



News Analysis (24 Mar, 2021)

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Reservation Quota Limit of States

Why in News

Tamil Nadu told a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court that the percentage of reservation should be left to the “**subjective satisfaction**” of individual States.

- **Subjective satisfaction** refers to the State’s discretion to identify its socially and educationally backward classes and fix the percentage of reservation for them in State government jobs and educational admissions.
- A nine-judge bench in the **Indra Sawhney case (famously known as the Mandal Commission case)** imposed the **ceiling of 50% on total reservation**.

Key Points

- **Indra Sawhney & Others vs Union of India, 1992:**
 - The Supreme Court while upholding the 27% quota for backward classes, struck down the government notification reserving 10% government jobs for economically backward classes among the higher castes.
 - SC in the same case also upheld the principle that the combined **reservation beneficiaries should not exceed 50%** of India’s population.
 - The concept of ‘**creamy layer**’ also gained currency through this judgment and provision that reservation for backward classes should be confined to initial appointments only and not extend to promotions.

- **Breach of the Limit by the States:**

- Notwithstanding the judgement passed by the Supreme Court, since **Indira Sawhney judgment 1992**, many states have passed laws **breaching the limit of 50%** such as Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- Tamil Nadu Reservation Act, 1993 provides 69% reservation in **State government** jobs and educational institutions.
- In January 2000, the Governor of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh declared **100% reservation to Scheduled Tribes (ST)** candidates in posts of school teachers in Scheduled Areas.

However, it was ruled as unconstitutional by the apex court.

- The **Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act of 2018**, which provides 12% to 13% quota benefits for the Maratha community, takes the reservation percentage in the State across the 50% mark, was enacted.
- **States' Concern:**
 - Tamil Nadu and Karnataka agreed with Maharashtra that the 50% ceiling limit on reservation introduced in the **Indira Sawhney judgment** was **not “cast in stone** (Permanently fixed or firmly established)”.
 - The Indira Sawhney judgment **required a re-look**. The ground situation had changed a lot since that judgment in 1992.
 - Also, there is contention regarding the **Constitution (One Hundred and Second Amendment) Act of 2018**, which introduces the **National Commission for Backward Classes**, that it interferes with the authority of State Legislatures to provide benefit to the social and educationally backward communities (SEBCs) in their own jurisdiction.

However, in an affidavit, the Ministry of Social justice and Empowerment has said **the power to identify SEBCs lies with Parliament only with reference to the central list and states can have a separate list of SEBCs for reservation.**

Constitution and Reservation

- **77th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1995:** The Indra Sawhney verdict had held there would be reservation only in initial appointments and not promotions.
 - However, addition of the **article 16(4A)** to the Constitution, empowered the state to make provisions for reservation in matters of promotion to SC/ST employees, if the state feels they are not adequately represented.
- **81st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000:** It introduced Article 16(4B), which says unfilled SC/ST quota of a particular year, when carried forward to the next year, will be treated separately and not clubbed with the regular vacancies of that year.
- **85th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001:** It provided for the reservation in promotion can be applied with ‘consequential seniority’ for the government servants belonging to the SCs and STs with retrospective effect from June 1995.

- **103rd amendment to the Constitution (2019): 10% reservation for EWS (Economically Weaker Section).**
- **Article 335:** It says that the claims of SCs and STs shall be taken into consideration constitutently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

Way Forward











- **Reviewing the 1992 Judgement:** The Supreme Court should definitely review the 50% reservation quota limit need and issues arising out of that.
- **Maintaining the Federal Structure:** While deciding the reservation issue, it is also important to take into account whether the states providing reservations to different communities are maintaining the federal structure of the government or destroying it.
- **Balancing the Reservation and Merit:** While giving reservation to the communities, the efficiency of the administration has to be looked upon too.
Reservation beyond the limit will lead to the ignorance of the merit, which will disturb the entire administration.

Source:TH

Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2020: Oxfam

Why in News

Recently, the Labour and Employment Minister has informed the Lok Sabha that **Oxfam Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index 2020** lacked clarity and did not take into account provisions of the four new labour codes.

HOW THE SAARC NATIONS FARE				
Country	Public services ranking* 	Tax ranking 	Labour ranking 	Overall ranking
India	141	19	151	 129
Pakistan	148	71	116	 128
Bangladesh	142	32	109	 113
Nepal	120	16	130	 112
Bhutan	124	130	141	 146
Afghanistan	153	6	113	 102
Sri Lanka	106	91	86	 94

*Health + education + social protection

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The Index ranked countries **measuring their policies and actions in three areas** that it said are proven to be directly related to reducing inequality:
 - Public services (health, education and social protection)
 - Taxation
 - Workers' rights
 - **Nigeria, Bahrain and India**, which experienced the world's fastest-growing outbreak of **Covid-19**, were among the **world's worst-performing countries in tackling inequality** going into the pandemic.
- **India's Position on the Index:**
 - **Overall, India ranked 129 in the CRI index** out of 158 countries **on government policies, and actions** in areas of public services of education, health, social protection, taxation, and workers' rights.
 - India slipped from rank **141** in the year 2018 **to 151** in the year 2020 with **weak labour rights and high incidence of vulnerable employment**.
 - Highest presence of the informal sector for men was in Uttar Pradesh at 86.9% and for women was in Andhra Pradesh at 73.6%.
 - In terms of its **public services, it ranked 141**.
 - India has been ranked **19** on the **taxation pillar**.
- **Reasons for India's Poor Performance:**
 - **Exploiting Labours in Covid:**
 - Several state governments in India have **used Covid-19 as a pretext to increase daily working hours from 8 to 12 hours** a day and **suspend minimum pay legislation**, devastating the livelihoods of millions of poor workers now battling hunger.
 - **Low Health Budget:**
 - India's **health budget was the fourth lowest** with half of its population having access to most essential health services, and more than 70% of health spending being met by people themselves.
 - **Informal Jobs:**
 - Most workers **earn less than half of the minimum wage**, 71% don't have any written job contract while 54% do not get paid leave.
 - Only around **10% of the workforce in India is formal**.

- **Recommendation:**

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, governments must dramatically improve their efforts on progressive spending, taxation and workers' pay and protection as part of National Inequality Reduction Plans under **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.**

SDG 10:

- It calls for reducing inequalities in income as well as those based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status within a country.
- It also addresses inequalities among countries, including those related to representation, migration and development assistance.

- **Some Recent Indian Initiatives to Reduce Inequality:**

- Increased allocation for health in **Budget 2021-22** by **137%**.
- **Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020** to provide for resolution of pending tax disputes.
- **Transparent Taxation - Honoring The Honest'** platform to honour the honest taxpayers of the country.
- Introduced **Industrial Relations Code, 2020, Code on Social Security, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.**
- **E-PG Pathshala:** An initiative of the Ministry of Education to provide e-content for studies.
- **SWAYAM:** it provides for an **integrated platform for online courses.**
- **National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.**

Oxfam International

- **About:**

- Oxfam International is a group of **independent non-governmental organisations** formed in 1995.
- The name "Oxfam" comes from the **Oxford Committee for Famine Relief**, founded in Britain in 1942.

The group campaigned for food supplies to starving women and children in enemy-occupied Greece during the Second World War.
- It aims to **maximize efficiency and achieve greater impact to reduce global poverty and injustice.**
- The Oxfam International **Secretariat is based in Nairobi, Kenya.**

- **Other Reports:**

- The **Global Inequality Crisis Report** by Oxfam in January 2021 claimed that **India's richest 1% hold more than four-times the wealth held by the bottom 70%** of the country's population.
- The **Inequality Virus Report** in January 2021 also found that the **Covid pandemic** deeply increased the existing inequalities in India and around the world.

Permanent Indus Commission

Why in News

The **116th Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** between India and Pakistan is underway in **New Delhi**.

The first day of the Meeting **coincided with the National Day of Pakistan** (marks **Lahore Resolution of 23rd March, 1940**).

Key Points

- **About the Latest Meeting:**
 - The meeting is **being held after a gap of more than two-and-a-half years**, a period that witnessed:
 - **Pulwama attack** (14th February, 2019), **Balakot air strike** (26th february, 2019), and
 - **Abrogation of special provisions under Article 370** that gave special status to J&K.
 - A discussion on **Pakistan’s objections about two India Projects - Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai** - is expected to be held.
 - India is building **Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project** (1,000 MW) on river **Marusudar**, a tributary of the Chenab. The project is located in Kishtwar district of J&K.
 - The second project – **Lower Kalnai** – is being developed on the **Chenab**.
 - **Routine issues such as flood data exchange mechanisms** are also expected to be discussed.
 - The meeting is being seen as a positive step **after both countries agreed to “strict observance of all agreements, understanding and ceasefire along the Line of Control** and all other sectors” last month.

- **About the Permanent Indus Commission:**
 - It is a **bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan**, created to implement and manage goals of the **Indus Waters Treaty, 1960**.
 - The Commission, according to the treaty, **shall meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan**.
 - The **functions** of the Commission include:
 - To study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development on the waters of the rivers.
 - To solve disputes arising over water sharing.
 - To arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.
 - To undertake, once in every five years, a general tour of inspection of the Rivers for ascertaining the facts.
 - To take necessary steps for the implementation of the provisions of the treaty.
 - The **115th meeting of the PIC was held in Lahore in August, 2018**.
- **Indus Water Treaty, 1960:**
 - It is a **treaty brokered by the World Bank** and signed by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan which **administers how the waters of the Indus and its tributaries that flow in both the countries will be utilised**.
 - According to the treaty, **waters of the eastern rivers — Sutlej, Beas and Ravi had been allocated to India**, while the **western rivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan**.
 - Under the treaty, **India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through a run of the river projects on the western rivers** subject to specific criteria for design and operation.
 - India has cleared several hydropower projects** in Ladakh: Darbuk Shyok (19 MW), Shankoo (18.5 MW), Nimu Chilling (24 MW), Rongdo (12 MW), Ratan Nag (10.5 MW) for Leh; and Mangdum Sangra (19 MW), Kargil Hunderman (25 MW) and Tamasha (12 MW) for Kargil.
 - It also **gives Pakistan the right to raise concerns** on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers.
 - The Treaty also **provides an arbitration mechanism** to solve disputes amicably.
 - There have been **disagreements and differences between India and Pakistan over dams**. For eg. In 2010, Pakistan instituted international arbitration proceedings over India's 330-megawatt hydropower project on a small Indus tributary, the **Kishenganga (known as Neelum in Pakistan)**.
 - **Though Indus originates from Tibet, China has been kept out of the Treaty**. If China decides to stop or change the flow of the river, it will affect both India and Pakistan.
 - **Climate change is causing melting of ice in Tibetan plateau**, which scientists believe will affect the river in future.

Lahore Resolution

- A historic **session of the All-India Muslim League was held at Lahore in March 1940.**
Muhammad Ali Jinnah explained how Hindus and Muslims cannot co-exist peacefully.
- On 23rd March, an epoch-making resolution was moved at that session demanding that **areas of the subcontinent of India in which the Muslims were numerically** in a majority, as in the **North-Western and Eastern Zones**, should be grouped to **constitute independent States.**
- Having regard to the place of its adoption, the resolution was **originally referred to as the Lahore Resolution.** The Hindu Press, however, dubbed it as the **Pakistan Resolution** and eventually, in popular parlance, it came to be called as such.
- The Lahore Resolution was the **beginning of the end of the administrative unity of the entire sub continent**, which had been created by the Muslim Emperors and continued by the British; **within eight years of its adoption the subcontinent was partitioned and Pakistan appeared as an independent sovereign State** on its map.

Source: IE

Market Infrastructure Institutions

Why in News

The **Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has **asked Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)** to begin **operations from disaster recovery sites within 45 minutes** of a disruption to critical systems, including trading.

The directive comes against the backdrop of a technical glitch at the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** on **24th February** that halted trading for nearly four hours.

Key Points

- **SEBI's Latest Directive:**
 - **New Framework for MIIs:**
 - SEBI has come out with a new framework for **Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Disaster Recovery (DR) of Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) - stock exchanges, clearing corporations and depositories.**
 - Business Continuity (BC) and Disaster Recovery (DR) are closely related practices that **support an organization's ability to remain operational after an adverse event.**
 - **Guidelines:**
 - In the event of **disruption of any one or more of the 'critical systems'**, the MII would, **within 30 minutes** of the incident, **declare that incident as 'disaster'**.
 - **Critical systems for an exchange or clearing corporation** would include **trading, risk management, collateral management, clearing and settlement and index computation.**
 - **Critical systems' for a depository** shall include **systems supporting settlement process and inter-depository transfer systems.**
 - MIIs have been directed **to move to disaster recovery sites within 45 minutes** of declaring an incident a 'disaster'.
 - A **disaster recovery site** is a place that a company can temporarily relocate to following a security breach or natural disaster.
 - It ensures that **a company can continue operations until it becomes safe to resume work at its usual location** or a new permanent location.
 - **Mobile- and cloud-based disaster recovery sites** are becoming increasingly popular.
 - **The new guidelines should be implemented within 90 days.**
- **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs):**
 - **Stock exchanges, depositories and clearing corporations** are collectively referred to as securities Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs).
 - According to the **Bimal Jalan Committee (2010)**, these institutions are systemically important for the country's financial development and serve as the infrastructure necessary for the securities market.
 - The **stock exchange** in India serves as **a market where financial instruments like stocks, bonds and commodities are traded.**
 - **Depositories** may be organizations, banks, or institutions that hold securities and **assist in the trading of securities.**
 - A **clearing corporation is an organisation/entity affiliated with a stock exchange** whose primary objective is to oversee the handling of confirmation, settlement, and delivery of transactions.

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** was established on 12th April, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992**.
- Major Function:
 - To protect the interests of investors in securities.
 - To regulate the securities market.

NSE

- The **National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE)** is **India's largest financial market**.
- **Incorporated in 1992**, the NSE has developed into a sophisticated, electronic market, which ranked fourth in the world by **equity** trading volume.
 - NSE was the first exchange in India to provide modern, fully automated electronic trading.
 - The NSE is the largest private wide-area network in India.
- The **NIFTY 50 is the flagship index on the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd. (NSE)**. The Index tracks the behavior of a portfolio of blue chip companies, the largest and most liquid Indian securities. It includes 50 of the approximately 1600 companies listed on the NSE.

Source: TH

Skill Certification

Why in News

The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** has asked all government departments to ensure that workers executing government contracts must have official certification for their skills.

Initially, up to **10% of the strength of workers** utilized in 2021-22 can be certified. This can be progressively **increased to 100% by 2026-27**.

Key Points

- **Need of the Move:**
 - **Low Level of Trained Workforce:** Only 2.4% of India's workforce is formally trained as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey** of 2018-19.
 - India's skill regulator, the **National Council for Vocational Education and Training**, has standardised skill certification systems for 4,000-odd job roles, as part of an effort to change the labour market structure from a largely unskilled one to a predominantly formally skilled workforce.
 - **Informal and Low Wage:** Government contractors prefer to rely on informal workers with low salaries for meeting their labour needs.
 - **Paradoxical Situation:** This is a paradoxical situation wherein the government is trying to promote skilling in the workforce without insisting on the use of skilled manpower for its own project.
- **Advantage:**
 - **Increase Demand For Skill:** Demand for skilling would start coming from the industry and labour force itself, which will prefer to pay for skilling itself, doing away with the present system of the Government trying to drive skilling through funding.
 - **Improvement in Wages : Improvement in wages** for the skilled manpower hired.
 - **Culture of Certified Skilling:** Given the quantum of manpower engaged in government and government contract works, this would help in making skilling aspirational for our youth and spread the culture of certified skilling.
 - **Enhance Productivity and Quality:** This will lead to higher productivity and output quality in government contract works.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Insufficient Training Capacity:** Insufficient job-linked training is leading to low employability rate in India.
 - **Low Industry Interface:** Low industry interface in training institutes is leading to poor placements and lower salaries.
 - **Low Student Mobilization:** The enrolment in skill institutes like ITIs, and polytechnics, remains low as compared to their enrolment capacity. This is due to low **awareness levels among youths** about the skill development programmes.
 - **Employers' Unwillingness:** India's joblessness issue is not only a skills problem, it is representative of the lack of appetite of industrialists and SMEs for recruiting.
 - Due to limited access to credit because of Banks' **Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)**, investment rate has declined and thus a negative impact on job creation.

Some Schemes Related to Skill Development

- **Industrial Training Centres (ITIs):** Conceptualized in the year 1950, aims to expand and modernize the existing Long-Term Training ecosystem in India.

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**: Launched in 2015, it aims to provide free skill training avenues to youths of India.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0**: It is launched 2021 in a bid to empower India's youth with employable skills by making over 300 skill courses available to them.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning**: It was launched in 2015 to recognize the prior skills acquired by individuals. It is one of the key components of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
 - Under this an individual with a certain set of skills or with prior learning experience is assessed and certified under RPL with grade according to the **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)**.
- **National Career Service Project**: Launched in 2015 to offer free online career skills training through its National Career Service (NCS) project for job-seekers registered with it.
- **Skill Management and Accreditation of Training Centres (SMART)**: It provides a single window IT application that focuses on the accreditation, grading, Affiliation and Continuous monitoring of the Training Centres (TC) in the skill ecosystem.
- **Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP)**: Its focus is on district-level skilling ecosystem through convergence and coordination. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which is collaborated with the World Bank.
- **Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE)**: Launched in 2016, the main focus of the scheme is to improve the performance of ITIs. Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) scheme is a World Bank assisted-Government of India project with the objective of improving the relevance and efficiency of skills training provided through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and apprenticeships.
- **Pradhan Mantri YUVA Yojana (Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan)**: Launched in the year 2016, it aims at creating an enabling ecosystem for Entrepreneurship development through Entrepreneurship education and training; Advocacy and easy access to entrepreneurship support network and Promoting social enterprises for inclusive growth.
- **Kaushalacharya Awards**: Launched to recognize the contribution made by skill trainers and to motivate more trainers to join the Skill India Mission.
- **Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)**: The scheme is to provide industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).
- **Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)**: Launched in 2020, it is a portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Source:TH

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

Why in News

The Prime Minister of India paid tribute to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia on his birth anniversary (23rd March).

Key Points

- **Birth:** 23rd March, 1910 in Akbarpur, Uttar Pradesh.



- **Brief Profile:**

- Indian politician and activist who was a prominent figure in socialist politics and in the movement towards Indian independence.
- Much of his career was devoted to combating injustice through the development of a distinctly Indian version of socialism.

Socialism refers to a set of political ideas that emerged as a response to the inequalities present in, and reproduced by, the industrial capitalist economy.

- **Lohia's Idea of Socialism:**

- Lohia **identified five kinds of inequalities** that need to be fought against simultaneously:
 - Inequality between **man and woman**,
 - Inequality based on **skin colour**,
 - **Caste-based** inequality,
 - **Colonial rule** of some countries over others, and
 - **Economic** inequality.
- For him struggle against these five inequalities constituted five **revolutions**. He added two more revolutions to this list:
 - **Revolution** for civil liberties against unjust encroachments on private life and
 - **Revolution** for non-violence, for renunciation of weapons in favour of Satyagraha.
- These were the **seven revolutions or Sapta Kranti** which for Lohia was the ideal of socialism.

- **Education:**

Bachelor's degree (1929) from the **University of Calcutta** and a **doctorate (1932)** from the **University of Berlin**, where he studied economics and politics.

- **Pre-Independence Role:**
 - In 1934, he became actively involved in the **Congress Socialist Party (CSP)**, founded that year as a left-wing group within the Indian National Congress.
 - A vehement **opponent of Indian participation on the side of Great Britain in World War II (1939-45)**, he was arrested for anti-British remarks in 1939 and again in 1940.
 - With the emergence in **1942 of the Quit India movement**—a campaign initiated by **Mahatma Gandhi** to urge the withdrawal of British authorities from India—Lohia and other CSP leaders (such as **Jaya Prakash Narayan**) mobilized support from the underground. For such resistance activities, he was jailed again in 1944–46.
- **Post-Independence Role:**
 - Lohia and other CSP members left the Congress in **1948**.
 - He became a member of the **Praja Socialist Party** upon its formation in **1952** and served as general secretary for a brief period, but internal conflicts led to his **resignation in 1955**.
 - He established a **new Socialist Party (1955)**, for which he became chairman as well as the editor of its journal, **Mankind**.
 - He advocated for various socio-political reforms in his capacity as party leader, including the **abolition of the caste system**, stronger protection of civil liberties, etc.
 - **In 1963**, Lohia was elected to the **Lok Sabha**, where he was noted for his sharp criticism of government policies.
- Some of **his works** include: ‘Wheel of History’, ‘Marx, Gandhi and Socialism’, ‘Guilty Men of India’s Partition’, etc.
- **Death:** 12th October, 1967.

Source: PIB

Greater One-Horned Rhino

Why in News

The claims by different political parties over significant reduction in poaching of Greater One-Horned Rhino has become an issue in Assam Assembly Elections.

According to the Assam Forest Department, poaching has **reduced by 86% in the last three years**.

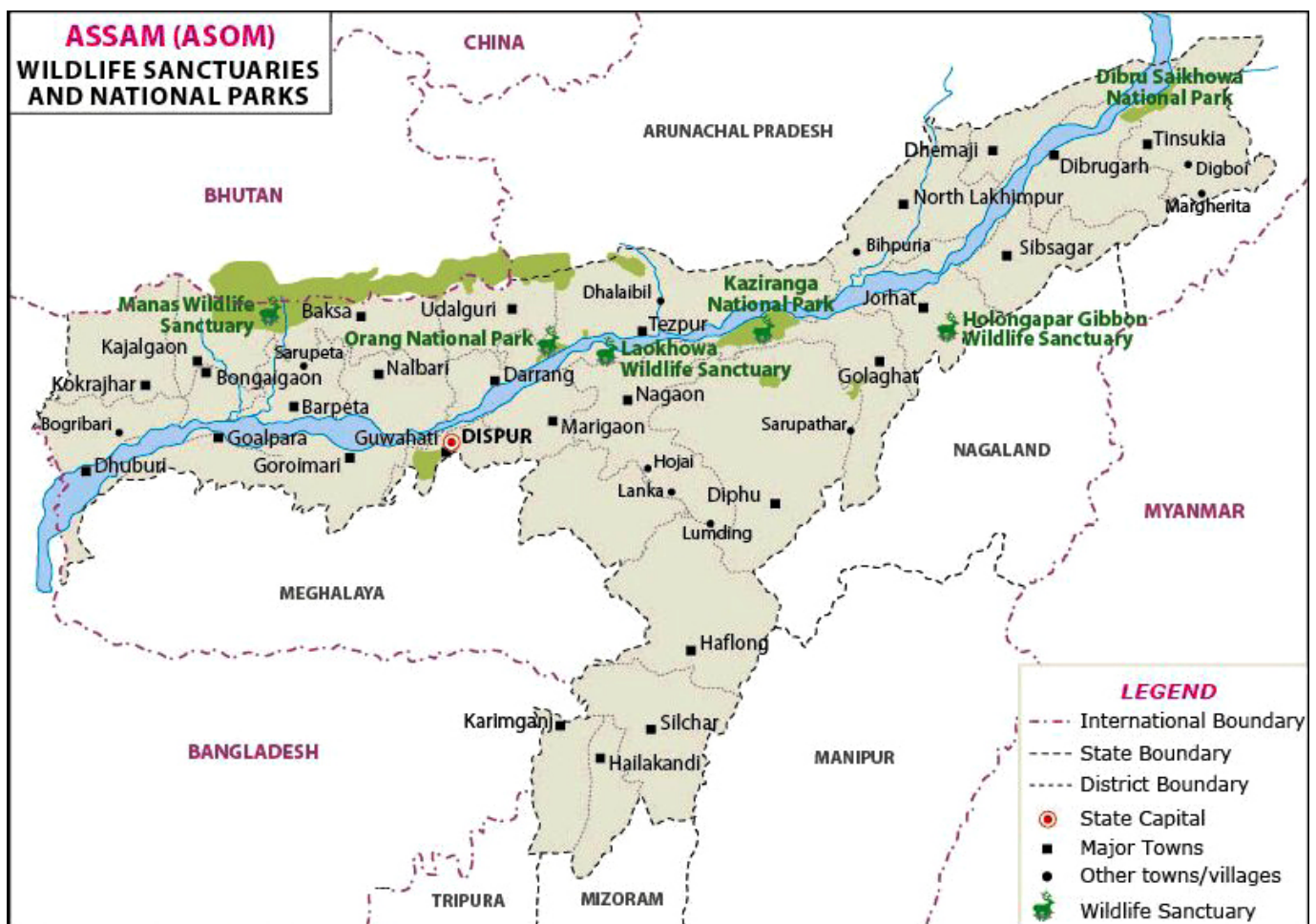
Key Points

- **About:**
 - The Greater **One-Horned Rhino** is one among the **five different species of Rhino**. The **other four are:**
 - **Black Rhino**: Smaller of the two African species.
 - **White Rhino**: Recently, researchers have created an embryo of the **northern white rhino by using In vitro Fertilization (IVF) process.**
 - **Javan Rhino**: **Critically endangered** in IUCN Red List.
 - **Sumatran Rhino**: Recently gone extinct in Malaysia.
 - There are **three species of rhino in Asia—Greater one-horned** (Rhinoceros unicornis), **Javan and Sumatran.**
 - Only the Great One-Horned Rhino is found in India.
 - Also known as Indian rhino, it is the **largest of the rhino species.**
 - It is identified by a **single black horn** and a grey-brown hide with skin folds.
 - They **primarily graze**, with a diet consisting almost entirely of grasses as well as leaves, branches of shrubs and trees, fruit, and aquatic plants.
- **Habitat:**
 - The species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam.
 - In India, rhinos are mainly found in **Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.**
 - Assam has an estimated **2,640 rhinos in four protected areas**, i.e. **Pabitora Wildlife Reserve**, Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and **Manas National Park**.
 - About **2,400 of them are in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR)**
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List**: Vulnerable.
 - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix I** (Threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance for scientific research).
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**: Schedule I.
- **Threats :**
 - Poaching for the horns
 - Habitat loss
 - Population density
 - Decreasing Genetic diversity

- **Conservation Efforts by India:**

- The **five rhino range nations** (India, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia) have signed a declaration ‘**The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019**’ for the **conservation** and **protection** of the species.
- Recently, the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has begun a project to create **DNA profiles of all rhinos** in the country.
- **National Rhino Conservation Strategy:** It was launched in 2019 to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- **Indian Rhino Vision 2020:** Launched in 2005, it is an ambitious effort to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in the Indian state of Assam by the year 2020.

Kaziranga National Park



- **Location:**

It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 Hectare (ha). It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

- **Legal Status:**

- It was declared as a National Park in 1974.
- It has been declared a **tiger reserve** since 2007. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.

- **International Status:**
 - It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1985.
 - It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.
- **Important Species Found:**
 - Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on the '**big four**' species— **Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo.**
 - As per the figures of **tiger census conducted in 2018**, Kaziranga had an estimated 104 tigers, the **fourth highest population** in India after **Jim Corbett National Park (231)** in Uttarakhand, **Nagarhole National Park (127)** and **Bandipur National Park (126)** in Karnataka.
 - Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.

Source -TH
