swearing-in.

On India’s part, the invitation extended to Mr. Muizzu indicates that New Delhi will continue to engage with Male, regardless of who is in power. There is hope that the Maldivian leader, now with a super-majority in the Maldivian Parliament, would reciprocate India’s accommodative policy by respecting its sensitivities. On the other hand, with nearly 65% of Indian EXIM loans yet to be disbursed and prospects of additional grants and concessional loans, Mr. Muizzu hopes that the invitation offers an opportunity to improve bilateral ties with India and rescue the country’s economy.

This is not to suggest that Mr. Muizzu has embraced a pro-India policy. Along with an attempt to deepen partnerships with others, his equation with China remains unchanged. Both countries even continue to maintain regular high-level exchanges. What has perhaps changed is his realising that he cannot completely alienate India and that he would benefit more by balancing and playing one country against the other rather than taking sides. As India and China compete and try to outdo each other in the region, Mr. Muizzu is possibly betting on increasing his agency to further the Maldives’ interests.

India and maldive

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- **Second, China is falling short of Male's expectations. Mr. Muizzu's visit to China in January 2024 saw both countries signing over 20 Memorandum of Understanding.**
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Human dignity versus religious practices



On May 17, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court allowed the resumption of “*annadhanam*” (offering free food) and “*angapradakshanam*” (circumambulation) at the final resting place of Nerur Sathguru Sadasiva Brahmendral on the eve of his Jeeva Samathi day. The practice of doing ‘*angapradakshanam*’ by rolling on the plantain leaves left behind by devotees after eating food from them, in the belief that it would offer spiritual benefit, had been in vogue for over 100 years. However, it was halted by a Division Bench order in a public interest litigation (PIL) petition in 2015.

Nine years later, Justice G.R. Swaminathan reinstated the practice by invoking Article 25(1) of the Constitution that guarantees the right to freely profess, practise, and propagate religion. The judge linked the belief of the devotees, who claim to derive spiritual benefit from such practice, to the right to privacy, a fundamental right under the Constitution. He argued that if the right to privacy includes “gender and sexual orientation”, it also includes “spiritual orientation”. “It should not affect the rights and freedoms belonging to others. So as long as this Rubicon is not crossed, it is not open to the State or the courts to impinge on one’s action,” he said.

The judge overlooked the people’s movement that culminated in the judicial decisions that recognised sexual orientation, which cannot be equated with a spiritual orientation, especially as *angapradakshanam* on the plantain leaves left behind by devotees is customary and religious rather than spiritual. He cited the Mahabharata to support his decision, arguing that spiritual benefits are conferred by rolling on leftover food. He sums it up by holding that the customary practice is protected as a fundamental right under Articles



P. Selvi

Advocate and Mediator at the Madras High Court

It is the duty of the state to change religious and customary practices that are unhealthy, harmful, and strike at human dignity

14, 19(0)(a), 19(0)(d), 21 and 25(1) of the Constitution.

Justice Swaminathan overruled the Division Bench’s order on the ground that the devotees and the trustees of the Adhistanam, who were the necessary parties in the PIL petition, were neither included as parties nor heard and held the order to be a fallacy as it suffered from an egregious breach of the principles of natural justice.

The Division Bench order noted that all devotees irrespective of their castes indulged in the practice of rolling on the leftover plantain leaves. It concluded that such religious and customary practices affect human dignity and violate the rights of equality and life under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. Despite the voluntary acts of the devotees, the court ordered the practice to be stopped immediately in 2015. The Division Bench relied on a case from Karnataka that is pending in the Supreme Court, where a similar practice was performed at the Kukke Subramanya temple in Dakshina Kannada district. The Supreme Court stayed the practice in December 2014 and directed the respondents therein not to allow anyone to roll on leftover plantain leaves.

Justice Swaminathan negates the Supreme Court order noting that the Karnataka case involved only Brahmins’ leftovers that persons of other communities rolled over, while in the present case, all devotees participated irrespective of their community. He observed that “in fact, the custom on hand points to communal amity and social integration”. The reasoning is due to the erroneous understanding of the facts in the Supreme Court case, which arose on an appeal from the Division Bench of the Karnataka High Court. Before the Division Bench, the respondents agreed that the rolling on plantain leaves ceremony would be open to all persons, and said that they would discontinue the practice of the Brahmin community alone eating the food offered to the deity

as ‘*naivedyam*’. They also said that the food served on the plantain leaves would not have been tasted or partially eaten. It would be placed in the outer yard over which willing devotees could perform the ritual. The appeal in the Supreme Court was by the State of Karnataka which was stayed as the rituals were against public order, morality, and health, which are the restrictions on the right to worship under Article 25(1) of the Constitution.

Justice Swaminathan’s judgment focused on the devotee’s rights to continue with the ritual under the pretext of protection of their fundamental rights. However, it failed to examine the duty of every citizen to develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform enshrined in the Constitution.

Existing conflict

At the heart of the judgment is the conflict between cultural relativism and universalism. The universalists argue for adoption of human rights standards, whereas the cultural relativists rely on customary laws and practices and religious beliefs. The judge has chosen the relativist argument and has moved away from the norms in international instruments, where the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights mention human dignity. The judge failed to recognise that traditional and religious practices are steeped in superstitious beliefs and are the refuge of the ignorant and fearful, who guard against the challenge to their privileges.

It is the duty of the state to change religious and customary practices, such as rolling over leftovers, that are unhealthy, harmful, and strike at human dignity. While an outright rejection of such practices may open up a Pandora’s Box, the State could educate the believers through reason and rational discussions and pave for a community that is humane and prone to the spirit of inquiry.

Religious practices

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- He argued that if the right to privacy includes “gender and sexual orientation”, it also includes “spiritual orientation”.
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- **customary practice is protected as a fundamental right under Articles 14, 19(1)(a), 19(1)(d), 21 and 25(1) of the Constitution.**

The NTI Aayog's project in Great Nicobar

Why has the Congress party called for an 'immediate suspension' of all clearances granted to NTI Aayog's mega project on Great Nicobar island? What are the ecological and social concerns? Why is there a threat of frequent earthquakes?

EXPLAINER

Rishika Pardikar

The story so far:

In June 17, the Congress party demanded an "immediate suspension" of all clearances granted to NTI Aayog's mega project on Great Nicobar island in the light of "violations of due process, legal and constitutional provisions protecting tribal communities, and the project's disproportionate ecological and human cost." The party also demanded a "thorough impartial review of the proposed project, including by the parliamentary committees concerned." Other political parties have also raised concerns about the project. In its 2024 election manifesto, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) promised to "scrap the environmentally disastrous and pro-corporate Islands Development Plan for Andaman and Nicobar." The Tribal Council of Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar and a host of environmentalists, wildlife conservationists, and tribal rights groups have also opposed the project.

Where is Great Nicobar and which are the communities living there?

The island of Great Nicobar is the southernmost tip of India and a part of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago that comprises 600-odd islands. It is hilly and covered with lush rainforests that are sustained by around 3,500 mm of annual rainfall. The rainforests and beaches host numerous endangered and endemic species including the giant leatherback turtle, the Nicobar megapode, the Great Nicobar crane, the Nicobar crab-eating macaque, and the Nicobar tree shrew. It has an area of 910 sq km with mangroves and Pandan forests along its coast.

The island is home to two tribal communities — the Shompen and the Nicobarese. The Shompen, around 250 in total, mostly live in the interior forests and are relatively isolated from the rest of the population. They are predominantly hunter-gatherers and are classified as a Partly Vulnerable Tribal Group within the list of Scheduled Tribes.

The Nicobarese community practices farming and fishing. It has two groups: the Great Nicobarese and the Little Nicobarese. They use different dialects of the Nicobarese language (the Shompens have their own unique language). The Great Nicobarese lived along the island's southeast and west coast until the tsunami in 2004, after which the government resettled them in Campbell Bay. Today, there are around 450 Great Nicobarese on the island. Little Nicobarese, numbering around 850, mostly live in Ariti Bay in Great Nicobar and also in other islands in the archipelago, Pulaulo and Little Nicobar.

The majority of Great Nicobarese comprise people who settled on the island from mainland India. Between 1968 and 1975, the Indian government settled retired military servicemen and their families from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, among a few others, here. Around 320 households were given around 15 acres of land across seven revenue villages on the island's east coast: Campbell Bay, Govindnagar, Jogindernagar, Vijaynagar, Laxminagar, Gandhinagar, and Shastrinagar. Campbell Bay is also an administrative hub that includes local offices of the Andaman and Nicobar administration and the panchayat. There were also short-term and long-term migrations of fisherfolk, agricultural and construction labourers,



Ecological wealth: A view of the Indra Point in Great Nicobar Island of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. GETTY IMAGES

businesspersons, and administrative staff comprising foresters, engineers, teachers, etc. from both the mainland and the Andaman Islands. The construction contract was awarded after the 2004 tsunami. Overall, the population of settlers on the island today is around 6,000. All population data is an approximation provided by researchers who have worked in Great Nicobar.

What is the NTI Aayog project?

In March 2021, NTI Aayog unveiled a ₹70,000 crore plan called 'Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island at Andaman and Nicobar Islands'. It includes the construction of an international transhipment terminal, an international airport, a power plant, and a township. The project is to be implemented by a government undertaking called the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIDCO).

The plan states: "The proposed port will allow Great Nicobar to participate in the regional and global maritime economy by becoming a major player in cargo transshipment. The proposed airport will support the growth of maritime services and enable Great Nicobar Island to attract international and national visitors to experience the outstanding natural environment and participate in sustainable tourism activity." Although NTI Aayog put forth the project in its present form, it has a long history. Plans for developing a port in Great Nicobar have been around since at least the 1970s, when the Trade Development Authority of India now

called India Trade Promotion Organisation) conducted techno-economic feasibility studies. The core aim has persisted since then — a port located near one of the world's busiest international sea routes (the Malacca Strait) which will allow increased participation in global maritime trade.

Why is there opposition?

The mega project has been heavily criticised for its ecological costs and for potential violations of tribal rights. The project requires the diversion of about 130 sq km of forest land and the felling of around 10 lakh trees. In January, 2020 the Indian government designated two wildlife sanctuaries — the Galathea Bay wildlife sanctuary and the Megapode wildlife sanctuary — to make way for the project. In the same month, the government released a National Marine Turtle Action Plan that lists Galathea Bay as a marine turtle habitat in India.

The transhipment terminal is expected to be developed at Galathea Bay, one of the world's largest nesting sites for the giant leatherback turtle. Both this species and the Nicobar megapode are listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 — the highest level of protection for wild animals under Indian law (numerous species, especially endemic ones, are likely yet to be documented in Great Nicobar given the limited number of surveys conducted so far). In November 2022, the Tribal Council of Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar withdrew the no-objective certificate (NOC) it had provided for the

concealed important information about the use of tribal reserve lands and that they had obtained tribal communities' consent in a rushed process.

Some of the land classified as "uninhabited" in NTI Aayog's plan is a part of the Great Nicobarese's ancestral land. Since their post-tsunami resettlement, they have repeatedly sought to return to these lands — only to be met with administrative apathy. Today, the mega project also stands in the way of their demands to return.

As for the Shompen, one of the biggest threats is disease. Since the Shompen have had little contact with the outside world, they haven't yet developed immunity to infectious diseases that affect India's general population. Some Shompen settlements also overlap with the areas the NTI Aayog has proposed to be used for the transhipment terminal. Earlier this month, the local panchayat of Campbell Bay raised concerns over the social impact assessment process for land acquisition for the airport. Researchers who work on disaster management have also raised concerns that proponents of the mega project have failed to adequately assess earthquake risk. The Andaman and Nicobar archipelago is located in the "ring of fire" — a seismically active region that experiences several earthquakes throughout the year.

According to some estimates, the region has experienced close to 500 quakes of varying magnitude in the last decade. The area is in category V, the geographical zone with the most seismic hazard.

Rishika Pardikar is a freelance environment reporter based in Bengaluru.

THE GIST

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The island of Great Nicobar vs development project

- **The island of Great Nicobar is the southernmost tip of India and a part of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago that comprises 600-odd islands.**
- **The island is home to two tribal communities – the Shompen and the Nicobarese.**
- **The Shompen, around 250 in total, mostly live in the interior forests and are relatively isolated from the rest of the population.**
- **They are predominantly hunter-gatherers and are classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group within the list of Scheduled Tribes.**

- **The Nicobarese community practises farming and ☐ fishing. It has two groups: the Great Nicobarese and the Little Nicobarese.**
- **They use different dialects of the Nicobarese language (the Shompen have their own unique language).**

What is the NITI Aayog project?

- In March 2021, NITI Aayog unveiled a ₹72,000 crore plan called ‘Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island at Andaman and Nicobar Islands’.
- It includes the construction of an international transshipment terminal, an international airport, a power plant, and a township.
- The project is to be implemented by a government undertaking called the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO).
- The plan states: “The proposed port will allow Great Nicobar to participate in the regional and global maritime economy by becoming a major player in cargo transshipment.

- **. In January, 2021 the Indian government denotified two wildlife sanctuaries – the Galathea Bay wildlife sanctuary and the Megapode wildlife sanctuary – to make way for the project. In the same month, the government released a ‘National Marine Turtle Action Plan’ that lists Galathea Bay as a marine turtle habitat in India.**
- **The transshipment terminal is expected to be developed at Galathea Bay, one of the world’s largest nesting sites for the giant leatherback turtle.**

- **Both this species and the Nicobar megapode are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection Act), 1972 — the highest level of protection for wild animals under Indian law (numerous species, especially endemic ones, are likely yet to be documented in Great Nicobar given the limited number of surveys conducted so far).**

- **As for the Shompen, one of the biggest threats is disease. Since the Shompen have had little contact with the outside world, they haven't yet developed immunity to infectious diseases that affect India's general population.**
- **Some Shompen settlements also overlap with the areas the NITI Aayog has proposed to be used for the transshipment terminal.**
- **Earlier this month, the local panchayat of Campbell Bay raised concerns over the social impact assessment process for land acquisition for the airport.**

- **Researchers who work on disaster management have also raised concerns that proponents of the mega project have failed to adequately assess earthquake risk.**
- **The Andaman and Nicobar archipelago is located in the “ring of fire”: a seismically active region that experiences several earthquakes throughout the year.**

How the PESA has boosted forest conservation in India

The Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act empowered the Scheduled Tribes as political actors; and they needed to protect trees for their livelihoods, it made them hostile to commercial timber and mining

G. Sampath

Qutub, Saad, Apoorva Lal, and Benjamin Pasquale (2023). "Representation and Forest Conservation: Evidence from India's Scheduled Areas." *American Political Science Review* (2024) 118, 2, 764-783.

The policy approach to conservation in India has long grappled with two kinds of conflicts: conservation versus resource extraction by local communities, and conservation versus 'economic development'. The state has tended to follow a piecemeal approach, at times leaning one way, at other times the other, with the direction determined by competition between sections of the political elite at the national, state, and local levels.

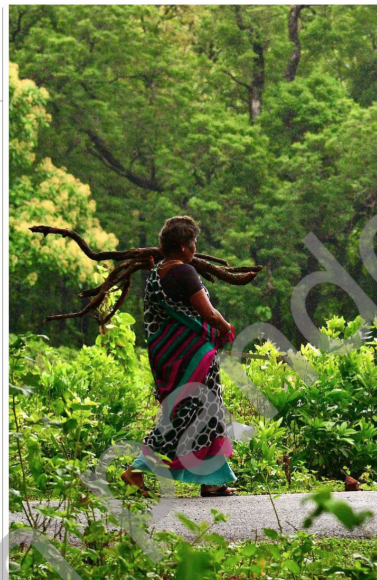
In such a scenario, it goes without saying that greater the centralisation of political power, the greater the say of the national and/or state elites, which, predictably, would foster a privileging of the interests of big capital over that of local communities. In other words, deforestation driven by mining, power projects, commercial timber, big dams etc. could prevail over conservation and/or livelihoods of forest communities – a noticeable phenomenon in India. Where conservation initiatives take off, they often follow a top-down approach, leading to situations where local communities lose access to traditional forest lands critical for their sustenance. Is there a policy approach that might reconcile these contradictions? There is, says this paper. The authors, Saad Qutub, Apoorva Lal and Benjamin Pasquale, argue that providing mandated political representation to marginalised communities boosts forest conservation while securing, at the same time, their economic interests. If that is so, the next question would be: what kind of political representation?

This article makes the case for a combination of decentralisation and democratisation, where marginalised local communities – living in, or in proximity to, forests – enjoy not just token political representation but have actual say in both decision-making and resource management.

The methodology

How do the authors arrive at this conclusion? They draw on a data-driven study of an institution mandated to provide precisely the kind of political representation they propose: the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), passed in 1996. PESA extends local government councils to Scheduled Areas. Under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, regions with predominantly tribal populations are categorised as 'Scheduled Areas', a territorial designation that recognises the customary rights of the Scheduled Tribes (ST).

Though the 73rd Amendment, passed in 1992, formalised local self-government through the three-tier Panchayat Raj institutions (PR) in the non-Scheduled Areas, it did so without 'mandated representation for STs'. PESA, however, took it a step further. It "introduced an electoral quota that requires all



Need to empower: Women from the Singpathy tribal settlement collecting firewood for fuel at the foothills of the Western Ghats in Coimbatore in 2023. PINKSHAH

chairperson positions, as well as at least half the seats on each local government councils to be reserved for ST individuals." Incidentally, in States where PESA has not been implemented well, as in Gujarat, for instance, the most common failure has been the absence of mandated ST representation in gram sabha committees. This variegated governance landscape sets of local self-governance and forest cover that differ in geography and over time for villages: with local self-government in Scheduled Areas (with mandated ST representation); for villages with local self-government without mandated ST representation; and also, villages which adopted PESA earlier, and those that did so later. In tracking these different sets of villages for rates of deforestation and afforestation over time, the authors adopt what they call a "difference-in-differences" framework. As they explain, "We use the staggered adoption of PESA institutions across States, and within-state variation in Scheduled Areas versus non-Scheduled

Areas, in a difference-in-differences framework that enables us to isolate the causal effect of ST-mandated representation on forest outcomes."

Unlike earlier studies of this kind, which relied on field work in small communities to track local changes in forestation outcomes, this paper uses "remote-sensing microdata that have recently become available from satellites such as LANDSAT, Sentinel, and DMSP." They use two such datasets – the MERRIPES Vegetation Continuous Fields (VCF), and the Global Forest Cover (GFC) dataset for 2000-17.

Equitable representation

Tracking the increase and decrease of tree and vegetation cover over time and across the forested areas around these different sets of villages, they found that "boosting formal representation for ST led to an average increase in tree canopy by 2% per year as well as a reduction in the rate of deforestation." The effects were also larger for areas that had more forest cover at the start of the study period. The study also showed that the

rise in tree canopy and fall in deforestation also began to happen after the introduction of PESA elections that mandate quotas for ST." In other words, the mere presence of PRs or local self-government – which were introduced from 1993 – "without mandated representation for the ST, had no conservation effects."

This was not a case of correlation but causation. When empowered as political actors, the STs had an economic incentive to protect trees, which they needed for their livelihoods centred on sale of non-timber forest produce and daily calorie intake – a dependency that made them hostile to commercial timber and mining, two deadly drivers of deforestation. As the authors sum up, "under PESA, ST are able to better pursue their economic interests which in turn leads to better forest conservation, a mechanism we call 'forest stewardship'."

The paper also provides qualitative and quantitative evidence for a second mechanism instrumental for improvement of overall forest health: opposition to mining interests, "where the increase to ST representation enables ST communities to resist mining and other large-scale commercial operation." The paper finds that prior to PESA, areas close to mines experienced higher rates of deforestation. But the introduction of PESA elections led "to a greater reduction in deforestation for PESA villages close to mines". Interestingly, they provide evidence that the introduction of PESA also "increased the incidence of conflict around mining".

On democratic decentralisation

The study further compares the impacts of PESA with that of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA), a legislation that aimed to bolster ST rights to forest lands. It found that FRA had "no discernible additional impacts" on conservation "beyond those caused by PESA." The paper makes a key theoretical distinction between administrative decentralisation (where the priority is efficient execution) and democratic decentralisation. It is possible to have village-level governing councils empowered with budgets for execution but lacking discretionary power on resource management. That won't do. "Unlike administrative decentralisation, democratic decentralisation refers to representative and downwardly accountable local actors who have autonomous, discretionary decision-making spheres, with the power and resources to make significant decisions pertaining to people's lives."

In conclusion, if mandated political representation for marginalised communities is one institutional mechanism that can yield better results in conservation, a second, one, according to the study, is "vesting powers in a single umbrella institution – for instance, a political institution that empowers marginalised voices." A single institution – rather than multiple ones vested with different mandates – is critical because it would be "better at recognising how to balance the local policy objectives of development and conservation; and it can "consolidate power into a more substantive and meaningful democratic authority."

Forest-dwelling ST communities are one of the most impoverished and politically marginalised populations in India. Fresh evidence, as seen in the findings of this paper, of complementarities between achieving conservation goals and economic development of vulnerable populations is good news for policymakers, who are duty-bound to protect their rights and ensure their welfare.



PESA



- **the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA). Passed in 1996, PESA extends local government councils to Scheduled Areas.**
- **Under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, regions with predominantly tribal populations are categorised as ‘Scheduled Areas’, a territorial designation that recognises the customary rights of the Scheduled Tribes (ST).**
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- It “introduced an electoral quota that requires all chairperson positions, as well as at least half the seats on each local government councils to be reserved for ST individuals.”
- Incidentally, in States where PESA has not been implemented well, as in Gujarat, for instance, the most common failure has been the absence of mandated ST representation in gram sabha committees.
- This variegated governance landscape has one virtue.

- **,It offers comparable data sets of local self-governance and forest cover that differ in geography and over time for villages: with local self-government in Scheduled Areas (with mandated ST representation); for villages with local self-government without mandated ST representation; and also, villages which adopted PESA earlier, and those that did so later.**
- **if mandated political representation for marginalised communities is one institutional mechanism that can yield better results in conservation,**

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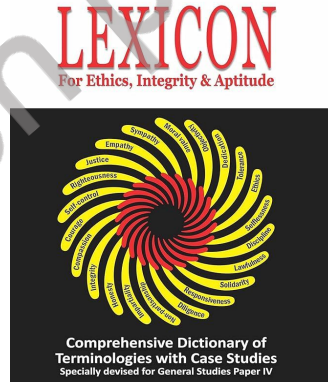
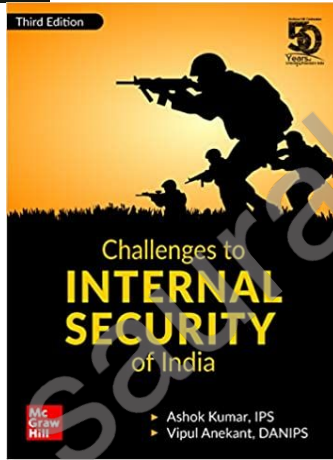
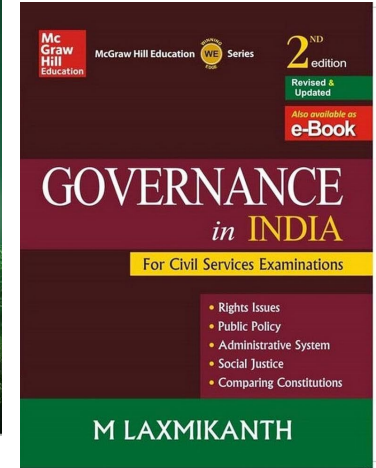
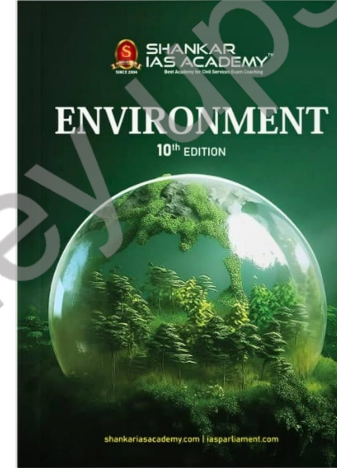
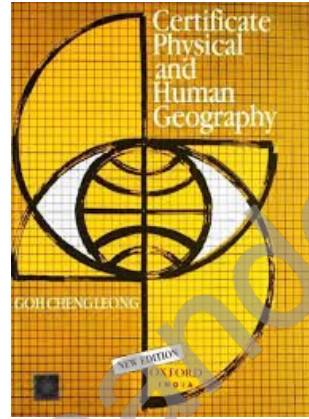
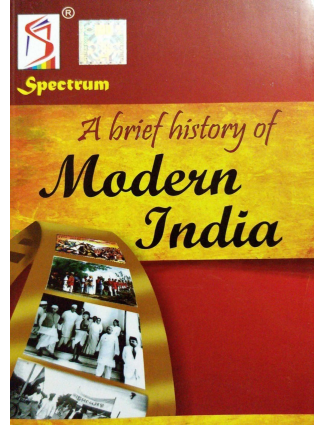
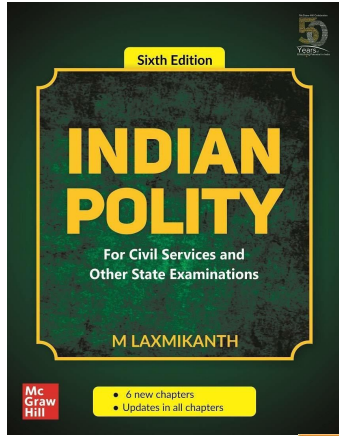
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X 22nd october 2...



Periodical cicada emergence disrupts food webs

The periodical mass emergence of cicadas in eastern North American forests can "rewire" forest food webs and initiate a cascade of impacts that propagates throughout the food chain, as per a study that quantified effects of the 2021 brood X cicada emergence. The study found that when insect-eating birds have prey in the form of cicadas and thus shift their focus away from their usual prey – leaf-eating caterpillars – the caterpillars feast more heavily upon the leaves of oak saplings, doubling insect leaf damage.

- The periodical mass emergence of cicadas in eastern North American forests can "rewire" forest food webs and initiate a cascade of impacts that propagates throughout the food chain, as per a study that quantified effects of the 2021 Brood X cicada emergence.

The cicadas are a superfamily, the Cicadoidea, of insects in the order

Hemiptera.



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X 10th october 2...

States as per Article 244(2).

What are Scheduled Areas?

- Scheduled Areas cover 11.3% of India's land area, and have been notified in 10 States: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh

How are Scheduled Areas governed?

- The President of India notifies India's Scheduled Areas. States with Scheduled Areas need to constitute a Tribal Advisory Council with up to 20 ST members.
- They will advise the Governor on matters referred to them regarding ST welfare.
- The Governor will then submit a report every year to the President regarding the administration of Scheduled Areas.

- The national government can give directions to the State regarding the administration of Scheduled Areas.
- The Governor can repeal or amend any law enacted by Parliament and the State Legislative Assembly in its application to the Scheduled Area of that State.

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X 7TH DECEMBE...

Garba dance of Gujarat makes it to UNESCO list

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Gujarat's traditional dance form "Garba" was on Wednesday included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The popular dance form is the 15th cultural item from India to make it to the UNESCO list. Kolkata's Durga Puja was the last one added two years ago.

The inclusion has been made under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The international cultural body described the 'Garba' as a ritualistic and devotional dance performed in India.

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'Garba' dance of Gujarat is making the world sick

By Sreeparna Chakrabarty
New Delhi
Gujarat's traditional dance form "Garba" was on Wednesday included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The popular dance form is the 15th cultural item from India to make it to the UNESCO list. Kolkata's Durga Puja was the last one added two years ago. The inclusion has been made under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The international cultural body described the 'Garba' as a ritualistic and devotional dance performed in India.

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WION
 Russia loads 'Avangard' missile into launch Silo, fears of nuclear warfare on rise | World DNA

Que-3 With reference to exercise 'Mitra Shakti', consider the following statements

- Between India and Nepal.
- The aim of the exercise is to jointly rehearse sub-conventional operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which authorises the Security Council to take enforcement measures, including the use of military force, to address threats to international peace and security.
- "Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-2023" recently commenced in Goa.

How many of the above statements are correct?

a) Only one b) Only two
 c) All three d) None

Ans 3- (a)

- "Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-2023" recently commenced in Aunah (Pune).
- Between India and Sri Lanka.

The Constituent Assembly debated whether fundamental rights including this one could be suspended or limited during an Emergency. The Article cannot be suspended except during the period of Emergency.

Can High Courts be approached in cases of violation of fundamental rights?

- Both the High Courts and the Supreme Court can be approached for violation or enactment of fundamental rights through five kinds of writs:
- Habeas corpus (related to personal liberty in cases of illegal detentions and wrongful arrests)
- Mandamus — directing public officials, governments, courts to perform a statutory duty;
- Quo warrant — to show by what warrant is a person holding public office;

- Prohibition — directing judicial or quasi-judicial authorities to stop proceedings which it has no jurisdiction for; and
- Certiorari — re-examination of an order given by judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative authorities.
- In civil or criminal matters, the first remedy available to an aggrieved person is that of trial courts, followed by an appeal in the High Court and then the Supreme Court.
- When it comes to violation of fundamental rights, an individual can approach the High Court under Article 226 or the Supreme Court directly under Article 32.
- Article 226, however, is not a fundamental right like Article 32.

awarded to
 of women's

Que-2 Consider the following statements

- Article 244, pertaining to the administration of Scheduled and Tribal Areas, is the single most important constitutional provision for STs.
- Articles 244(1) provides for the application of Fifth Schedule provisions to Scheduled Areas notified in any State other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram, the Sixth Schedule applies to these states as per Article 244(2).
- The Prime Minister of India notifies India's Scheduled Areas.

How many of the above statements are correct?

a) Only one b) Only two
 c) All three d) None

Ans (b)

The President of India notifies India's Scheduled Areas.

Scheduled Areas cover 11.3% of India's land area, and have been notified in 10 States: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh. In 2015, Kerala proposed to notify 2,133 habitations, five gram panchayats and two wards in five districts. It awaits the Indian government's approval.

- The President of India notifies India's Scheduled Areas. States with Scheduled Areas need to constitute a Tribal Advisory Council with up to 20 ST members. They will advise the Governor on matters referred to them regarding ST welfare. The Governor will then submit a report every year to the President regarding the administration of Scheduled Areas.
- The national government can give directions to the State regarding the administration of Scheduled Areas. The Governor can repeal or amend any law enacted by Parliament and the State Legislative Assembly in its application to the Scheduled Area of that State. The Governor can also make regulations for a Scheduled Area, especially to prohibit or restrict the transfer of land by or among members of the STs, and regulate the allotment of land to STs and money-lending to STs.



Ethics vs privilege committee

- Objective: It oversees the moral and ethical conduct of members and examines cases of misconduct referred to it.
- Appointment of members in Lok Sabha: The members of the Ethics Committee are appointed by the Speaker for a period of one year.

Procedure for complaints

- Any person can complain against a Member through another Lok Sabha MP, along with evidence of the alleged misconduct, and an affidavit stating that the complaint is not "false, frivolous, or vexatious".
- If the Member himself complains, the affidavit is not needed.
- The Speaker can refer to the Committee any complaint against an MP.
- The Committee does not entertain complaints based only on media reports or on matters that are sub-judice.
- The Committee makes a prima facie inquiry before deciding to examine a complaint. It makes its recommendations after evaluating the complaint.
- The Rules (for example, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha) applicable to the Committee of Privileges also apply to the ethics panel.
- An allegation of corruption against an MP can be sent to either body, but usually more serious accusations go to the Privileges Committee.
- The mandate of the Privileges Committee is to safeguard the "freedom, authority, and dignity of Parliament".
- These privileges are enjoyed by individual Members as well as the

House as a whole.

- An MP can be examined for breach of privilege; a non-MP too can be accused of breach of privilege for actions that attack the authority and

Santiniketan finds its place on UNESCO's World Heritage List

World body makes announcement on Sunday. Manu's ruins, named by Tagore, has been reported by Bengal Culture Ministry as a richly important heritage in human civilisation

By India Desk

Santiniketan, a town established by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List on Sunday. The town, located in West Bengal, is known for its unique blend of Indian and Western architecture and its role in the development of modern Indian education.



The UNESCO World Heritage Committee, which meets annually in Paris, has decided to include Santiniketan in the World Heritage List. The town, founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1901, is a unique blend of Indian and Western architecture and is known for its role in the development of modern Indian education. The town is also home to the Visva-Bharati University, which was founded by Tagore in 1919.

Santiniketan, a town established by Nobel laureate Rabindra nath Tagore, made it to the UNESCO's World Heritage List on Sunday.

Located in West Bengal's Birbhum district, Santiniketan, which means "abode of peace", started taking shape in 1901 and is the place where Tagore laid the foundations of VisvaBharati University

EU chief promises a plan of action as migrants flock to island

Ursula von der Leyen, along with Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, visits Lampedusa where more than 2000 people have arrived this week. EU crisis talks began here in July this year, almost double the figure by the corresponding period in 2022.

By Reuters

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited the Italian island of Lampedusa, which is struggling with a surge in migrant arrivals, on Sunday. She said she will work with the Italian government to find a way to manage the situation.



Making heads circle on the island, EU commission president Ursula von der Leyen and Italian PM Giorgia Meloni are seen here.

The plan includes using EU funds to support the island's economy and to help it manage the influx of migrants. The EU is also working to improve the island's infrastructure and to provide better services for the residents. The EU is also working to improve the island's infrastructure and to provide better services for the residents.

ceramics and glasses, greases, metallurgical powders, polymers and other uses.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Que-2 With reference to Parliaments special sessions, consider the following statements

- There is specific provision in the Constitution that deals with special sessions.
- Article 352, which deals with the proclamation of Emergency, refers to a 'special sitting' of the House, this clause was added through the 44th Amendment Act in 1978, which included safeguards against the Emergency.
- The Question Hour was suspended during the session.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None



Que-3 Consider the following statements about Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala

- This includes five temples in Karnataka, has been recently inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List.
- The Hoysala Temples, built in the 12th and 13th centuries by the Hoysala kings, are dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu.
- The temples became targets of plundered and destruction by the Delhi Sultanate army of Ala-ud-din Khaji in the early 14th century and another Delhi Sultanate army of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq in 1326 AD.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None



Que-4 Consider the following statements about SHREYAS scheme

- It comprises 4 central sector sub-schemes.
- The objective of the Scheme is to provide coaching of good quality for economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) candidates to enable them appear in competitive and entrance examinations.
- The ceiling of the total family income under the scheme is 2 lakhs per annum and 3500 slots are allotted per annum.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Que-5 Consider the following statements about Women's Reservation Bill

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, seeking to reserve 33% of seats in Lok Sabha and state Assemblies for women.



Que-5 With reference to Shumang Leela, consider the following statements

- Shumang Leela is a traditional form of theatre in Tripura.
- In this the roles of women are all played by men, called Nupi Shabis.
- It is performed in an open courtyard surrounded by spectators on all four sides.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (d)

- Shumang Leela is a traditional form of theatre in Manipur.
- In the case of women's theatre groups, the roles of men are played by women.
- Shumang Leela translates to "courtyards performance".
- Today, Shumang Leela is of two types: Nupa Shumang Leela, performed only by men, and Nupi Shumang Leela, performed only by women.

Que-6 Consider the following statements about Red Sanders also called Red Sandalwood

- It is a species found in the southern tropical dry deciduous forest of Telangana.
- The tree reaches an average height of 10 to 15 metres.
- The species is listed as 'Endangered' in the International Union for Conservation of Nature and falls in Appendix II of CITES.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 1 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (d)

- It is a species found in the southern tropical dry deciduous forest of Andhra Pradesh (AP).
- CITES (shorter name for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention).
- In India, it has been enlisted under Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The heartwood of Red Sanders is in demand in the domestic and international markets for making

furniture, handicrafts and musical instruments in China and Japan. The red dye obtained from the wood is used as a colouring agent in the textiles, medicine and food industries.

Que-7 Consider the following statements about Compressed Biogas (CBG) and compressed natural gas (CNG)

- Chemically, CBG is the same as CNG — both are compressed methane — and has the same calorific value.
- CNG is a by-product of petroleum, CBG can be produced from any biomass, be it crop residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal wet waste or effluents from a sewage treatment plant.
- CBG cannot be transported through cylinders or pipelines to retail outlets.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 3 only

Que-8 Finance Minister announced 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan scheme (GOBARDHAN) in the Union Budget 2023. Consider the following statements about this

- The new GOBARDHAN scheme is an upgrade and an expansion of the old one of the same name, launched in 2018 by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- This scheme limited itself to cluster or community-level biogas plants, for instance, for Anganwadis or farms.
- Compressed biogas (CBG) gas is a part of the initial scheme launched in 2018 because it is very different from biogas in terms of utilisation and constituents.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 2 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 and 3 only

- c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 3 only

Ans: (b)

- In the union budget of FY 2023-24, it is announced to launch a mission to eliminate sickle cell anemia by 2047.

Que-7 Lamu Archipelago, recently in News, belongs to which country

- a) Somalia
b) Malaysia
c) Indonesia
d) Kenya

Ans: (d)

- The Lamu Archipelago is located in the Indian Ocean close to the northern coast of Kenya, to which it belongs. The islands lie between the towns of Lamu and Kiunga, near the Coast Province. It is a part of Lamu District.

Que-8 Consider the following statements about "Operation Sadbhavana", recently in News

- Launched by an Indian Army.
- For development of Jammu and Kashmir.

- Some of the objectives achieved through Operation Sadbhavana are national interfaith tours, women's empowerment, employment generation, education, and

development activities geared towards nation-building.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 only

Ans: (b)

- For development of Ladakh.
- The Indian Army is organising multiple welfare activities, such as running schools and infrastructure development projects, as part of "Operation Sadbhavana" in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Que-1 Consider the following statements

- A spy balloon is literally a gas-filled balloon that is flying quite high in the sky, more or less where we fly commercial airplanes.
- Disadvantage that low Earth orbit satellites have is that they are continually moving around the Earth.
- Geosynchronous orbit satellite has the disadvantage that it's harder to see things clearly when you're very, very far away.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 3 only

Ans: (c)

- The disadvantage these low Earth orbit satellites have is that they are continually moving around the Earth.

of what we call persistence, allowing satellites to capture images continuously.

Que-2 With reference to Paris Club, consider the following statements

- The Paris Club is a group of mostly western creditor countries.
- It grew from a 1956 meeting in which Brazil agreed to meet its public creditors in Paris.
- Their objective is to find sustainable debt-relief solutions for countries that are unable to repay their bilateral loans.

Which of the following given above is/are correct

- a) 2 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (b)

- It grew from a 1956 meeting in which

Exchange traded fund

- An exchange-traded fund (ETF) is a pooled investment security that can be bought and sold like an individual stock.
- ETFs can be structured to track anything from the price of a commodity to a large and diverse collection of securities.
- ETFs can even be designed to track specific investment strategies.

- ETF share prices fluctuate all day as the ETF is bought and sold; this is different from mutual funds, which only trade once a day after the market closes.
- ETFs offer low expense ratios and fewer broker commissions than buying the stocks individually.
- An ETF must be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Pros and Cons of Exchange-Traded Funds

	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower costs Diversification and risk management Tax benefits Easy to trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially higher costs Limited control Tracking error

BIMSTEC WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Stands for The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

7 MEMBER COUNTRIES



Importance of BIMSTEC

- Accounts for 20% of the world population
- Estimated GDP of \$2.7 trillion
- Most populous the world's traded goods cross the Bay every year
- Has been a leader in trade, technology, energy, transport, etc.

Founded in 1997 through Bangkok Declaration



... DELIMITATION COMMISSION ...

DELIMITATION COMMISSION

- Delimitation literally means the act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body. The job of delimitation is assigned to a high power body. Such a body is known as Delimitation Commission or a Boundary Commission
- In India, such Delimitation Commissions have been constituted 4 times - in 1952 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, in 1963 under Delimitation Commission Act, 1962, in 1973 under Delimitation Act, 1972 and in 2002 under Delimitation Act, 2002.

- The Delimitation Commission in India is a high power body whose orders have the force of law and cannot be called in question before any court. These orders come into force on a date to be specified by the President of India in this behalf.
- The copies of its orders are laid before the House of the People and the State Legislative Assembly concerned, but no modifications are permissible therein by them.

productivity, uphold good health and prevent poverty. The second set consists of policies to reduce inequality and promote economic security at older ages in a fiscally sustainable manner, considering pensions and health care. While many older persons are in excellent health or economically active stages, others live with ailments or are in poverty. Public spending in most countries has not been sufficient to cover the growing demand for long-term care, the analysis points out.

CURRENT AFFAIRS BY SAURABH PANDEY SIR

Question 5 With reference to Doppler radar network, consider the following statements

- 1 It is named after Christian Doppler, the physicist who first proposed the concept of the Doppler effect.
 - 2 It is a system of multiple radar stations that work together to provide comprehensive coverage of a specific area.
 - 3 The entire stretch of India will be covered under the Doppler Weather Radar Network to better predict extreme weather events more accurately.
- Which of the following given above is/are correct
- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 and 3 only

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- 5- (c)
 - It is named after Christian Doppler, the physicist who first proposed the concept of the Doppler effect. The Doppler effect is the change in frequency or wavelength of a wave (such as sound or light) as it approaches or moves away from an observer.
 - A Doppler radar network is a system of multiple radar stations that work together to provide comprehensive coverage of a specific area. The system uses the Doppler effect to detect and track moving objects, such as weather systems, aircraft, and vehicles.
- How does a Doppler radar network work?
- Each station in the network includes a radar transmitter, which sends out a microwave signal, and a radar receiver, which detects the reflected signal. The transmitter and receiver are typically located at the same site, but they can also be separated by a significant distance. The radar signal reflects off any moving objects in its path and the change in frequency of the signal due to the Doppler effect is used to determine the speed and direction of the moving object.
- What are the uses of a Doppler radar network?
- Doppler radar networks are widely used for weather forecasting and severe weather warning, tracking of aircraft and vehicles, and also used in meteorology and atmospheric sciences. These radar networks provide detailed information about storm systems, including the location, size, and movement of thunderstorms, tornadoes, and other severe weather events.

CURRENT AFFAIRS BY SAURABH PANDEY SIR

Question 6 Consider the following statements about Army Day

- 1 India celebrates Army Day on January 15 every year.
 - 2 The Army Day is celebrated every year to honour Cariappa and the defence forces.
 - 3 75th Army Day was held in Hyderabad this year.
- Which of the following given above is/are correct
- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) 2 and 3 only

CURRENT AFFAIRS BY SAURABH PANDEY SIR

- In 1997 Bangkok Declaration launched a modest grouping (of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand), with the acronym, BIST-EC.
- Originally formed as BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation) in 1997, it became BIMST-EC after Myanmar joined, and BIMSTEC in 2002, with the inclusion of Nepal and Bhutan. This unique set of five countries from South Asia and two from Southeast Asia are parents to an institution with an unwieldy name but lofty ambitions.

6- (a)

- The portal ensures end-to-end coverage of all the linked schemes.
- Anyone can apply for a loan.

7- (b)

- Any serving or retired three-star officer from either of the three services, below 62 years on the date of projected appointment, would be eligible to be elevated as the CDS and will superannuate at the age of 65. Earlier, the post was only open for four-star generals.

8- (c)

- The Chief of Defence Staff is principally responsible for getting the armed forces better integrated than operating in silos as has been the case for decades.
- The job includes the creation of new military commands which integrate the Army, Air Force, and Navy to fight together.
- According to the government, the CDS acts as the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister only on tri-services matters. The three service chiefs will continue to advise the Defence Minister exclusively on the matters concerning their respective services.
- The CDS will not hold any military command, including over the three service chiefs.
- As the Permanent Chairman of the Chief of Staff Committee, the CDS brings about jointness in operation, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three services.



Target Mains -2024/25 -

Q Constitutional morality should be the basis for 'spiritual orientation' and 'opting of customary practices' . Discuss

Q संवैधानिक नैतिकता 'आध्यात्मिक अभिविन्यास' और 'प्रथागत प्रथाओं को चुनने' का आधार होना चाहिए। चर्चा करना

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