

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**

 **LAKSHYA ACADEMY**[®]

03 AUGUST 2023

1 - International Tiger Day and Project Tiger:

GS III

Environmental Conservation related issues

- **Important details:**

- At the Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2010, the 13 countries that make up the tiger range first created Tx2, the global goal to double the number of wild tigers by the year 2022.
- In contrast to Southeast Asian countries, India fared far better in the World Wildlife Fund's assessment of population decrease.
- Project Tiger, which earlier this year celebrated its 50th anniversary, may be largely blamed for the achievements in India.

- **Project Tiger information:**

- **When was it first introduced?**

- The Central government launched Project Tiger on April 1st, 1973 in an effort to promote tiger conservation.

- **Development of a need and a project:**

- The plan was introduced as India's tiger population was rapidly dwindling.
- When the country acquired its independence (in 1947), there were allegedly 40,000 tigers there, but their numbers rapidly decreased to roughly 2,000 by 1970 due to widespread poaching and habitat destruction.
- Concerns over the situation increased after the International Union for Conservation of Nature designated the tiger as an endangered species in 1970.
- Two years later, the Indian government performed its own tiger census and found that there were only 1,800 left in the entire country.
- The nation's prime leader at the time, Indira Gandhi, passed the Wildlife Protection Act in 1972.
- When a task force proposed that the government create a network of reserves committed to the preservation of tigers a year later, Indira unveiled Project Tiger.

- **How did it start?**

- Nine distinct States, including Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, each have one or more tiger reserves where the campaign was first launched. The Jim Corbett National Park was then the site of its debut.

- **What is the scope of the project?**

- Project Tiger had many facets, one of which was big cat conservation.
- It also guaranteed the preservation of their natural habitat because tigers are at the top of the food chain.

- **Successes and failures:**

- Soon after, the tiger population in India began to grow; by the 1990s, it was estimated that there were roughly 3,000 tigers living there.
- The progress of Project Tiger, however, suffered a serious blow in 2005 when word spread that tigers were being killed by locals in Sariska, Rajasthan.
- After Project Tiger was reorganised, the government established the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- The NTCA has more power to prevent poaching and safeguard the tiger population.
- Its obligations included funding the relocation of villagers from protected areas and establishing the Tiger Protection Force.

- **50 years of Project Tiger success:**

- India currently has 54 tiger reserves with a combined area of 75,000 square kilometres.
- Currently, there are 3,167 tigers in the country.
- The fifth cycle of India's Tiger Census shows that the population has grown by 6.74 percent since 2018 (when it was 2,967).
- Approximately 75% of the wild tiger population in the world is currently found in India.

- **Source → *The Hindu***

2 - GOBARdhan scheme:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**

- The GOBARdhan Initiative Has Began Giving Good Results And Boosting Investments In India's Biogas Sector

- **Regarding the strategy:**

- The main goal of the Gobardhan project is to manage and transform solid farm waste, including cow dung, into compost, biogas, and bio-CNG.
- It not only maintains the neighbourhood clean, but it also increases the income of farmers and animal keepers.
- The GOBARDhan scheme also seeks to give farmers more control over the "waste to energy" conversion process.

- **The Gobardhan Scheme's objectives are:**

- The long-term objective of the programme is to help villages safely manage their animal, agricultural, and organic waste.
- Create decentralised systems that can profit localities by converting organic waste and livestock.
- By appropriately disposing of waste in rural areas, one can reduce vector-borne diseases and enhance environmental cleanliness.
- The production of biogas and fertiliser from organic waste, particularly animal manure, may be advantageous for rural communities.
- It is critical to support rural entrepreneurs' capacity to generate income and jobs.

- *Source → The Hindu*

3 – Conjunctivitis:

GS II

Health related issues

- **Context:**

- The persistent rain is causing an increase in conjunctivitis, or "pink eye," cases in numerous parts of the country.

- **In relation to the ailment:**

- Eye reddening, itching, soreness, and a watery or thicker discharge are all signs of conjunctivitis.
- The sickness could be brought on by bacteria, viruses, or allergens, and it might be quite contagious in some circumstances.

- The term "pink eye" or "conjunctivitis" describes an enlargement or inflammation of the conjunctiva, a thin, transparent layer of tissue that borders the inside of the eyelid and covers the white of the eye.
- **Causes:**
 - Allergy conjunctivitis can be brought on by common allergens like pollen or by wearing hard contact lenses for an extended period of time.
 - One of the contagious viruses linked to the common cold is the most prevalent cause of viral conjunctivitis.
 - It could become apparent after being exposed to the coughing or sneezing of someone else who has an upper respiratory infection.
- **Treatment:**
 - Controlling symptoms is frequently included in treatments.
- *Source → The Hindu*

4 - Forest (Conservation) Act:

GS III

Environmental Conservation related issues

- **Context:**
 - The Lok Sabha has approved the Forest (Conservation) Act Amendment Bill.
- **The FC Act of 1980:**
 - The Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 placed a ban on using forests for non-forest activities.
- **Aims:**
 - protect the plants, animals, and other natural components.
 - preserve the territory, integrity, and distinctiveness of the forests.
 - increase the number of trees in an area to reforest it.
 - prevent the conversion of forest reserves into grazing areas, residences, apartments, or other forms of land.

- stop the decline in forest biodiversity.
- **What the Act does:**
 - It limits and controls the State Government's and other authority organisations' ability to make decisions without first obtaining approval from the Central Government.
 - To assist the Central Government, a council of advisers could be established.
 - Any laws made in accordance with this Act must be fully implemented by the Central Government.
 - According to the Act, anyone found to be in violation of its rules must pay fines.
- **Constitutional mandate for forest preservation:**
 - Future difficulties with forest protection were not anticipated by the writers of the Indian Constitution when it was written in 1950.
 - The Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act of 1976, which added Article 48A to the section on Directive Principles of State Policy, made it later apparent.
 - According to Article 48A, the state must pass legislation to protect our woods by preserving and enhancing the ecosystem.
 - Every Indian has a fundamental obligation to uphold Article 51A.
 - Article 51A(g) states that it is the duty of every Indian citizen to preserve and enhance the environment, especially our nation's forests.
- **Previous Act modifications:**
 - The act is being changed for the second time.
 - Prior amendments to the FCA were made in 1988 and 1996.
 - Prior to 1996, the Act's restrictions were exclusively applied to reserve forests and national parks by state governments, union territory administrations, and the federal government.
 - The Supreme Court broadened the concept of forest land in the T N Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India case in 1996 to encompass all lands listed as forests in any government record, regardless of ownership, recognition, or categorization.
 - The Act was also presumed to apply to plantations on non-forest land in accordance with how the order was understood.
- **Newest Amendment:**
- **Government exemption:**
 - It has been suggested that the Act should not apply to any land that the Railways and Roads Ministries bought before 1980.

- It claims that although these lands had been purchased for expansion, trees have now sprung up there, making it impossible for the government to use the land for that purpose.
- If the amendment is implemented, these Ministries won't need to obtain approval for their projects or pay restitution levies in order to construct there.
- It suggests that the Act only be applicable to land that has been declared a forest and to land that is listed as a forest in government records, with the exception of any forests that have already been used for another purpose before the 1996 SC judgement.
- **Individuals should:**
 - The government wants to grant a one-time relaxation to persons whose lands are covered by a state-specific Private Forests Act or those mentioned in the 1996 Supreme Court judgement, allowing building of structures for legitimate reasons, including residential units up to 250 sq m.
- **Defense-related initiatives are exempt:**
 - Forest clearance will not be required for defence projects that are located close to international boundaries.
- **Extraction of oil:**
 - Extraction of natural gas and oil from areas covered in forest will be allowed.
 - Roadside strip plantings, however, will be exempt.
- **There are no fees for non-forestry uses:**
 - Additionally, it has been suggested that taxes for non-forestry uses be eliminated during lease renewals because a double levy at the time of lease award and renewal is illogical.
- **Property covered by the Act:**
 - **According to the Bill, the following types of land will be covered by the Act:**
 - Under the Indian Forest Act of 1927 or any other law, any land designated or notified as a forest, or.
 - Land that is not included in the first category but was recorded in a government record as a forest on or after October 25, 1980.
 - Land that was converted from forest use to non-forest use on or before December 12, 1996 by any authority approved by a state/UT will not be included by the Act.
- **Land types that are exempt:**

- land within 100 kilometres of an international border, the Line of Control, or the Line of Actual Control, for the development of a strategically important linear project involving national security.
- Land up to 10 hectares, for building infrastructure related to security.
- Land up to five hectares suggested to be used for defense-related projects, paramilitary force camps, or public utility projects in an area troubled by left-wing extremism.
- **Forest land leasing and assignments:**
 - To allocate forest land to any organisation that is not owned or under the jurisdiction of the government, a state government must first obtain prior consent from the federal government.
 - This requirement is applied to all entities in the Bill, including those that the government owns and controls.
 - Additionally, it calls for previous clearance to be subject to guidelines established by the federal government.
- **Forest land activities that are permitted:**
 - With the central government's previous approval, these limitations may be lifted.
 - **Among the non-forest uses are:**
 - Usage of land for horticulture crop cultivation or
 - For any objective except from reforestation.
 - **The Act outlines specific activities that will not be considered non-forest purposes, hence any limitations on the use of forest land for such reasons will not be enforced. These actions consist of:**
 - Activities like setting up checkpoints, fire lines, fencing, and wireless communication are all related to the conservation, management, and development of forests and wildlife.
 - **The Bill adds additional activities to this exclusive list, including:**
 - The Wild Life (Protection) Act of 1972 applies to zoos and safaris run in forests outside of protected areas that are held by the government or any other body.
 - Ecotourism infrastructure
 - Silvi-cultural activities, which promote forest development
 - Any other objective listed by the national government.

- In order to prevent any survey (such as an exploratory activity or seismic survey) from being categorised as having a non-forest purpose, the central government may establish rules and conditions.
- **The ability to give instructions:**
- According to the Bill, any authority or organisation that is affiliated with or acknowledged by the federal government, a state, or a union territory (UT) may receive instructions from the central government on how to implement the Act.
- **Concerns:**
- **Encouraging corporate ownership:**
- It appears to exempt some types of infrastructure project developers from asking the Centre for approval to utilise forest land for non-forestry uses, which will undoubtedly encourage corporate ownership and the disappearance of substantial portions of forests.
- **Exemptions that harm forests:**
- Elephants, tigers, and leopards may suffer as a result of the exemption for roads and railways on forest territory bought prior to 1980.
- **Less time is available for public input:**
- The pre-legislative consultation policy was broken by the one-month deadline.
- **States' protests:**
- Himachal Pradesh requested that "National importance and National Security" be defined in the Act.
- The user agencies and different sorts of security-related infrastructure were to be mentioned explicitly, according to Chhattisgarh.
- Mizoram was concerned that any action falling under the definition of a linear project might be undertaken by any agency and described as a national security or project of importance.
- Sikkim requested that the planned exemption limits be lowered from 100 km to 2 km since it claimed that doing so would encompass the entire state and expose virgin forest regions.
- **Uncertain purpose of zoo inside forest:**
- Zoos are likewise free from the 1980 Act's requirement for prior clearance under the Bill.
- It's unclear why a zoo is permitted inside of a forest.

- **Moving ahead:**

- Ensuring harmony between economic activity and forest conservation:
- It could be necessary to strike a balance between economic advantages and forest preservation.
- It is unclear why a broad exception is being used in place of the central government's duty to examine each case individually to determine this balance.

- **Forest needs to be defined:**

- It is necessary to define the term "forest" such that it is applicable universally to all places based on land use, canopy cover/crown density, tree height, species makeup, and the endemic biodiversity that is characteristic of forests.
- By exploiting the socioeconomic and environmental potential of forests to combat the threat of climatic change and other environmental and natural risks, such a definition would eliminate the contradictions, bring about uniformity, and aid in the conservation of forests.

- *Source → The Hindu*



5 - Human challenge studies:

GS III

related issues

- **Context:**

- The consensus policy statement for the ethical conduct of controlled human infection studies (CHIS), also known as human challenge studies, in India was recently uploaded by the ICMR Bioethics Unit.

- **Key information:**

- For a very long period, traditional human clinical trials have been conducted in the nation.
- The addition of human challenge trials will complement current clinical research and hasten the search for safe and efficient medication and/or vaccination interventions.
- Infection, transmission, disease aetiology, and prevention are just a few of the many facets of even well-studied pathogens that might be better understood through human challenge studies.
- Finding more efficient medicinal therapies is urgently needed since numerous infectious diseases are endemic in many poor nations and because drug resistance is rising.

- **Studies on human challenges:**

- Studies called "human challenge studies" involve exposing humans to diseases in order to understand more about them.
- However, India has never before conducted such experiments.
- To comprehend the many facets of infectious microorganisms and the diseases or disorders brought on by such pathogens, human challenge experiments are nearly usually done.
- Human challenge studies differ from conventional human clinical trials in the following ways:

- **Kind of exposure:**

- The way that volunteers are exposed to infections is the key distinction between the two scientific approaches.
- Traditional clinical trial participants are heavily exhorted to adopt and follow safety precautions in order to prevent infection, which is left to chance.
- In a human challenge study, microorganisms that cause disease are purposefully introduced to volunteers.

- **Different types of studies:**

- To investigate the security and effectiveness of medications and vaccinations, conventional clinical trials are conducted.
- In addition to choosing the best candidate medicine or vaccine, human challenge experiments are carried out to comprehend the numerous aspects of infection and illness aetiology.

- **Associated dangers:**

- In both investigations, the potential side effects of the medications or vaccinations are unknown.
- Intentional exposure to the disease poses an added danger to volunteers in a human challenge experiment.

- **Illnesses that were researched:**

- In contrast to conventional clinical research, "less deadly diseases" like influenza, dengue, typhoid, cholera, and malaria are frequently studied through human challenge experiments.

- **Trial for a human challenge's ethical considerations:**

- **Related health dangers:**

- It is more difficult ethically since volunteers in a human challenge trial are purposefully exposed to a pathogen that causes sickness.

- **The most important medical exam:**

- In the 18–45 age range, only healthy persons are to be included, according to the ICMR consensus statement.
- Pre-existing medical issues are to be disqualified from participation, however numerous medical conditions are frequently not known to the general public.
- This makes a thorough medical assessment of the participants before to enrollment absolutely necessary.

- **The cost of participation:**

- The consent form should include information about remuneration for participation, but the precise payment amount should not be disclosed until after the volunteer has agreed to participate.
- Traditional clinical trials frequently entice volunteers by promoting the compensation they will get, as was the case with the Covaxin trial carried out in Bhopal.

- **Moving ahead:**

- **Strong social and scientific justification is required:**

- A significant disease must have substantial morbidity, death, or at the very least, a high prevalence.
- An essential outstanding question must be covered by the investigation.
- The suggested intervention ought to have a decent chance of success.
- Alternative approaches to providing a sufficient response to the trial question ought to be disregarded.

- **The reduction of dangers:**

- The amount should be established so that the most likely risk is mild to moderate symptoms that last only briefly. Everything reasonable should be done to reduce hazards to participants.
- The likelihood and severity of established risks should be taken into account, but also any unidentified dangers related to an illness that is not fully understood.
- It is preferable to use weakened infectious agents or strains with limited pathogenic potential.
- Testing should be thought about in subpopulations with low risk of developing serious illness.
- It is morally required to provide a rescue alternative, a successful therapy in the event that a participant develops a mild to severe illness.

- **Not to be done on persons who are weak:**

- Justice prohibits the use of such vulnerable populations as convicts in research.
- Additionally, it is unfair to excessively favour socioeconomic and racial/ethnic groups that are already disproportionately affected by the illness when choosing participants.
- The population from which participants are chosen should, in theory, have access to the intervention if it turns out to be effective.
- In order to be just, those who suffer harm as a result of participation must be compensated, and their medical needs must be met.

- **Aware consent:**

- For challenge research, informed consent must be carefully carried out to guarantee that potential volunteers are aware of the hazards and are making an informed decision.
- Consent by proxy should not be allowed.

- *Source → The Hindu*



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