

**DAILY  
CURRENT  
AFFAIRS  
ANALYSIS**



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**29 JUNE 2024**

# 1 - US-China climate agreement:

## GS II

### International Issues

- **Important information:**
- When combined, they produce 38% of the greenhouse gases in the globe.
- **Importance:**
- It should be simpler for other nations to follow suit if the two most polluting nations in the world can agree to cut back on their emissions from fossil fuels.
- **Regarding the climate agreement:**
- **Boosting the capacity of renewables:**
- The nations decided to work towards tripling the world's capacity for renewable energy sources by 2030 in order to hasten the replacement of coal, oil, and gas generation.
- Both nations expect to reduce absolute power sector emissions this decade in a significant way.
- **Goals for reduction:**
- Both nations decided to include reduction objectives for all greenhouse gas emissions, including methane, nitrous oxide, and other gases that warm the earth, in their upcoming round of national climate pledges.
- **Importance:**
- Given that China has made a principled commitment to reduce methane, its readiness to address the issue is very noteworthy.
- China's prior pledge made under the Paris Agreement did not include methane.
- Since China is the world's top methane emitter and taking significant steps to reduce this gas is necessary to halt global warming in the near future, this declaration is a significant step forward.

- **Problems:**
- **Too little progress has been made:**
- Critics point out that it won't be sufficient because global action to combat climate change is still moving too slowly.
- **Absence of a clear action:**
- Regarding the replacement of fossil fuels, the US and China did not expressly promise to move decisively.
- On the need to gradually reduce emissions from petrol and oil, it says nothing.
- **Uncommittable to phase out fossil fuel use:**
- Furthermore, China has not committed to phase out its coal consumption or to stop approving and constructing new coal-fired power plants under the terms of the agreement.
- According to scientists, using fewer fossil fuels right away is necessary to prevent more catastrophic global warming.
- Regarding the need to quickly move away from fossil fuels this decade, which will be a major topic of discussion at the COP28 summit, the two countries said nothing.
- *Source → The Hindu*

## 2 - Himalayan Yew:

### GS III

#### Environmental Conservation:

- **Important information:**
- The Pustul plant is a member of the gymnosperms group and is known locally as Ustul, Birmi, or thunner among tribal tribes.
- It was revealed that Taxus Bacata, its sister species, which was first discovered in Europe, had the ability to treat cancer.
- Drawn from Taxus Bacata and Taxus wallichiana, taxol is a crucial anti-cancer medication that is given to patients all over the world.

- **About Himalayan Yew:**

- One type of yew that is indigenous to the Himalaya and some regions of southeast Asia is the Himalayan yew.
- The species is used in traditional medicine in many different ways.
- It is a coniferous tree of medium size that is evergreen.
- With the male and female cones on different plants, it is dioecious.
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- **Status of conservation:**

- The IUCN has designated it as endangered as of right now.

- **Usages in medicine:**

- In Tibetan and Ayurvedic medicine, the tree is used medicinally.
- The chemical building blocks of the anticancer medication paclitaxel (taxol) are likewise derived from *Taxus wallichiana*.
- The Bhotiya tribal group in the Garhwal Himalaya makes tea from *Taxus wallichiana*.
- The local communities also use this species as fuelwood.

- **Source** → *The Hindu*

### **3 - Southern India's declining water supplies:**

## **GS I**

### **Water Conservation related issues**

- **Presently accessible reserves within the dams:**
- **42 reservoirs in the southern states are under the watchful eye of the CWC:**
  - Andhra Pradesh
  - Telangana
  - Karnataka
  - Kerala
  - Tamil Nadu
- Together, they have 53.334 billion cubic metres (BCM) of storage capacity.

- The water stocks decreased to 24.575 BCM (46 percent of the total storage capacity) from 25.609 BCM (48 percent of the total storage capacity) in September 2023.
- The most recent CWC report states that this stock has further decreased to 23.617 BCM, or 44% of the overall capacity.
- At same time last year, these states' combined water reserves made up 87% of their total storage capacity.

- **Situation in the monsoon:**

- In southern India, the available water reserves reach 91% of the total storage capacity during typical monsoon years across the nation.
- Despite the fact that the nation as a whole saw normal rainfall in 2023 (820mm, or 94% of the Long Period Average), the south peninsula did not have a significant monsoon.

- **Why do the stocks have a low value?**

- **Deficit in rain:**

- This year's southwest monsoon saw a significant inter-seasonal variability in rainfall.
- Large-scale precipitation deficiencies were seen towards the conclusion of the season, totaling 8 percent below average, or 659 mm.

- **An arid October:**

- October across the southern tip of India continued to be the sixth driest in a record 123 years.
- Compared to the usual of 148.2mm, the recorded rainfall was 58.7mm.
- The majority of southern India typically experiences rainfall in October, which is a result of both the entering northeast monsoon and the withdrawing southwest monsoon.

- **Hurricane Hamoon:**

- The northeast monsoon's beginning phase saw Cyclone Hamoon form in the Bay of Bengal, which reduced the amount of rainfall, especially across Tamil Nadu and the coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh.

- **Deficiency in collective rainfall:**

- Consequently, the overall rainfall deficit in the southern peninsula of India decreased to 60%.

- **Ramifications:**

- The depletion of water sources is a discouraging trend.
- Irrigated farmland, especially the highly water-intensive paddy crop that is mostly practised in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, may be immediately impacted.

- The effects will cascade into the accessibility of potable water.
- *Source* → *The Hindu*

## 4 - Using Subcategories in Scheduled Castes:

### GS II

#### Government Policies and Interventions:

- **Subcategorization: What is it?**
- For reservation purposes, it is intended to divide the larger group of Scheduled Castes into smaller groups.
- The justification for the creation of subcategories is that doing so will guarantee that all SC communities are fairly represented.
- **Is it legal to subcategorize?**
- **Justice Ramachandra Raju Commission:**
- When the Andhra Pradesh government established a one-man Commission of Justice Ramachandra Raju in 1996, the matter initially made its way to the courts.
- It suggested subdividing the State's SC population into smaller groups on the grounds that certain communities were less represented and more archaic than others.
- In 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that the State lacked the authority to arbitrarily divide apart communities included in the Scheduled Tribes (STs) or SCs list.
- According to the Constitution, only Parliament and the President may create these lists and notify each other of them.
- **Punjab's endeavour to divide up into:**
- In 2020, a five-judge panel led by Justice Arun Mishra ruled that states might choose the amount of benefits for those on the lists of SCs and STs that have already received notification, without violating any constitutional prohibitions.
- The 2020 ruling has also been submitted to the broader Bench due to the inconsistency.
- **Actions the Union Government has taken:**

- **The Attorney General of India's perspective:**

- According to the Attorney-General of India (AGI), SCs could be divided into smaller groups.
- Any such classification could only be approved in the event that there was indisputable proof demonstrating its necessity.
- To make this possible, a constitutional amendment could be proposed.

- **National Commissions' Suggestions:**

- A National Commission was established by the Union government to investigate the issue of Andhra Pradesh's SC subcategorization.
- In order to make it possible, the Cabinet at the time suggested amending Article 341 of the Indian Constitution.
- However, a constitutional change was deemed unnecessary by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).
- They claimed that States were already allowed by Article 16(4) of the Constitution to enact special legislation for any underrepresented backward category.

- **Reasons in favour of subcategorization:**

- **Levelled disparities:**

- The graded inequities among SC communities have been the main justification for subclassifying SCs.
- Certain populations, even those who are marginalised, have less access to basic amenities.
- Consequently, the comparatively more advanced communities inside them have been able to continuously reap benefits while pushing away the more disadvantaged ones.
- Therefore, the idea is to divide the villages into smaller groups and give the less developed communities their own reservation within the SC reservation.

- **Balanced Representation throughout All tiers:**

- Ensuring representation at all levels—including higher positions—is the aim.

- **Rebuttals to the subcategorization idea**

- **Will not deal with the underlying source of the issue:**

- Separate reservations within the categories would not effectively address the underlying issue.
- A separate quota would not help because the most backward SCs are trailing forward SC communities by such a large margin.

- **Insufficient number of candidates in the pool:**
- Due to the difference, these most underdeveloped SCs would not have enough candidates to be given consideration for the position in the first place, even if vacancies were reserved at higher levels.
- Therefore, prior to any subcategorization, the NCSC and NCST had advised that these sectors receive current programmes and government incentives.
- **The next steps:**
- To enable sub-categorization, specific data must be available.
- The main things that are required are the precise population counts and socioeconomic information for every community and subcommunity.
- These are the only factors that can offer a rational basis for determining the best way to classify castes, the appropriate percentage to assign them, etc.
- *Source → The Hindu*



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