



## Urban Flooding

# URBAN FLOODING

### MEANING

- Flooding of land/property in a built environment, particularly in cities
- Caused not just by higher precipitation but also **unplanned urbanisation**

### CAUSES OF EXACERBATION

- **Encroachments** on drainage channels (Lakes, wetlands, riverbeds)
- **Climate change** (increased frequency of short duration heavy rainfall)
- Uninformed **release of water from dams** (e.g. Chennai Floods 2015)
- **Mining** activities (depletes natural riverbed and water retention capacity)
- Urban heat island effect
- **Storm surges** affecting coastal cities/ towns

### IMPACTS

- Loss of life and property
- Spread of diseases
- Disruptions in supply of power & water and communication
- Ecological impacts

### SUGGESTIONS TO MITIGATE

- Creating a unified **flood control implementing agency**
- **Blue-Green Infra** for urban and climatic challenges
  - Blue - Water bodies such as rivers and tanks
  - Green - Trees, Parks, and Gardens
- Mapping of Flood Vulnerability
- Construction of **flood walls, raised platforms** along basins

### Some of the Most Notable Urban Floods in India



## Children and Domestic Labour

For Prelims: [Child Labor](#), [International Labour Organization](#), [National Crime Records Bureau](#), [Child](#)

**For Mains:** Vulnerabilities Faced by Child Labor in Domestic Work.

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

## Why in News?

Recently, an incident came into light where a couple was accused of hiring a 10-year-old girl as a **stay-at-home help to care for their 4-year-old son and was** subjected to physical and mental abuse on several occasions.

- This incident highlights the issue of [Child Labour in Domestic Work](#).

## What is Child Labor?

- **Child Domestic Labour:**
  - Child domestic work is a **general reference to children's work in the domestic work** sector in the home of a third party or employer.
  - Child labor in domestic work refers to **situations where domestic work is performed by children below the relevant minimum** age (for light work, full-time non-hazardous work), in hazardous conditions or in a slavery-like situation.
- **Hazards of Child Domestic Work:**
  - The [ILO \(International Labour Organization\)](#) has identified a number of hazards to which **domestic workers are particularly vulnerable** some of the most common risks children face in domestic **service include**,
    - **Long and tiring working days**; use of toxic chemicals; carrying heavy loads; handling dangerous items such as knives and hot pans; insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation etc.
  - The **risks are compounded** when a child lives in the household where he or she works as a domestic worker.
- **Status of Child Labor in India:**
  - As per the [National Crime Records Bureau Report 2022](#), in 2021, around 982 cases were registered under the [Child Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act, 1986](#), with the **highest number of cases registered in Telangana, followed by Assam**.
  - According to a study by **Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL)**, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of working **children from 28.2% to 79.6% out of the 818 children** who were surveyed, mainly because of the [Covid-19](#) pandemic and closure of schools.
  - The states in India having highest child labour employers are - **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra**.

## Why is Child Labor in Domestic Work Prevalence in India?

- **Social and Economic Conditions of Families:**
  - The prevalence of child labor in domestic work in India are the social and economic conditions of families, lack of effective policies ensuring sufficient wages to adult workers, and the burden **falling on children of impoverished households to supplement family** income.
  - This situation often leads to **kids being paid even less and forced to work beyond their physical** and mental capacity, resulting in a **systematic trap of slavery** in 24x7 house help employment.
- **Marginalized Communities are Easy Targets:**
  - Some communities and families have a **tradition of making their children work** in certain occupations, such as agriculture, carpet weaving, or domestic service. Some also

believe that **education is not important** or suitable for girls.

- Tribals and Dalits who migrate to big cities from the poorer regions of India such as West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand are the easiest targets.

▪ **Poor School Infrastructure:**

- Many schools in **India lack adequate facilities, teachers,** and quality education. Some schools also charge fees or other expenses that are unaffordable for poor families.
- These factors **discourage parents from sending** their children to school and make them drop out.

▪ **Unprecedented Disruption/Losses:**

- Natural disasters, conflicts, and **pandemics can disrupt the normal functioning** of society and increase the **vulnerability of children.**
- Some children may lose their parents, homes, or access to basic services. They may be forced to work for survival or be exploited by traffickers and other perpetrators.

## What is the Socio-Economic Impact of Child Labour?

▪ **Reduced Human Capital Accumulation:**

- Child labor diminishes **children's ability to accumulate skills** and knowledge, affecting their future productivity and income.

▪ **Perpetuation of Poverty and Child Labour:**

- Child labor lowers **wages for unskilled work,** contributing to the cycle of poverty and continued child labor.

▪ **Impaired Technological Progress and Economic Growth:**

- Child labor hampers **technological advancements** and innovation, slowing down long-term economic growth and development.

▪ **Deprivation of Rights and Opportunities:**

- Child labor **deprives children of their rights to education,** health, protection, and participation, limiting their future opportunities and social mobility.

▪ **Undermined Social Development and Cohesion:**

- Child labor weakens social development and cohesion within a country, impacting stability and democracy.

▪ **Negative Health Impacts:**

- Child labor exposes children to hazards, **physical injuries,** diseases, abuse, and exploitation, adversely affecting their physical and mental well-being, mortality rates, and life expectancy.

## What are the Government Initiatives to Curb Child Labour in India?

▪ [Right to Education Act \(2009\)](#)

▪ [Article 24:](#)

- Forbids employment of children under 14 years of age in dangerous jobs like factories and mines. However, it didn't prohibit their employment in any harmless or innocent work.

▪ **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986):**

- Amended in 2016 as **Child & Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, completely prohibited employment of children** below 14 years of age in all occupations and processes.

▪ **The Factories Act (1948)**

▪ **National Policy on Child Labour (1987)**

▪ [Pencil Portal](#)

▪ **Ratifying Conventions of the International Labour Organization:**

- [The Minimum Age Convention \(1973\) - No. 138](#)
- [The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention \(1999\) - No. 182](#)

## Way Forward

- The government should enact and **amend laws that prohibit and regulate child labour,** in

line with international standards and conventions.

- It should also ensure that the laws are effectively implemented and enforced, by allocating adequate resources, capacity, coordination, data, accountability and political will.
- The government should provide **comprehensive social protection** and economic support to poor and vulnerable families, to prevent them from resorting to child labour as a coping mechanism.
- The government should ensure that **all children have access to free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years**, as per the **Right to Education Act 2009** and [Article 21A](#) of the Constitution.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Prelims:**

**Q. International Labour Organization's Conventions 138 and 182 are related to (2018)**

- (a) Child Labour
- (b) Adaptation of agricultural practices to global climate change
- (c) Regulation of food prices and food security
- (d) Gender parity at the workplace

**Ans: (a)**

### **Mains:**

**Q. Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation. (2016)**

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## Corporate Debt Market Development Fund

**For Prelims: Guarantee Scheme for Corporate Debt, Corporate Debt Market Development Fund, [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#), Guarantee Fund for Corporate Debt (GFCD)**

**For Mains: Role CDMDF in corporate bond market, [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#)**

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

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the government of India has approved the **Guarantee Scheme for Corporate Debt (GSCD)** to provide a guarantee cover for the debt raised by the **Corporate Debt Market Development Fund (CDMDF)** that aims to **stabilize the corporate bond market** during times of stress.

- The [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#) has issued guidelines for the operation and management of the scheme and the fund.

### **What is the Guarantee Scheme for Corporate Debt (GSCD)?**

- The GSCD provides a complete guarantee cover for debt raised by the CDMDF.
- The primary objective of GSCD is to **enhance investor confidence and provide stability** to the corporate debt market.
- GSCD is managed by the **Guarantee Fund for Corporate Debt (GFCD)**.
  - The GFCD is a trust fund formed by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)** and managed by the **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd**, which is a **wholly owned company** of the **Department of Financial Services** under the Ministry of Finance.
- The scheme is designed to support the purchase of **investment-grade corporate debt securities** by CDMDF during market dislocation.
  - Investment-grade corporate debt securities are **bonds or notes issued by companies that have a low risk of default** and a good credit rating.
- The guaranteed cover provided by GSCD ensures that investors are protected from **potential risks associated with investment-grade corporate debt securities**.
- CDMDF's ability to purchase securities with a guarantee under GSCD enhances secondary market liquidity and supports the overall stability of the corporate debt market.

## What is Corporate Debt Market Development Fund (CDMDF)?

- The CDMDF is an **alternative investment fund** established to address the needs of the corporate debt market in India and it will be launched as a **close-ended scheme**.
- CDMDF serves as a **backstop facility for investment-grade corporate debt securities**, providing stability and enhancing investor confidence in the market.
- CDMDF provides a backstop facility of **Rs 33,000 crore** has been established for Mutual Funds. The **government will contribute Rs 30,000 crore**, and the **Asset Management Companies will provide the remaining Rs 3,000 crore**.
- CDMDF aims to enhance secondary market liquidity by creating a permanent institutional framework that can be **activated during periods of market stress**.
- The fund acts as a **safety net for investors during times of market dislocation**, providing support and stability to the corporate debt market.

## What are the SEBI Guidelines for CDMDF?

- **Investment:**
  - During normal market conditions, CDMDF focuses on dealing in **low duration [government securities \(G-sec\)](#), [treasury bills](#)**, and guaranteed corporate bond repo with a **maturity not exceeding seven days**.
  - When the market experiences dislocation, CDMDF steps in to purchase **investment-grade corporate debt securities**, providing a safety net for investors.
    - Corporate debt securities sold by mutual fund schemes to CDMDF during market dislocation will be **treated as trade executed on the Request for Quote (RFQ) platform**.
- **Eligible Securities:**
  - CDMDF is authorized to purchase only listed corporate debt securities with a **residual maturity of up to five years**.
  - **Exclusion Criteria:**
    - The fund refrains from **acquiring unlisted, below-investment-grade, or defaulted debt securities**.
    - Securities that present a material possibility of default or adverse credit news or views are also excluded.
- **Fair Pricing Mechanism:**
  - CDMDF buys securities at a **fair price**, factoring in liquidity risk, interest rate risk, and credit risk to **ensure transparency and market stability**.
    - Buying or trading is done at a fair price and not at distress price.
  - The selling of securities is done at breakeven or for profit as the market stabilizes, aiming to reduce borrowing as soon as possible.
- **Subscription and Contribution:**
  - Units of CDMDF are subscribed by **Asset Management Companies (AMCs) of mutual**

**funds** and specified debt-oriented mutual fund schemes.

- AMCs of specified debt-oriented mutual fund schemes make a **one-time contribution equivalent to two basis points (bps)** of their assets under management (AUM) to support the functioning of CDMDF.

▪ **Tenure:**

- CDMDF will be launched as a **closed-ended scheme with an initial tenure of 15 years.**
- The possibility of extension lies at the discretion of the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in consultation with SEBI.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q. Which of the following is issued by registered foreign portfolio investors to overseas investors who want to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly? (2019)**

- (a) Certificate of Deposit
- (b) Commercial Paper
- (c) Promissory Note
- (d) Participatory Note

**Ans: (d)**

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## Seagrass Meadows

**For Prelims:** [Seagrass](#), [Carbon Sequestration](#), [Greenhouse gas emission](#), [Global warming](#), [Ocean currents](#), [United Nations Environment Programme](#), [Ocean acidification](#), [Gulf of Mannar](#), [Baltic Nations](#)

**For Mains:** Significance of Seagrass and Concerns Related to it.

**Source:** IE

### Why in News?

Scuba divers in Northern Germany are **extracting [seagrass](#) shoots to replant in barren areas**, aiming to **combat [climate change](#)** and **revive these [ocean carbon sinks](#)**.

### What are Seagrass Meadows?

▪ **About:**

- Seagrass meadows are composed of **flowering plants that grow in shallow coastal waters**, forming dense underwater carpets that can cover large areas.
- They thrive in areas where sunlight can penetrate the water, allowing them to undergo **[photosynthesis](#) for growth**.
  - Also, they typically grow in **sandy or muddy substrates**, where their roots can take hold and stabilize the plant.

▪ **Significance:**

- **Carbon Sequestration:** Though they cover **only 0.1% of the ocean floor**, these meadows are highly efficient carbon sinks, storing up to **18% of the world's oceanic**

## carbon.

- This helps **reduce [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and slow down [global warming](#).**
- **Water Quality Improvement:** They also **filter [pollutants](#) from the water**, trap sediments and prevent erosion, thereby improving **water clarity and quality**.
  - This benefits both marine life and human activities such as **[fishing](#), tourism and recreation**.
- **Habitat and Biodiversity:** They are among the most productive and diverse ecosystems on Earth, providing habitats and food for many marine animals, including **fish, turtles, dugongs, crabs and seahorses**.
- **Coastal Protection:** Seagrass beds act as natural barriers, protecting coastlines from erosion caused by **waves and [tidal currents](#)**.



### ▪ Concern:

- According to “**Out of the Blue: The Value of Seagrasses to the Environment and to People**” report of **[United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#)**, an estimated **7% of seagrass habitat is being lost worldwide each year**.
  - Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, **almost 30% of seagrass area across the globe has been lost**.
- The main causes of seagrass loss are:
  - **Coastal Development:** Construction of **ports and marinas** can destroy seagrass habitats or reduce their light availability.
  - **Pollution: Runoff of nutrients, chemicals and sediments** from agriculture, industry and urban areas can cause eutrophication, algal blooms and turbidity, which can smother or shade out seagrass plants.
  - **Climate Change: [Rising sea temperatures](#), sea level rise, [ocean acidification](#)** and extreme weather events can stress or damage seagrass plants and alter their distribution and growth.

### ▪ Seagrasses in India:

- In India, the major seagrass beds exist along the **coastline of [Gulf of Mannar](#) and [Palk Bay](#) regions on the east coast, [Gulf of Kachchh](#) region on the west coast, the [lagoons of islands in Lakshadweep](#) in the Arabian Sea and [Andaman and Nicobar Islands](#) in the Bay of Bengal.**

### ▪ Restoration Efforts:

- Seagrass restoration has been attempted in various regions, such as the **[Baltic Sea](#) in**

## Sulfur Dioxide Emission Norms

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Power has informed Lok Sabha that, for compliance with Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) emission norms, Thermal Power Plants are installing [Flue Gas Desulphurisation \(FGD\) equipment](#).

- The Ministry in September 2022 had extended the deadline for **Coal-Fired power plants** to install FGD to cut **sulphur emissions by two years**.

### What is the Categorisation of Power Plants for Installing FGD?

Category	Location/Area	Timelines for compliance
Category A	Within 10 km radius of National Capital Region (NCR) or cities having million plus population (as per <a href="#">2011 census of India</a> )	Upto 31st December 2024
Category B	Within 10 km radius of Critically Polluted Areas or Non-attainment cities (as defined by <a href="#">CPCB</a> )	Upto 31st December 2025
Category C	Other than those included in category A and B	Upto 31st December 2026

### What is Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD)?

- **About:**
  - FGD is the process of removing **sulfur compounds from the exhaust emissions of fossil-fueled** power stations.
  - This is done through the **addition of absorbents**, which can remove up to 95% of the sulphur dioxide from the flue gas.
  - Flue gas is the **material emitted when fossil fuels** such as coal, oil, natural **gas, or wood are burned** for heat or power.
- **Need for FGD in India:**
  - Indian cities have **some of the world's most polluted air**. India currently emits almost **twice the amount of SO<sub>2</sub>** than the next highest country, Russia.
  - Thermal utilities, which produce **75% of the country's power**, account for some 80% of industrial emissions of **sulphur and nitrous oxides**, which cause [Lung Diseases](#), acid rain and smog.
  - Every single day **delay in implementation of prescribed norms** and not installing the FGD system is causing huge health and economic damage to our society.
    - The high **levels of damaging SO<sub>2</sub> pollution in India are avoidable much sooner** as FGD systems have proved successful in reducing emission levels in China, which was responsible for the **highest level of SO<sub>2</sub> Pollution** in 2005.



## What is Sulfur Dioxide Pollution?

- **Source:**
    - The largest source of **SO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is the burning of fossil fuels** by power plants and other industrial facilities.
    - Smaller sources of SO<sub>2</sub> emissions **include** industrial processes such as **extracting metal from ore**, natural sources such as volcanoes, and locomotives, ships and other vehicles.
  - **Impact:**
    - Short-term exposures to SO<sub>2</sub> can harm the **human respiratory system** and make breathing difficult. People with asthma, particularly children, are sensitive to these effects of SO<sub>2</sub>.
    - The WHO has estimated that it causes **4.2 million deaths globally per year**.
    - SO<sub>2</sub> emissions that **lead to high concentrations of SO<sub>2</sub>** in the air generally also lead to the formation of other sulfur oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>).
    - SO<sub>x</sub> can react with other compounds in the atmosphere to form small particles. These particles contribute to [Particulate Matter \(PM\) pollution](#).
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## India Shares INDIA STACK with Papua New Guinea

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) of India** and the **Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) of Papua New Guinea** have taken a significant step towards digital transformation by signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to share [India Stack](#)**.

- Earlier in June 2023, India had already signed MoUs with four countries namely **Armenia, Sierra Leone, Suriname, and Antigua & Barbuda** to share India Stack, showcasing the growing interest and acceptance of the initiative on a global scale.

### What are the key highlights of the MoU between India and Papua New Guinea?

- The MoU facilitates the sharing of India Stack, to support identity, data, and payment services on a large scale.
- The MoU focuses on the **implementation of population-scale [Digital Public Infrastructure](#) and Transformational Platforms/projects to improve living standards and governance efficiency**.
- The collaboration seeks to **strengthen digital identity systems and digital payment mechanisms** for seamless transactions.

### What is India Stack?

- India Stack is a **set of APIs (Application programming interface)** that allows governments, businesses, startups, and developers to utilize a unique **digital Infrastructure** to solve India's hard problems towards **presence-less, paperless, and cashless service delivery**.
- India Stack is a **government-led initiative** that focuses on building a **robust digital infrastructure** to enable various **digital services across different sectors**.
  - The components of this collection are owned and maintained by different agencies.
- INDIA STACK aims to streamline and enhance **identity verification, data exchange, and digital payment processes** to make them more accessible and efficient for citizens.
- It includes **digital public goods**, which are digital resources and tools made available to the

public to support various digital services and initiatives.

- The key components of INDIA STACK include [Aadhaar](#) (unique biometric-based identification system), [Unified Payments Interface \(UPI\)](#) for instant digital payments, and [Digital Locker](#) for secure storage of personal documents.
- The vision of India Stack is not limited to one country (India); it can be applied to any nation, be it a developed one or an emerging one.



### Papua New Guinea:

- Papua New Guinea is an **island country** located in the **south-western Pacific**. It shares land borders with **Indonesia** and water border with **Australia, and the Solomon Islands**.
- It includes the **eastern half of New Guinea and many small offshore islands**.
- The capital is **Port Moresby**, Papua New Guinea is mainly **mountainous but has low-lying plains in southern New Guinea**.
- Papua New Guinea gained self-government in 1973 and full independence in 1975.



## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)**

1. Aadhaar card can be used as a proof of citizenship or domicile.
2. Once issued, Aadhaar number cannot be deactivated or omitted by the Issuing Authority.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (d)**

**Exp:**

- The Aadhaar platform helps service providers authenticate identity of residents electronically, in a safe and quick manner, making service delivery more cost effective and efficient. According to the Gol and UIDAI, Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship.
- However, UIDAI has also published a set of contingencies when the Aadhaar issued by it is liable for rejection. An Aadhaar with mixed or anomalous biometric information or multiple names in a

single name (like Urf or Alias) can be deactivated. Aadhaar can also get deactivated upon non-usage of the same for three consecutive years.

## Graded Response Action Plan

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas \(CAQM\)](#) has announced a revision **in the existing [Graded Response Action Plan \(GRAP\)](#)** to combat air pollution in the region.

- The revised GRAP contains **targeted actions that need to be taken** by the agencies responsible/ implementing agencies when [AQI \(Air Quality Index\)](#) of Delhi **goes beyond a certain threshold**.
- Earlier, research was published in the journal Nature titled- [“Machine learning-based country-level annual air pollutants exploration using Sentinel-5P and Google Earth Engine”](#), showing that, **during 2018-2021**, India witnessed the maximum levels of human-induced [Air Pollution](#).

### What is a Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)?

- **About:**
  - GRAP is a **set of emergency measures** that kick in to prevent further deterioration of air quality once **it reaches a certain threshold** in the Delhi-NCR region.
  - It was approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 after the Supreme Court’s order in the matter of ***M. C. Mehta vs. Union of India (2016)*** and notified in 2017.
- **Implementation:**
  - From 2021 onwards, the GRAP is being implemented by the **CAQM**.
    - Till 2020, the Supreme Court-appointed [Environment Pollution \(Prevention & Control\) Authority \(EPCA\)](#) used to order States to implement GRAP measures.
  - The EPCA was dissolved and replaced by the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** in 2020.
  - CAQM relies on air quality and **meteorological forecasts** by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)** and the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.
- **Revision:**
  - **Stage I (Poor Air Quality - AQI 201-300):** Enforce NGT / Hon'ble SC's order on over aged diesel / petrol vehicles.
  - **Stage II (Very Poor- AQI 301-400):** Targeted actions to **combat air pollution at identified hotspots** in the region. Regulated operations of DG (Diesel Generators) have been set across all sectors in the NCR.
  - **Stage III ('Severe'- AQI 401-450):** Impose strict restrictions on **BS III petrol** and **BS IV diesel four-wheelers** in certain areas and may suspend physical classes in schools for primary grade children up to Class 5.
  - **Stage IV (Severe Plus- AQI greater than 450):** When the AQI exceeds 450, four-wheelers registered outside Delhi, except for electric vehicles, CNG vehicles, and BS-VI diesel vehicles and vehicle carrying essential commodity, **will not be allowed to enter the city**.

Note: An **AQI** is a number used by **government agencies** to measure the **air pollution levels and communicate** it to the population. As the AQI increases, it means that a **large percentage of the**

population will experience severe adverse health effects.

## What are the Government Initiatives to Combat Air Pollution?

- [Graded Response Action Plan \(Delhi\)](#)
- [Polluter Pay principle](#)
- [Smog Tower](#)
- [Tallest Air Purifier](#)
- [National Clean Air Programme \(NCAP\)](#)
- [BS-VI vehicles](#)
- [New Commission for Air Quality Management](#)
- [Turbo Happy Seeder \(THS\)](#)
- [Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research \(SAFAR\)](#)
- [Dashboard for Monitoring Air Quality](#)
- [National Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#)
- [Air \(Prevention and Control of Pollution\) Act, 1981](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana \(PMUY\)](#)

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## Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023** was passed in Lok Sabha during the monsoon session and aims at giving a boost to **Ease of Living and [Ease of Doing Business](#)**.

### What is the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023?

- **About:**
  - The Bill proposes to **amend 183 provisions in 42 Central Acts administered by 19 Ministries/Departments**, covering various domains such as environment, agriculture, media, industry, trade, information technology, copyright, motor vehicles, cinematography, food safety, etc.
  - The main objective of the Bill is to **decriminalize minor offences** that do not involve any harm to the **public interest or national security** and replace them with civil penalties or administrative actions.
- **Background:**
  - The Bill was introduced in **Lok Sabha on 22nd December 2022** and referred to the **Joint Committee of Parliament**.
- **Need:**
  - Rationalize criminal provisions to **reduce undue pressure on the justice system**.
  - Address **technical and procedural defaults** without imposing severe penalties.
  - Establish a balanced approach between the **severity of offence and prescribed punishment**.
  - Boost the **growth of businesses by eliminating barriers** and promoting a **conductive legal environment**.
- **Key Features of the Bill:**
  - The Bill seeks to remove **imprisonment clauses and/or fines in some provisions and**

**convert them into penalties in some others.**

- The penalties will be determined by **adjudicating officers** appointed by the respective Ministries/Departments.
- The Bill also introduces **compounding of offences in some provisions**, which means that the offenders can settle their cases by **paying a certain amount without going through a court trial.**
- The Bill provides for a periodic **revision of fines and penalties every three years, with an increase of 10% of the minimum amount for various offences in the specified Acts.**
- The Bill removes all offences and penalties under the **Indian Post Office Act, of 1898**, which is considered to be obsolete and **irrelevant in the present context.**
- **Benefits:**
  - By introducing administrative adjudication mechanisms, the **Bill reduces pressure on the justice system**, helps in reducing **case pendency**, and facilitates a more efficient and effective justice dispensation.
  - The Bill will foster **trust-based governance** by ensuring that citizens, businesses, and government departments **operate without fear of imprisonment for minor**, technical or procedural defaults.
- **Concerns:**
  - The Jan Vishwas Bill replaces imprisonment with fines or penalties, which is **not enough for decriminalization.**
  - Experts argue that the Bill represents a '**quasi-decriminalization**', and more efforts are needed to institutionalize true decriminalization.
  - Concerns were raised about the **appointment of adjudicating officers** under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, **questioning their technical competence for such legal proceedings.**

## What are the Key Laws Covered in the Bill?

- [The Indian Forest Act, 1927.](#)
  - [The Air \(Prevention and Control of Pollution\) Act, 1981.](#)
  - [The Information Technology Act, 2000.](#)
  - [The Environment \(Protection\) Act, 1986.](#)
  - [The Copyright Act, 1957.](#)
  - [The Patents Act, 1970.](#)
  - [The Railways Act, 1989.](#)
  - [The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.](#)
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## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### Dongria Kondh Tribe

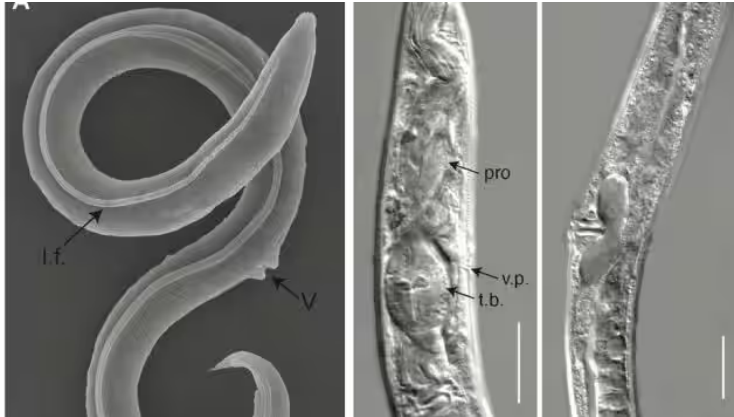
The **Niyamgiri Hills in Odisha**, home to the **Dongria Kondh tribe**, face potential threats due to proposed amendments to the [Forest \(Conservation\) Act, 1980](#), raising concerns about the protection of their **ancestral land and cultural identity.**

- The Dongria Kondh tribe is **one of the 13 PVTGs** in Odisha, India.
- The proposed [Forest Conservation \(Amendment\) Bill, 2023](#), seeks to alter the **definition of 'forest' set by the Supreme Court of India in 1996.**
- According to the amendment, the Forest Conservation Act, of 2023, will apply only to notified '**forest**' areas as per the [Indian Forest Act, 1927](#), and government records from **October 25, 1980, onwards.**
  - About **95% of Niyamgiri land is not classified as 'forest'** in government records.

- The amendment may potentially open a window for diverting **land not classified as 'forest' in government records** to other purposes, which could impact the Niyamgiri hill range and other forest areas in Odisha.

Read more: [Dongria Kondh tribe](#), [Forest Conservation Amendment Bill 2023](#) , [Major Tribes in India](#)

## 46,000-Year-Old Worms and Cryptobiosis



Scientists found and revived **two frozen microscopic nematodes** in Siberia five years ago. A recent study published in the *journal PLOS Genetics* revealed key findings about these ancient organisms, showing that **these worms are 46,000 years old**. The study provides valuable insights into the incredible phenomenon of **cryptobiosis**.

- Cryptobiosis is a **state of extreme inactivity** in response to adverse environmental conditions. In the cryptobiotic state:
  - **All metabolic procedures stop**, preventing **reproduction, development, and repair**.
  - Organisms can **survive extreme conditions by entering a dormant state** where they **halt their life processes** surviving between life and death.
- The study significantly increases the documented cryptobiosis period in **nematodes by tens of thousands of years**.
  - Ancient worms' remarkable ability to survive in a dormant state has profound implications for evolutionary studies and understanding species adaptation, shedding light on how **animals endure habitat changes due to [climate change](#)**.

## Nyaya Vikas Portal

Recently, the Union Minister of Law and Justice provided valuable insights into the [Nyaya Vikas Portal](#) during a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

- Nyaya Vikas is an online monitoring system developed with the technical expertise of the **National Remote Sensing Centre of ISRO**.
  - To leverage space technology effectively, the **Nyaya Vikas Web Portal and mobile app were launched in 2018**, providing efficient and real-time monitoring of infrastructural projects related to judiciary.
- Other initiatives Targeted to reform the Indian Judiciary include:
  - [AI based SUPACE Portal](#)
  - [Centrally Sponsored Scheme \(CSS\) for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities](#).

Read more: [Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary](#)

## World Nature Conservation Day with Mission-LiFE

**World Nature Conservation Day** is observed annually on **July 28 annually with an aim** to preserve **natural resources**, [biodiversity](#) and **ecology** across all regions.

- The National Zoological Park, New Delhi commemorated **World Nature Conservation Day** linking it with the goals of [Mission-LiFE](#).
- At UNFCCC COP26, India's Prime Minister introduced **Mission LiFE**, aiming to prioritize individual behaviors in global climate action.
  - LiFE seeks to **shift from the wasteful 'use-and-dispose' economy** to a sustainable [circular economy](#) based on mindful and intentional consumption.
- Theme for World Nature Conversation Day 2023 is '**Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet**'

Read more: [Mission-LiFE](#)

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## SMILE-75 Scheme

Recently, the **Minister of State for Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** provided valuable insights into the SMILE-75 Initiative during a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

- **The umbrella scheme “SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprises”** also includes sub-scheme - 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging'.
- The objective of SMILE- 75 is to make Indian cities/town and municipal areas **begging-free and make a strategy for comprehensive rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of begging** through the coordinated action of various stakeholders.
- According to **Census 2011**, India has **over 4 lakh beggars**. **West Bengal** tops the chart followed by **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** at number two and three respectively.

Read more: [SMILE-75 Scheme](#), [Census in India](#)

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