

**DAILY  
CURRENT  
AFFAIRS  
ANALYSIS**

**LAKSHYA ACADEMY**<sup>®</sup>

**29 JULY 2023**

## **1 - Madhav Gadgil report:**

### **GS III**

#### **Environmental Conservation**

- **Context:**

- The 2011 Dr. Madhav Gadgil research on Western Ghats conservation has gained new attention following last week's 27-victim landslide in Maharashtra's Raigad district.

- **In relation to the report:**

- The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP), which was founded in 2010, was led by ecologist Dr. Madhav Gadgil.
- The commission gave the Centre its report in 2011.
- According to the study, the three Ecologically Sensitive Zones should be designated for the 64 percent of the Western Ghats that are spread over six states.
- It also advocated designating the whole region as an ESA (Ecologically Sensitive Area).
- In ESZ 1, nearly all development activities—such as mining, constructing thermal power plants and dams—had to come to a halt, along with the demolition of similar structures that had outlived their usefulness.
- According to it, neither of the Athirappilly or Gundia hydel project sites should be given environmental clearance because they are both located in this zone.

- **Regulations and Permits:**

- The acceptance of genetically engineered crops should be prohibited.
- To outlaw using plastic bags.
- The establishment of Special Economic Zones ought to be prohibited.
- New ski resorts in the mountains ought to be prohibited.
- switching from agriculture to other uses for land, and
- It is not appropriate to divert rivers in order to protect the local ecology.
- Converting public lands into private ones is not acceptable.

- **Recommendations:**

- The research suggested a bottom-to-top approach to environmental regulation as opposed to a top-to-bottom one, suggesting decentralisation and granting local governments more power.
- It proposed establishing the Western Ghats Ecology Authority as a qualified agency to manage the region's ecology and ensure its sustainable development under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- a ban on the development of specific commercial crops, including as bananas, pineapple, tea, coffee, cardamom, and rubber, which have harmed the environment by causing soil erosion, forest fragmentation, and river ecosystem decline.
- A policy reform is urgently needed in the Western Ghats in order to eliminate environmentally hazardous practises and make the transition to a more sustainable agriculture system.
- taking significant actions to involve the public, such as compassionately and proactive implementation of the Community Forest Resources of the Forest Rights Act's provisions.

- **The Kasturirangan Committee versus the Gadgil Committee:**

- The former leader of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Dr. K. Kasturirangan, convened a High-Level Working Group on the Western Ghats in 2012.
- A report to replace the Gadgil Report is drafted by a group under the direction of Kasturirangan.
- In contrast to the Gadgil panel's recommendation of 64%, only 37% of the Western Ghats were classified as environmentally sensitive in a research led by Dr. K. Kasturirangan.
- In the Western Ghats, there are cultural (regions where people live) and natural (regions where people don't live).
- The designation of cultural lands as an ESA (ecologically sensitive area) was proposed.
- Additional categories were available in red, orange, and green.
- Some construction and township projects, thermal planning, mining, stone quarries, and other activities were restricted as a result of the red list.
- The appropriate authorizations would be governed and used to carry out the activities in the orange category.
- Under the green category, all commercial and industrial operations are allowed.
- In a draughts notification issued by the Environment Ministry in 2017, the Western Ghats area of 56,285 sq km was categorised as ESA as opposed to the 59,940 sq km recommended by the Kasturirangan committee.
- The Centre said that in 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) created a strong committee with the authority to carry out physical landscaping and give a full report within a year.

- **Source → The Hindu**

## 2 - Meri Maati, Mera Desh campaign:

### GS II

#### Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**
- The Union government introduced the Meri Maati, Mera Desh campaign as the grand conclusion to the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav festival.
- **Important details:**
- As part of the plan, a garden would be built along Delhi's Kartavya Path using earth from different parts of the country.
- One of the five things on the agenda is the placement of a shilaphalakam (memorial plaque), which will list the names of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice.

• *Source* → *The Hindu*

## 3 - Mexico border barrier:

### GS II

#### International Issues

- **Context:**
- For installing floating barriers in the Rio Grande River to keep migrants from Mexico from entering the US, the state of Texas was sued by the US Justice Department.
- **Important details:**
- The Rio Grande serves as the actual US-Mexico border since it passes through a large portion of Texas on its way from Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico.
- However, it also serves as a key entryway for Mexican migrants heading to the United States.
- The barricade is simply a 1,000-foot (305-meter) long row of buoys the size of wrecking balls that are painted bright orange.

- A system of vertical barriers known as the Mexico-United States barrier was erected along the two nations' shared border in an effort to halt illegal immigration from Mexico.
- In reality, the wall or fence in question is a series of partitions rather than a single continuous construction.
- *Source* → *The Hindu*

## 4 - Flight Duty Time Limitation:

### GS III

#### Aviation sector related issues

- **Context:**
- Recently, an Air India flight to Delhi was grounded due to a pilot's refusal to take off because it violated the flight duty time limitation (FDTL) guidelines set by India's aviation safety regulator, leaving roughly 100 passengers stranded in Rajkot.
- **About the FDTL:**
- The flight duty time limitations (FDTL) are set by the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- **Aim:**
- To make certain that pilots and flight attendants receive enough sleep and prevent safety risks associated with weariness.
- All airlines must follow the FDTL rules, which include requirements like:
  - eight hours maximum each day,
  - 35 hours each week,
  - 125 hours per month, and
  - 1000 hours are equivalent to 365 days.
- Each crew member must also have enough rest, which must last at least 10 hours every day and will be prorated based on how long the flight is.

- **Concerns:**

- Because it is unlikely that they would have a backup crew and because it is difficult to activate them fast, smaller airports are often more susceptible to FDTL-related issues.
- Airlines base the majority of their operating employees in large cities with busy airports because it is easier to have backup crews or quickly mobilise them there.
- Even so, stationing a sizable staff in each city of operation would be costly and monetarily unwise in order to prevent any potential FDTL-related disturbance.

- **Moving forward:**

- Given the volume of traffic, India rarely experiences FDTL-related disruptions.
- As Indian carriers expand their fleets and networks and require a steady influx of new pilots, this may change over the next years.
- India currently has a fleet of roughly 700 aircraft and 9,000 pilots, according to estimates.
- About 2,000 additional pilots may be needed each year to keep up with the fleet expansion rate predicted during the ensuing few years.
- This is more than twice the number of commercial pilot licences that are now issued annually by the DGCA.

- **About DGCA:**

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) was founded by the Indian government as a statutory organisation to regulate civil aviation in India.
- It became a statutory body by virtue of the Aircraft (Amendment) Act of 2020.
- All aviation regulations must be kept up to date, and the DGCA is in charge of doing so as well as looking investigating accidents and other connected events and giving permits for associated operations.
- The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), modelled after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the United States, will take its place, according to the Indian government.

- **Source → *The Hindu***

## 5 - Himachal floods: a man-made disaster:

### GS I

#### Geography related issues

- **Context:**

- Flash floods during the monsoon season in Himachal Pradesh have decimated people and property in ways that have never been witnessed before.

- **Major concerns:**

- **The relationship with climate change:**

- According to the IPCC VI report (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the Himalayas and India's coastal regions will suffer the most from climate change.

- In the Himalayas, there is a definite trend towards heavier precipitation occurring more frequently.
- The India Meteorological Department's data indicates that 720mm to 750mm of rain are usual for this time period.
- However, on rare occasions, it has gone beyond 888 mm, as in 2010, and 926.9 mm, as in 2018.

- **Human-made components:**

- In addition to climate change, anthropogenic forces have significantly contributed to the calamity.
- Himachal Pradesh's development strategy, which was put into place when the state was created in 1971, has made it a model state for development for mountain States.

- **In homage of the first Chief Minister, Dr. Y.S. Parmar, the Dr. Parmar model focused on:**

- unfinished land reforms.
- robust government-led social welfare spending.
- a strong emphasis on people is given.

- As a result of these initiatives, Himachal Pradesh is now ranked second in social development metrics.
- **As of the 1980s:**
  - Electricity was available in every house.
  - Connectivity in remote regions is enhanced by medical facilities.
  - Many schools were constructed.
  - In agriculture, significant advancements were accomplished.
  - Vitality was enhanced by economic and societal changes that favoured the off-season vegetable and apple sectors.
- **Hydropower project development results in the depletion of natural resources:**
  - The exploitation of natural resources, including forests, water, tourism, and cement production, came to dominate development.
- **This frequently accelerated the building of hydropower plants by:**
  - causing harm to waterways and the ecosystems they support.
  - without doing sufficient geological and technical investigations, road expansion.
  - Land use patterns are being altered by cement plant expansion.
  - a shift from income crops to subsistence farming, which affected the ecology and water systems.
- **Impacts of hydropower projects:**
  - For hill States, the development of hydroelectric projects—whose capacity was measured in megawatts (MW) to entice investment—became a top concern.
  - The finance priorities of multilateral organisations underwent a significant adjustment.
  - Prior to 2000, these groups denied supporting large hydropower projects, but they later changed their opinions and started to do so, making it simple to obtain financing for such projects.
  - The haphazard development of these hydropower facilities, which have basically reduced mountain rivers to minor streams, is one of the main causes of the disastrous effects of floods in the area.
  - The used technology is referred to as "run of the river" dams, and it diverts water through tunnels dug into the mountains. Muck from excavations is routinely thrown beside riverbeds.
  - The water returns to the river during times of heavier precipitation or cloudbursts, carrying the dumped muck with it.
  - Numerous other small hydropower dams and rivers including the Parvati, Beas, and Sutlej also exhibit this harmful process.



- Additionally, 150 km of lengthy tunnels on the Sutlej river have been planned or opened, seriously harming the ecology as a whole.
- **Upcoming projects include:**
  - 168 hydropower projects are now running and producing 10,848 MW of electricity.
  - It is anticipated that 1,088 hydropower plants will be operational by 2030, producing 22,640 MW of energy.
- **The effect of tourism:**
- **Road enlargement:**
  - The road widening projects involve turning single lanes into two lanes and turning two-lane roadways from two lanes to four lanes.
  - The public-private partnership (PPP) strategy used in the development model emphasises the urgency with which these projects must be finished.
- **Cutting mountains vertically:**
  - Mountainous areas are typically terraced rather than cut with vertical incisions, limiting environmental harm.
  - Following such catastrophes, repairing these roads takes a long time—often months or even years.
- **Cement plant effects:**
  - The construction of huge cement mills and the substantial mountain-chopping have had a considerable impact on land use.
  - When it rains, it might cause flash floods.
- **Crop patterns are evolving:**
  - Agriculture and horticultural practises are undergoing a stealthy transition that will result in a dramatic shift in both land ownership and produce.
  - Due to the perishable nature of these crops, this move has ramifications for their quick conveyance to markets.
  - Roads are being built hastily in response to this need without taking necessary land cutting and gradient requirements into account.
  - Modern excavators are used in construction, but no suitable drains or designated muck disposal locations are made.

- As a result, when it rains, the water follows its own course and deposits the spilled muck into the river ecology.
- As a result, rivers and rivulets quickly swell even with typical rainfall.
- Despite the State's 1,753 km of official highways, the overall length of all roads, including link and village roads, is more than 40,000 km.

- **Moving ahead:**

- **A commission of inquiry is required:**

- To involve the key players, the people, and to debate both the shortcomings of the policy framework and the oddities of the initiatives undertaken, a commission of inquiry must be established.

- **New architecture is required:**

- It is necessary to make up for the losses of culverts, village drains, tiny bridges, schools, and other social infrastructure.
- If the assets are insured and the custodians in nearby communities, this is possible.

- *Source → The Hindu*