



# Amazon Deforestation

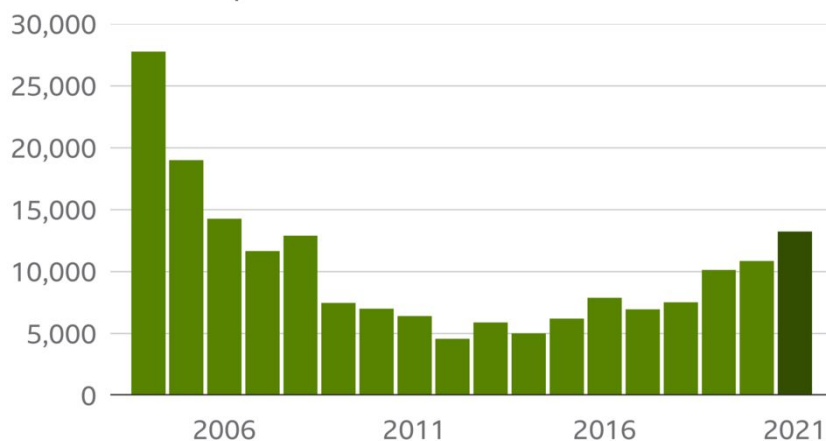
## Why in News

Recently, it was found that the **area deforested in Brazil's Amazon** reached a 15-year high after a 22% jump from the prior year (2020).

- Earlier, a study showed that [Amazon Forests have started emitting Carbon dioxide \(CO<sub>2</sub>\)](#) instead of absorbing it.
- Over time, global climate change and more deforestation will likely **lead to increased temperatures and changing rain patterns** in the Amazon, which will undoubtedly affect the region's forests, water availability, biodiversity, agriculture, and human health.

## // Amazon deforestation highest since 2006

Annual rate in square kilometres



Annual figures August to July

## Key Points

### ▪ Drivers of Deforestation in the Amazon:

#### ◦ Cattle Ranching:

- One of the **leading causes of deforestation** in the Amazon Rainforest is linked to beef consumption.
- **Vast areas of forest are cleared by cutting down trees** and burning the forest down in order to create pasture land for grazing cattle.
- **Brazil is a major supplier of beef to countries** like the United States and China, exporting 1.82 million tons in 2019 alone.

#### ◦ Small-Scale Agriculture:

- It has long been touted as a major driver of deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest.

- As with ranching, **small-scale agriculture requires the forest** to be “slashed and burned” to clear the ground for crops and grazing of various types.

- **Fires:**

- Unlike other types of forests, the Amazon did not evolve to burn.
- And in the Amazon basin, **fires can actually be spurred by deforestation**. As their name suggests, rainforests contain high levels of moisture, which helps buffer them from fire.

- **Industrial Agriculture Operations:**

- **Industrial agriculture operations are becoming increasingly common** in the Amazon Rainforest.

- **Other Reasons:**

- **Mining operations**, for sought-after minerals such as gold, account for further damage to the Amazon forest.
- **Increased government incentives** in the form of loans and infrastructure spending, including roads and dams.

- **Amazon Rainforests:**

- These are the **world's largest tropical rainforest** occupying the drainage basin of the Amazon River and its tributaries in northern South America.

- **Tropical forests are closed-canopy forests** growing within 28 degrees north or south of the equator.
- They are **very wet places**, receiving more than 200 cm rainfall per year, either seasonally or throughout the year.
- **Temperatures are uniformly high** - between 20°C and 35°C.
- Such forests are found in Asia, Australia, Africa, South America, Central America, Mexico and on many of the Pacific Islands.

- The Amazon is a vast biome that **spans eight rapidly developing** countries—Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname—and French Guiana, an overseas territory of France.

- The **Amazon rainforests cover about 80% of the Amazon basin** and they are **home to nearly a fifth of the world's land species** and is also home to about 30 million people including hundreds of indigenous groups and several isolated tribes.

- The **Amazon basin is huge** with an area covering over 6 million square kilometres, it is nearly twice the size of India.
- The basin produces about **20% of the world's flow of freshwater** into the oceans.

- **Comprising about 40% of Brazil's total area**, it is bounded by the Guiana Highlands to the north, the Andes Mountains to the west, the Brazilian central plateau to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east.



▪ **Initiatives to tackle Deforestation:**

- Brazil was among a **number of nations who promised to end and reverse deforestation** by 2030 during the **COP26 climate summit**.
- **LEAF (Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance) Coalition** was announced at the Leaders Summit on Climate, 2021.
- **REDD+ initiatives:** It is one of the **climate change mitigation options** in developing countries for conservation of forest carbon stock, sustainable management of forests and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

**Source: TH**

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