



## World Environment Day 2024

**For Prelims:** [World Environment Day](#), United Nations Assembly, [Stockholm Conference](#), COP, NAP, [LiFE Movement](#).

**For Mains:** World Environment Day, Need to Conserve Environment and Related Initiatives

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

World Environment Day is celebrated on **5<sup>th</sup> June** every year to encourage awareness and environmental protection.

- In a remarkable initiative **to combat deforestation and restore biodiversity**, two environmentalists have spearheaded the **creation of India's first biospheres within tiger reserves**.

### India's First Biosphere in a Tiger Reserve

- Recently two environmentalists, **Jai Dhar Gupta** and **Vijay Dhasmana** created **India's first biosphere** in a **tiger reserve**, called the **Rajaji Raghathi Biosphere (RRB)** within the [Rajaji National Park](#) in Uttarakhand.
- The biosphere is a **35-acre private forest initiative** aimed at identifying and **reviving rare and endangered species of native trees** while protecting the area from poachers and mining.
- The land earmarked for RRB was previously barren and in a state of degradation.
- They are also developing a second biosphere above the **Koyna River** in the buffer zone of the **Sahyadri Tiger Reserve** near Pune, Maharashtra, along the [Western Ghats](#).

### 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' Campaign

- It was launched by the Acting Prime Minister of India on World Environment Day on 5th June 2024 by planting a Peepal tree at Buddha Jayanti Park in Delhi.
- He urged the country to protect Mother Nature by making sustainable lifestyle choices and contributing in making our planet better.

### What are the Key Facts About World Environment Day?

- **About:**
  - The [United Nations Assembly](#) established **World Environment Day** in **1972**, which was the first day of the [Stockholm Conference](#) on the human environment.

- **World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated every year with a specific theme and slogan that focuses on the major environmental issues of that time.**
  - WED 2024 is hosted by **Saudi Arabia**.
  - **India** hosted the 45<sup>th</sup> celebration of World Environment Day in 2018 under the **theme 'Beat Plastic Pollution'**.
- WED celebration in 2021 kicked off the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration \(2021-2030\)](#) which is a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the seas.
- **The theme for 2024:**
  - **Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience**
  - Year 2024 also marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [UN Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#).
  - **Significance of Land Restoration:**
    - **Reverses Environmental Damage:** Combats land degradation, drought, and desertification.
    - **High Return on Investment:** Each dollar invested can yield up to USD 30 in benefits from healthy ecosystems.
    - **Boosts Communities:** Creates jobs, reduces poverty, and improves livelihoods.
    - **Strengthens Resilience:** Helps communities better withstand extreme weather events.
    - **Combats Climate Change:** Increases carbon storage in soil and slows the pace of warming.
    - **Protects Biodiversity:** Restoring just 15% of degraded land could prevent a significant portion of expected species extinction.

## What is India's Contribution Towards Environmental Sustainability?

- [Mission LiFE](#)
- [National Mission for Green India \(GIM\)](#): It aims to increase forest/tree cover on 5 million hectares of land and improve the quality of forest/tree cover on another 5 million hectares.
- [National Afforestation Programme \(NAP\)](#): Under this, 21.47 million hectares of land have been afforested as of 2020.
- [National Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
- **Nagar Van Yojana (Urban Forest Scheme)**: It focuses on developing mini urban forests or "Nagar Vans" within cities and towns.
- **School Nursery Yojana**: It encourages schools to develop their own nurseries.
- [CAMPA Funds](#): The **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)** has been established to promote afforestation and regeneration activities etc.
  - These programs promote tree plantation on waste, vacant, and barren lands.
- [Wetland Conservation](#):
  - India expanded its **Ramsar Site** count to **80** in January 2024 by designating new sites in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
    - 11 wetlands were added in August 2022 to commemorate India's 75th Independence anniversary.
  - The **Wetlands of India Portal** serves as a knowledge hub for wetland managers and stakeholders, providing valuable information and resources.
- **Forest and Wildlife Conservation:**
  - India ranks **third** globally in **net forest area gain** over the past 15 years.
  - The **Forest Cover** of India is **7,13,789 sq. km**, which is 21.71% of the total geographical area of the country, as per the [India State of Forest Report \(ISFR\) 2021](#).
  - India celebrated **50 years of Project Tiger** and **30 years of Project Elephant**, demonstrating its commitment to species conservation.
  - The '[Green Credit Program](#)' has been introduced to incentivize tree plantation and restoration of degraded forest lands, contributing to climate action initiatives.
- **Mangrove Restoration:**
  - The Government of India has implemented **promotional and regulatory measures** to protect and enhance [mangrove forests](#) in coastal States/Union Territories.
  - A Central Sector Scheme called '**Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs**' is being implemented under the **National Coastal Mission Programme**.

- The [Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes \(MISHTI\)](#) was announced in the [Union Budget 2023-24](#) to promote and conserve mangroves.
- **Ban on Single-use Plastic:**
  - The Government has introduced amendments to the [Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016](#), through the **Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2024**.
  - The rules prohibit the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of identified **single-use plastic (SUP)**.
- **Push to Renewable Energy:**
  - **The National Green Hydrogen Mission** was launched in January 2023 with a Rs 19,744 crore investment, will be a game-changer for India's clean energy future.
  - The mission aims to make India a **self-reliant (Aatma Nirbhar) leader in green hydrogen production and technology**.
  - This green push will significantly **reduce dependence on fossil fuels, decarbonize the economy**, and inspire a global clean energy transition.
- **Global Initiatives of India:**
  - India is a member of the **Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE)** and the Steering Committee of the **International Resource Panel (IRP)**.
    - These platforms advocate for a global and just [circular economy](#) transition and sustainable natural resource management.
  - The sixth Assembly of the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#) was hosted in New **Delhi** on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023, with participation from ministers and delegates from **116 Member** and Signatory countries.

## Report of Ministry of Coal on Environment Day

- Coal and Lignite PSUs under the **Ministry of Coal** are **implementing measures to reclaim mined-out areas** through **extensive plantation efforts** in and around coal-bearing regions.
- The Ministry of Coal has released a **report** titled "**Greening Initiative in Coal & Lignite PSUs**" highlighting the efforts of PSUs in restoring and rejuvenating mined-out lands.
  - The report underscores the significant role that the **coal sector** can play in advancing the goals of [land restoration](#) and promoting **environmental sustainability**.
  - Coal/Lignite PSUs have created a **green cover** of about 50,000 hectares in and around coal mining regions. This includes **reclaiming de-coaled land, and planting trees within mine leaseholds**, and outside leaseholds, which is estimated to create a **carbon sink** potential of around 2.5 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year.
  - The initiative aims to boost India's green cover to support achieving the [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#) target of creating a carbon sink of 2.5 to 3.0 billion tonnes by 2030.

## AQ-AIMS and Air-Pravah App

On World Environment Day, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** launched a significant step towards better air quality awareness and monitoring in India.

- **AQ-AIMS (Indigenous Air Quality Monitoring System):** This cost-effective, Indian-made system replaces expensive, complex traditional methods.
- **Air-Pravah App:** This mobile app provides **real-time [Air Quality Index \(AQI\) data](#)**, along with features like:
  - Easy setup
  - Live data visualisation
  - Unit conversions for easy understanding
  - AQI comparisons over time or location
  - Multi-device support for convenient access
  - Data analysis tools for deeper insights
  - Remote monitoring for centralised data management
  - Automatic updates for the latest information
- **Benefits:**

- Affordable and user-friendly air quality monitoring.
- Faster environmental clearances with accurate data.
- Potential for improved public health through informed decisions (e.g., wearing masks during high pollution).

▪ **Technical Details:**

- AQ-AIMS is validated for monitoring PM (various sizes), SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, CO, CO<sub>2</sub>, temperature, and humidity.
- Developed through a collaborative effort between C-DAC Kolkata, TeXMIN (ISM Dhanbad), and JM Envirolab Pvt Ltd under the 'AgriEnlcs' program.

**Drishti Mains Question:**

Explain India's challenges and opportunities in land restoration. Suggest policy measures to achieve UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration goals.

**UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**Prelims**

**Q. The term 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of (2016)**

- (a) pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East
- (b) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change
- (c) capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- (d) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)**

1. The Sustainable Development Goals were first proposed in 1972 by a global think tank called the 'Club of Rome'.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals have to be achieved by 2030.

**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: (b)**

**Mains**

**Q.** Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference? **(2021)**

**Q.** Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is the sine qua non to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” Comment on the progress made in India in this regard. **(2018)**

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