



## Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill 2021

**For Prelims:** States that have passed anti conversion laws, constitutional provisions on freedom of religion, Article 21 of the Constitution.

**For Mains:** Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021, anti-conversions laws and associated issues, Related Supreme Court judgements.

### Why in News

Recently, the **Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021** was introduced in the state assembly of Karnataka. The Bill **prohibits conversion from one religion to another** by misrepresentation, force, fraud, allurements or marriage.

- Other States like **Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** have also passed laws restricting religious conversion.

### Key Points

- **Main Provision of Bill:**
  - **Penal Provision:** The offense of conversion is **cognisable and non-bailable offense**.
    - It will attract a jail term of three to five years and a fine of Rs 25,000 for people found violating the law and a jail term of three to 10 years, and a fine of Rs. 50,000 for people converting minors, women and persons from the SC and ST communities.
  - **Locus Standi Doesn't Apply:** According to the proposed legislation, complaints of conversions can be filed by family members or relatives or any person in association.
  - **Exemption:** The Bill provides an exemption in the case of a person who **"reconverts to his immediate previous religion"** as "the same shall not be deemed to be a conversion under this Act".
  - **Provision for Willing Person:** After the law comes into force, any person intending to convert to another religion will have to **inform the district magistrate at least thirty days in advance**.
    - This will be followed by an inquiry to be conducted by the district magistrate through the police to establish the real intent of conversion.
    - Not informing the district magistrate will lead to the conversion being declared null and void.
- **Anti-Conversion Laws in India:**
  - **Constitutional Provision:** The Indian Constitution under **Article 25 guarantees the freedom to profess, propagate, and practise religion**, and allows all religious sections to manage their own affairs in matters of religion; subject to public order, morality, and health.
    - However, **no person shall force their religious beliefs** and consequently, no person should be forced to practice any religion against their wishes.
  - **Existing Laws:** There has been **no central legislation** restricting or regulating religious conversions.

- However, since 1954, on multiple occasions, [Private Member Bills](#) have been introduced in **(but never approved by) the Parliament**, to regulate religious conversions.
- Further, in 2015, the Union Law Ministry stated that **Parliament does not have the legislative competence** to pass anti-conversion legislation.
- Over the years, **several states have enacted 'Freedom of Religion' legislation** to restrict religious conversions carried out by force, fraud, or inducements.
- **Issues Associated with Anti-Conversion Laws:**
  - **Uncertain and Vague Terminology:** The uncertain and vague terminology like **misrepresentation, force, fraud, allurement presents a serious avenue for misuse.**
    - These terms leave room for ambiguities or are too broad, extending to subjects far beyond the protection of religious freedom.
  - **Antithetical to Minorities:** Another issue is that the present anti-conversion laws focus more on the prohibition of conversion to achieve religious freedom.
    - However, the broad language used by the prohibitive legislation might be used by officials to oppress and **discriminate against minorities.**
  - **Antithetical to Secularism:** These laws may pose a threat to the **secular fabric of India** and the **international perception** of our **society's intrinsic values and legal system.**
- **Supreme Court on Marriage and Conversion:**
  - [Hadiya Judgement 2017:](#)
    - Matters of dress and of food, of ideas and ideologies, of love and partnership are within the central aspects of identity.
    - Neither the State nor the law can dictate a choice of partners or limit the free ability of every person to decide on these matters.
    - The principle that the right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to [Article 21.](#)
  - [K.S. Puttuswamy or 'privacy' Judgment 2017:](#)
    - Autonomy of the individual was the ability to make decisions in vital matters of concern to life.
  - **Other Judgements:**
    - The SC in its various judgments, has held that **faith, the state and the courts have no jurisdiction over an adult's absolute right** to choose a life partner.
    - India is a **"free and democratic country"** and any interference by the State in an adult's right to love and marry has a **"chilling effect"** on freedoms.
    - Intimacies of marriage lie within a **core zone of privacy**, which is inviolable and the choice of a life partner, whether by marriage or outside it, is part of an **individual's "personhood and identity"**.
    - The absolute right of an individual to choose a life partner is **not in the least affected by matters of faith.**

## Way Forward

- The governments implementing such laws need to ensure that these do not curb one's Fundamental Rights or hamper the national integration instead, these laws need to strike a balance between freedoms and malafide conversions.

[Source: IE](#)

**For Prelims:** Termination of Sitting of Parliament, Adjournment, Adjournment sine die, Prorogation and Dissolution.

**For Mains:** Important legislations passed in the winter session of Parliament.

## Why in News

Recently, the **Winter Session of Parliament** has been **adjourned sine die** (terminating a sitting of Parliament without naming a day for reassembly). The session witnessed **passing of some of the important legislations**.

## Key Points

- **Termination of Sitting of Parliament:** The sitting of the Parliament in both the Houses can be terminated only by:
  - **Adjournment,**
  - **Adjournment sine die,**
  - **Prorogation**
  - **Dissolution** (not applicable for Rajya Sabha).
- **Adjournment:** An adjournment results in the **suspension of work in a sitting** for a **specified time**, which may be hours, days or weeks.
  - In this case, the time of reassembly is specified as **an adjournment only terminates a sitting and not a session of the House**.
  - The power of adjournment lies with the **presiding officer of the House**.
- **Adjournment sine die:** Adjournment sine die means terminating **a sitting of Parliament for an indefinite period**, that is, when the House is adjourned without naming a day for reassembly, it is **called adjournment sine die**.
  - The power of adjournment sine die lies with the presiding officer of the House.
  - However, the presiding officer of a House can **call a sitting of the House before the date or time to which it has been adjourned** or at any time after the House has been adjourned sine die.
- **Prorogation:** The term prorogation means the termination of a session of the House by an order made by the President under **Article 85(2)(a)** of the Constitution.
  - The prorogation **terminates both the sitting and session of the House** and is usually done within a few days after the House is adjourned sine die by the presiding officer.
  - The **President issues a notification** for the prorogation of the session.
  - However, the president can also prorogue the House while in session.
  - It must be noted that **all pending notices except those for introducing bills lapse**.
  - The period between the prorogation of a House and its reassembly in a new session is called a **recess**.
- **Dissolution:** Whenever a dissolution happens, it ends the **very life of the existing House** and **a new House is constituted after the General Elections**.
  - However, only the Lok Sabha is subject to dissolution as the **Rajya Sabha, being a permanent House, is not subject to dissolution**.

## Some of the Important Bills Passed by Houses of Parliament

- **[The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021](#):** In view of protests by the farmers, the bill was introduced and passed to repeal the three farm laws namely:
  - Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020
  - Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020
  - Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020
- **[The Dam Safety Bill, 2021](#):** It provides for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of the specified dam for **prevention of dam failure related disasters**.
  - It also seeks to provide for institutional mechanisms to ensure their safe functioning and for

matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- **[The Assisted Reproductive Technology \(Regulations\) Bill, 2021](#)**: It provides for **regulation and supervision of the assisted reproductive technology** clinics and the assisted reproductive technology banks, prevention of misuse, safe and ethical practice of assisted reproductive technology services.
  - It also envisaged establishment of the National Board, the State Boards and the National Registry.
- **[The Surrogacy \(Regulation\) Bill, 2021](#)**: It provides for **regulation of surrogacy services in the country**.
  - It also prohibits the potential exploitation of surrogate mothers and to protect the rights of children born through surrogacy.
- **[The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#)**: It provides **clarity that the institutes established as well as any other similar institute** to be established under the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act shall be institutes of national importance.
  - It also established a central body, to be called the Council to ensure coordinated development of pharmaceutical education and research and maintenance of standards, etc.
- **[The High Court and Supreme Court Judges \(Salaries and Conditions of Service\) Amendment Bill, 2021](#)**: It seeks to bring clarity on when Supreme Court and High Court judges are **entitled to an additional quantum of pension** or family pension on attaining a certain age.
- **[The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#)**: The bill would replace an ordinance promulgated earlier this year (2021) to correct a drafting error in **section 27A of the Act**.
- **[The Delhi Special Police Establishment \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#)**: It provides for **extension of tenure of Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation by up to one year** at a time in public interest, till the completion of five years in total including the period mentioned in the initial appointment.
- **[The Central Vigilance Commission \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#)**: It provides for **extension of tenure of Director of the Directorate of Enforcement by up to one year at a time** in public interest, till the completion of five years in total including the period mentioned in the initial appointment.
- **[The Election Laws \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#)**: It provides **linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem** to curb the menace of multiple enrolment of the same person in different places.

**[Source: PIB](#)**

---

## Hate Speech

**For Prelims:** Sections 505(1) and 505(2), Article 19(1) (a), Representation of People's Act, 1951 (RPA), Shreya Singhal v. Union of India.

**For Mains:** About Hate Speech, Reasons of increasing hate speech in the Indian Society and steps that can be taken to tackle these kinds of issues.

## Why in News

Recently, an FIR was filed against a leader in Uttarakhand for promoting enmity amongst different sections of the society.

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- In general, it refers to words **whose intent is to create hatred towards a particular group**, that group may be a community, religion or race. This speech may or may not have meaning, but is likely to result in violence.
- The [Bureau of Police Research and Development](#) recently published a manual for investigating agencies on cyber harassment cases that defined hate speech as a language that denigrates, insults, threatens or targets an individual based on their identity and other traits (such as sexual orientation or disability or religion etc.).
- In the **267<sup>th</sup> Report of the Law Commission of India**, hate speech is stated as an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and the like.
- In order to determine whether a particular instance of speech is a hate speech or not, the context of the speech plays an important role.
- One of the greatest challenges is **not to exercise the principle of autonomy and free speech principles** that are detrimental to any section of society.
  - Free speech is necessary to promote a plurality of opinions where hate speech becomes **an exception to Article 19(1) (a)** (Freedom of Speech and Expression).

### ▪ Major Reasons of Hate Speech:

- **Feeling of Superiority:**
  - Individuals believe in stereotypes that are ingrained in their minds and these stereotypes lead them to believe that a class or group of persons are inferior to them and as such cannot have the same rights as them.
- **Stubbornness to Particular Ideology:**
  - The stubbornness to stick to a particular ideology without caring for the right to co-exist peacefully adds further fuel to the fire of hate speech.

### ▪ Legal Position of Hate Speech:

- **Under Indian Penal Code:**
  - **Sections 153A and 153B of the IPC:** Punishes acts that cause enmity and hatred between two groups.
  - **Section 295A of the IPC:** Deals with punishing acts which deliberately or with malicious intention outrage the religious feelings of a class of persons.
  - **Sections 505(1) and 505(2):** Make the publication and circulation of content which may cause ill-will or hatred between different groups an offence.
- **Under Representation of People's Act:**
  - **Section 8 of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 (RPA):** Prevents a person convicted of the illegal use of the freedom of speech from contesting an election.
  - **Sections 123(3A) and 125 of the RPA:** Bars the promotion of animosity on the grounds of race, religion, community, caste, or language in reference to elections and include it under corrupt electoral practices.

### ▪ Suggestion for Changes in IPC:

- **Viswanathan Committee 2019:**
  - It proposed inserting **Sections 153 C (b) and Section 505 A in the IPC** for incitement to commit an offence on grounds of religion, race, caste or community, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, place of birth, residence, language, disability or tribe.
  - It proposed punishment of up to two years along with Rs. 5,000 fine.
- **Bezbaruah Committee 2014:**
  - It **proposed amendment to Section 153 C of IPC** (promoting or attempting to promote acts prejudicial to human dignity), punishable by five years and fine or both and Section 509 A IPC (word, gesture or act intended to insult member of a particular race), punishable by three years or fine or both.

### ▪ Some Cases Related to Hate Speech:

- [SC' s Recent Judgement:](#)
  - In the context of discussing the limits of free speech and what may tantamount to hate speech, the Supreme Court (SC) has recently held that "Historical truths must be depicted without in any way disclosing or encouraging hatred or enmity between

different classes or communities.”

- **[Shreya Singhal v. Union of India:](#)**
  - Issues were raised about **Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000** relating to the fundamental right of free speech and expression guaranteed by **Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution**, where the Court differentiated between discussion, advocacy, and incitement and held that the first two were the essence of **Article 19(1)**.
- **Arup Bhuyan vs State of Assam:**
  - The Court held that a **mere act cannot be punished unless** an individual resorted to violence or inciting any other person to violence.
- **S. Rangarajan Etc vs P. Jagjivan Ram:**
  - In this case, the Court held that **freedom of expression cannot be suppressed unless the situation so created is dangerous** to the community/ public interest wherein this danger should not be remote, conjectural or far-fetched. There should be a proximate and direct nexus with the expression so used.

## Way Forward

- The most efficient way to dilute hatred is by **means of Education**. Our education system has a prominent role to play in promoting and understanding compassion with others.
- Fight against hate speech cannot be isolated. It should be discussed on a wider platform such as the **United Nations**. Every responsible government, regional bodies, and other international and regional actors should respond to this threat.
- Cases of hate speech **can be addressed through Alternative Dispute Resolution** as it proposes a shift from the long procedures of the court to the settlement of the dispute between parties by way of negotiation, mediation, arbitration and/or conciliation.
- Also, **Public authorities must be held accountable for dereliction of the duty of care** and also for non-compliance with this court's orders by not taking action to prevent vigilante groups from inciting communal disharmony and spreading hate against citizens of the country and taking the laws into their own hands.

**Source:** [TH](#)

---

## India-Myanmar

**For Prelims:** India- Myanmar Cooperation, Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, Rakhine State Development Programme, Border Area Development Programme.

**For Mains:** Significance of Myanmar for India, Coup in Myanmar and its implications for India, Act East policy, India's "Neighborhood First" policy.

## Why in News

Recently, **India has provided 10 lakh doses of 'Made in India' coronavirus vaccines** and **a grant of 10,000 tonnes of rice and wheat to Myanmar** as part of its continued humanitarian support for the neighbouring country.

- It was the first visit of an Indian Foreign Secretary to Myanmar since **Myanmar's military deposed the democratically-elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a coup on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.**



## Key Points

- Called for **“return of democracy” at the “earliest”** in the country and “release” of political prisoners; resolution of issues through dialogue; and complete cessation of all violence.
- Reaffirmed **India’s strong and consistent support to the ASEAN initiative** and expressed hope that progress would be made in a pragmatic and constructive manner, based on the five point consensus.
  - The **ASEAN five-point consensus states** that there shall be an immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint; constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people.
- Expressed India’s continued **support for people-centric socio-economic developmental projects**, including those along the India-Myanmar border areas, as well as India’s commitment for expeditious implementation of ongoing connectivity initiatives such as the **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and the Trilateral Highway**.
- Reiterated India’s commitment **to continue with the projects under Rakhine State Development Programme and Border Area Development Programme** for the benefit of the people of Myanmar.
- Emphasized that **peace and security in the North East states are affected if there is instability in Myanmar**.
  - In the recent past, it is **not just the Rohingyas** who tried to enter India from Myanmar. According to reports, police personnel and others serving in Myanmar forces fled the country and took shelter in the North East states like Mizoram, Manipur.

## India-Myanmar Ties

- **Background:**
  - India and Myanmar relationship officially got underway **after the Treaty of Friendship was signed in 1951**, after which the foundation for a more meaningful relationship was established during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit in 1987.
- **Muti-faceted Relationship:**
  - India and Myanmar have traditionally **had much in common, with cultural, historical, ethnic, and religious ties**, in addition to sharing a long geographical land border and maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal.
- **Geo-Strategic Location of Myanmar:**
  - Myanmar is **geopolitically significant to India as it stands at the center of the India-**



**Southeast Asia** geography.

- Myanmar is the **only Southeast Asian country that shares a land border with northeastern India**, stretching some 1,624 kilometers.
- The two countries **also share a 725-km maritime boundary** in the Bay of Bengal.
- **Confluence of Two Foreign Policy Doctrines:**
  - Myanmar is the **only country that sits at the intersection of [India's "Neighborhood First" policy](#) and its ["Act East" policy](#).**
  - Myanmar is **an essential element in India's practice of regional diplomacy** in the [Indo-Pacific](#) and serves as a land bridge to connect South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- **Competition with China:**
  - If India is to become an assertive regional player in Asia, it has to work toward developing policies that would improve and strengthen its relationship with neighboring countries.
  - However, in pursuance of this, **China is a big roadblock, as it aims to diminish India's influence in its neighborhood.** Therefore, both India and China are **fighting for gaining influence in Myanmar.**
  - For example, as part of its policy for the Indian Ocean called [Security and Growth for All in the Region \(SAGAR\)](#), India developed the Sittwe port in Myanmar's Rakhine state.
  - The **Sittwe port is meant to be India's answer to the Chinese-fronted Kyaukpyu port**, which is intended to cement China's geostrategic footprint in Rakhine.
- **Critical for India's National Security Interests:**
  - North-eastern states in India are affected by **left-wing extremism and [narcotics trade routes \(golden triangle\)](#).**
  - To counter these threats, the **Indian and Myanmar armies have carried out many joint military operations** like Operation Sunshine.
- **Economic Cooperation:**
  - Many Indian companies **made significant economic and trade agreements** in infrastructure and other areas.
  - Some other Indian companies such as Essar, GAIL, and ONGC Videsh Ltd. have invested in Myanmar's energy sector.
  - To elevate its **"Made in India"** arms industry, India has identified Myanmar as key to increasing its military exports.

## Way Forward

- Even as India continues to call for a restoration of the democratic process, both bilaterally and at various multilateral fora, **it has to engage with the army in Myanmar to address Indian concerns** as well as to make it a stakeholder that can deliver on the democratic front, **including the release of political prisoners.**
  - Marginalising the army will only push it into China's arms. Ever since the coup, China's economic grip over Myanmar has only become tighter with a special focus on projects critical for the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.
- **India's "Buddhist Circuit" initiative, which seeks to double foreign tourist arrivals** and revenue by connecting ancient Buddhist heritage sites across different states in India, should resonate with **Buddhist-majority Myanmar.**
- The **quicker the Rohingya issue is resolved**, the easier it will be for India to manage its relations with Myanmar and Bangladesh, focusing instead more on bilateral and subregional economic cooperation.
- Finally, **cooperation in different multilateral forums** such as [ASEAN](#) and [BIMSTEC](#) strengthens the relationship between the two countries.

[Source: TH](#)

---

## Card on File Tokenisation (CoFT)

---



**For Prelims:** Card-on-file tokenisation (CoF), Card-on-File, Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

**For Mains:** Issues related to Card on File Tokenisation (CoFT)

## Why in News

The [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) has **extended the timeline for implementation of the new credit and debit card data storage norms, or card-on-file tokenisation (CoF) by six months to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2022.**

- The digital payment firms, merchant bodies and banks had **sought more time to integrate the systems and onboard all the stakeholders** amid fears over disruption of business transactions.
- In September 2021, the [RBI prohibited merchants from storing customer card details](#) on their servers with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2022, and mandated the adoption of CoF tokenisation as an alternative to card storage.

## PROCESS TO GET MORE TEDIOUS?

➤ E-tailers & payment gateways **currently offer to store card details**, including the 16-digit number

➤ RBI's ban on storing card data would require e-commerce firms to **opt for tokenisation** or ask customers to enter the card number

➤ Tokenisation refers to payment networks **linking card data to a token**, which is given to the merchant

➤ This token can be used for payments but **only by the specified merchant**

➤ The new rule will become the norm for all card-based transactions in e-commerce **from Jan 2022**

➤ According to a source, the **threat of ransomware attacks** have increased manifold

➤ Online firms **won't be able to store card info & debit recurring payments** (won't affect billers added with bank directly)

➤ It is thought RBI's move is aimed at **increasing customer safety & improving data security**



## Key Points

- **About:**
  - **Tokenisation:** It refers to replacement of actual credit and debit card details with an alternate code called the “token”, which will be unique for a combination of card, token requestor and device.
    - A tokenised card transaction is **considered safer** as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.
    - Customers who do not have the tokenisation facility will have to key in their name, 16-digit card number, expiry date and CVV each time they order something online.
  - **Card-on-File:** A CoF transaction is a transaction where a cardholder has authorised a

merchant to store the cardholder's Mastercard or Visa payment details.

- The cardholder then authorises that same merchant to bill the cardholder's stored Mastercard or Visa account.
- **E-commerce** companies and airlines and supermarket chains normally store card details in their system.

▪ **More Time Sought for Implementation:**

- If the new RBI mandate is implemented in the present state of readiness, it could cause **major disruptions and loss of revenue**, especially for merchants.
  - Online merchants can **lose up to 20-40 % of their revenues** post 31<sup>st</sup> December due to tokenisation norms, and for many of them, especially smaller ones, this would sound the death knell, causing them to shut shop.
  - Disruptions of this nature **erode trust in digital payments and reverses consumer habits** back towards cash-based payments.
- Merchants **cannot start the testing and certification** of their payment processing systems until banks and card networks are certified and live with stable APIs (Application Programming Interface) for consumer-ready solutions.

## Way Forward

- The RBI has said that after June 2022, credit and debit card data should be purged from the online systems of merchants.
- In addition to tokenisation, industry stakeholders may devise alternate mechanisms to handle any use case, including **recurring e-mandates** and **EMI option or post-transaction activity, including chargeback handling, dispute resolution, reward or loyalty programme**, that currently **involves storage of CoF data** by entities other than card issuers and card networks.

[Source: IE](#)

---

## ESG Funds

**For Prelims:** ESG Funds, Corporate Social Responsibility.

**For Mains:** Growth of ESG Funds in India, its significance and concerns associated with it.

## Why in News

The asset size of **ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) Funds** has grown nearly five times to Rs 12,300 crore over the last couple of years.

- The demand and growth for ESG funds in Asia, especially in India, has been overwhelming, it is 32%.

## Key Points

▪ **About:**

- It is a kind of **Mutual Fund**. Its investing is **used synonymously with sustainable investing or socially responsible investing**.
- Typically, a mutual fund looks for a good stock of a company that has potential earnings, management quality, cash flows, the business it operates in, competition etc.

- However, while selecting a stock for investment, **the ESG fund shortlists companies that score high on environment, social responsibility and corporate governance**, and then looks into financial factors.
- Therefore, the key difference between the ESG funds and other funds is 'conscience' i.e the ESG fund focuses on companies with **environment-friendly practices, ethical business practices and an employee-friendly record**.
- The fund is regulated by [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#).
- **Factors Behind ESG Growth:**
  - Greater policy focus on aspects such as cleanliness, skill development, expanded healthcare coverage, and education **indicates potential public investment in these social development and environmentally sensitive sectors** of the economy.
  - There is increasing awareness and understanding among younger investors about the **impact of business on social development and environment**.
  - Modern investors are **re-evaluating traditional approaches, and look at the impact their investment has on the planet**. Thus, investors have started incorporating ESG factors into investment practices.
  - The **United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UN-PRI)** (an international organization) works to promote the incorporation of environmental, social, and corporate governance factors into investment decision-making.
- **Significance:**
  - As ESG funds gain momentum in India, **companies will be forced to improve governance and ethical practices**, and act with greater social and environmental responsibility.
  - As the policy framework changes, companies that do not alter business models or become more environmentally sustainable, **could have their revenue and profits impacted in the long term**.
    - Globally, many pension funds and sovereign wealth funds do not invest in companies that are seen as polluting or socially not responsible.
- **Concerns:**
  - Alongside the greater attention on issues such as climate risk, emissions, supply chains, labour rights, anti-corruption, etc., certain concerns have been flagged as well.
  - **Greenwashing is one of the top concerns** among global institutional investors.
    - Greenwashing is considered an unsubstantiated claim to deceive consumers into believing that a company's products are environmentally friendly.
  - Investment experts have also pointed to **the tendency of fund managers to overweight certain stocks** and companies in a situation where most large investment-friendly companies have fallen short of the qualitative and quantitative parameters used for ESG investing.

[Source: IE](#)

---

## Olive Ridley Turtles

### Why in News

Researchers of the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** are carrying out **tagging of Olive Ridley turtles at three mass nesting sites** - Gahirmatha, Devi River mouth and Rushikulya.

- The **exercise was undertaken in Odisha in January 2021** after a span of about 25 years and

1,556 turtles had been tagged.



## Key Points

### ▪ Tagging and its Significance:

- The metal tags affixed to turtles are **non-corrosive**, which can be removed later **and they do not harm their body**.
- The tags are **uniquely numbered containing details** such as the name of the organisation, country-code and email address.
- If researchers in other countries come across the tagged turtles, they will email their location in longitude and latitude to researchers in India. There is an established network working on turtles.
- It would **help them identify the migration path and places** visited by the marine reptiles after congregation and nesting.

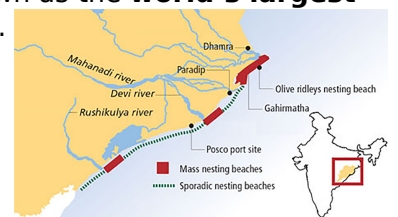
### ▪ Olive Ridley Turtles:

#### ◦ About:

- The Olive ridley turtles are the **smallest and most abundant** of all sea turtles found in the world.
- These turtles are **carnivores and get their name** from their olive colored carapace.
- They are **best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

#### ◦ Habitat:

- They are **found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans**.
- The **Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary** is known as the **world's largest rookery (colony of breeding animals)** of sea turtles.



#### ◦ Protection Status:

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Scheduled 1
- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **CITES:** Appendix I

#### ◦ Threats:

- Marine pollution and waste.
- **Human Consumption:** They are extensively poached for their meat, shell and leather, and eggs.
- **Plastic Garbage:** An ever-increasing debris of plastics, fishing nets, discarded nets, polythene and other garbage dumped by tourists and fishing workers.

- **Fishing Trawlers:** Overexploitation of marine resources by use of trawlers often violates the rule to not fish 20 kilometers within a marine sanctuary.
  - There were injury marks on many dead turtles indicating they could have been trapped under trawls or gill nets.
- **Initiatives to Protect Olive Ridley Turtles:**
  - **Operation Olivia:**
    - Every year, the **Indian Coast Guard's "Operation Olivia"**, initiated in the early 1980s, helps protect Olive Ridley turtles as they congregate along the Odisha coast for breeding and nesting from November to December.
      - It also intercepts **unlawful trawling activities**.
  - **Mandatory use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs):**
    - To reduce accidental killing in India, the Odisha government has made it mandatory for **trawls to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)**, a net specially designed with an exit cover which allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.

### Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)

- It is a **subordinate organization of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, established in 1916.
- It is a **national centre for faunistic survey** and exploration of the resources leading to the advancement of knowledge on the exceptionally rich faunal diversity of the country.
- It **has its headquarters at Kolkata** and 16 regional stations located in different geographic locations of the country.

[Source: TH](#)

---

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/24-12-2021/print>