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ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

**Science
Reporter**



MK Yadav Sir

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INDIA-KLEMS DATABASE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Were 8 crore new jobs created in three years?

Prime Minister Modi, based on the India KLEMS database, claimed that India created 'eight crore new jobs in the last three to four years'. However, analyses are questioning the methodology used to estimate these numbers. They argue that little meaningful employment was created in these years.

[illegible]

Context: Prime Minister of India, based on the India-KLEMS database, claimed that India created “eight crore new jobs in the last three to four years”.

India-KLEMS Database

- **KLEMS Framework:** KLEMS stands for Capital (K), Labour (L), Energy (E), Material (M), and Services (S).
- **About:** This project started in 2009 as an academic exercise financed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- **From:** 2022, the RBI began hosting the India-KLEMS database
- **Purpose:** The framework is used to measure industry-level "total factor productivity" (TFP), which mainstream economists consider as a measure of input efficiency in producing output.
- **Objective:** The KLEMS framework is not to produce employment data; employment figures are merely inputs into the database's modelling framework.
- **Data Collection:** The RBI does not directly collect data on any inputs, including employment. Instead, it sources data from official sources like the Central Statistics Office, Census of India, Annual Survey of Industries, and Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS).

The method in India-KLEMS

- **Borrowed Data:** India-KLEMS uses employment data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), focusing on the Worker Population Ratio (WPR) rather than the absolute number of workers.
- **Estimation Method:** To estimate the number of workers, the WPR is multiplied by the total population, but this leads to challenges as there is no official population figure for India post-2011.
- **Adopted Method:** India-KLEMS used population estimates from the Economic Survey (ES) 2021-22 for 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20, which assumed population growth rates were the same as between 2001 and 2011.
- **Calculation:** The WPRs were multiplied by these ES-projected populations to estimate the number of workers for the respective years.
- **Different Source:** For 2020-21 to 2023-24, India-KLEMS used population projections from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), based on demographic models including fertility and mortality rates.

OTTs under Telecom Act? Despite govt's denial, telcos have a different view

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 21

LAST YEAR, when the government had released a fresh version of the Telecommunications Act, there was one key definition that had concerned the industry. The word was telecommunication services, and tech companies felt the way it was described was broad enough to regulate over-the-top (OTT) communication services like WhatsApp and Google Meet, needing them to get an authorisation from the government.

This had sparked fears of government overreach. To calm nerves, the then telecom Minister publicly assured that OTTs would not fall under the definition of telecom services. But, privately, tech companies remained sceptical — feeling that assurances made by the government through media statements did not have the same sanctity as the legal word.

Now, it seems they were right to be concerned. Eight months after the law was passed in Parliament, telecom operators Jio, Airtel, Vi and a lobby group which represents them, have all interpreted that the definition of telecommunication services is in fact broad enough to regulate OTT services. In comments sent to the telecom regulator TRAI for a consultation that will operationalise a part of the new Act, they have asked OTT platforms to require authorisation from the government, as part of what they are pitching as 'same service, same rules'.

The initial concern has morphed into confusion and all eyes are now on TRAI — whether or not it recommends that OTT platforms should be treated at par with telecom companies.

Telcos assertion on inclusion of OTTs

In essence, the core argument of telecom companies is this: they spend big money on purchasing spectrum, setting up the physical infrastructure for offering services and need to acquire a licence from the government. OTTs like WhatsApp also offer calling and messaging functions, but they don't have to purchase spectrum

'DEFINITION BROAD ENOUGH TO REGULATE OTT'



or set up physical infrastructure like telcos have to. This, they claim, disadvantages them, especially when most communication has moved online.

In its submission to the TRAI's consultation paper on service authorisations, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents the three telecom companies Jio, Airtel and Vi, said: "As per our understanding, OTT Communication services are covered under the new Telecom Act as an access service. ... We reiterate our view that the players providing OTT communication services should be brought under the licensing framework."

To address the issues of non-level playing field and ensure adoption of principles of "Same Service Same Rule", these competing and substitutable services should be included under Access Services authorisation under the new framework."

Reliance Jio said that the definition of 'message' and telecom service includes all forms of telecommunication services including the communication services provided over the top. "OTT communication service providers are equivalent to access service providers," Jio said.

Bharti Airtel said that the Telecom Act has a broad definition of 'telecommunications', which includes "any sign, signal, writing, text, image, sound, video, data stream, intelligence or information sent through telecommunication". "It leaves ample room for the inclusion and regulation of OTT communication services under the Act."

Vi said that while there is no need for a new authorisation, "it would be prudent to increase the scope of access services authorisation to include OTT communication services, which as per our understanding, are covered under the new Telecom Act".

TELECOM OPERATORS
Jio, Airtel, Vi and a lobby group which represents them, have all interpreted that the definition of telecommunication services is in fact broad enough to regulate over-the-top (OTT) services

Where telcos and government diverge

In the Act, telecom services have been defined as: "transmission, emission or reception of any messages, by wire, radio, optical or other electro-magnetic systems, whether or not such messages have been subjected to re-arrangement, computation or other processes by any means in the course of their transmission, emission or reception". And 'messages' has been further defined as "any sign, signal, writing, text, image, sound, video, data stream, intelligence or information sent through telecommunication".

When the Act was tabled in Parliament last year, various stakeholders had raised concerns that this particular definition was broad enough to potentially include OTT communication platforms.

However, former telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had, at the time, clarified publicly to the media that OTTs are not under the ambit of the law.

While telecom companies say that not imposing similar rules on OTT platforms was putting them at an economic disadvantage, the argument for not including OTT platforms in the telecom ambit stems from a largely human rights issue, and some technological limitations — if a WhatsApp call was to be treated at par with a regular voice call, the company would have to enable monitoring of these calls because they could be subject to interception requests from the government.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Context: The Cellular Operators Association of India confirmed that over-the-top (OTT) communication platforms like WhatsApp are classified as access services under the Telecommunications Act, 2023.

Telecommunications Act, 2023

- **Definitions:** It clearly defines various terminologies related to the implementation of the Act thereby reducing uncertainties and improving investor confidence and is a step towards ease of doing business.
- **Objective:** An Act to amend and consolidate the law relating to development, expansion and operation of telecommunication services and telecommunication networks; assignment of spectrum.
- **Replace:** The Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933. The Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950.
 - It also amends the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997.
- **Definition of a Message:** It defines a message broadly as any form of communication, including signs, signals, text, images, sounds, video, and data streams sent via telecommunication.
 - **OTT Services Under Regulation:** Due to this broad definition, there is a view that Over-The-Top (OTT) services might fall under the Act's purview, similar to traditional telecom services.
 - **Telecom Providers' Stance:** Major telecom service providers like Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea argue for including OTT services under the same licensing requirements, citing the similarities in the services provided.
 - **Advocacy for Regulation:** The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has supported this stance in their feedback on TRAI's consultation paper, advocating for the regulation of OTT communication services.
- **Telecommunication standards:** Telecom is a global industry. To ensure national security and promote India's technology developers, the Act lays down powers to set standards and conformity assessment measures for telecommunication services, telecommunication networks, telecommunication security, etc.
- **National Security and Public safety:** The Act provides strong provisions to take necessary measures for national security and public safety.

An unfortunate resemblance: Why conservation evades the depleting Mettukurinji of Western Ghats

Context: The depleting Mettukurinji of the Western Ghats faces inadequate conservation efforts, highlighting a troubling resemblance in the challenges to its preservation.

Neelakurinji

- **About:** It is a shrub of the Acanthaceae family that famously blooms once every 12 years.
- These blossoms, referred to locally as Mettukurinji (*Strobilanthes sessilis*).
- **Geographical Range:** It is endemic to the Western Ghats, covering the slopes of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.
 - **Regional Distribution:** The Topli Karvy is found more in the northern section of the Western Ghats in Maharashtra.
- **Scientific Name:** *Strobilanthes kunthiana*.
- **Related Species:** The Topli Karvy (*Strobilanthes sessilis*), the Karvy (*Strobilanthes callosa*), and the Kurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) all belong to the *Strobilanthes* genus.
- **Nilgiri Hills:** They are seen mostly on the Nilgiri hills, which even got its name from the flowers — 'neela', meaning blue, and 'kurinji', referring to the flowers.
- **Diversity in India:** India is the hotspot for the highest diversity of *Strobilanthes*, accommodating over 160 species, of which 72 are endemic to the Sahyadris.
- **Similarity** *Strobilanthes sessilis* is a ravishing impression of *Strobilanthes kunthiana* (Neelakurinji) with perplexingly similar floral hues as well as morphology. Both these species are identical to the naked eye.



Ecological Benefits

- These species offer several benefits, including drought tolerance, nutrient storage, improved soil aggregation, and prevention of soil erosion with extensive topsoil coverage during rainfall.
- The loss of these plants could lead to chaos and irreversible ecological damage to montane terrains.

PM begins Poland visit, says it will help forge more vibrant relations

It is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 45 years; Modi interacts with the Indian diaspora in Warsaw; pays homage to Jam Saheb of Nawanagar at his memorial and to Indian and Polish soldiers who fought in the Second World War

Dinakar Peri
WARSAW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Warsaw on Wednesday, the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland in 45 years. Mr. Modi expressed confidence that the visit will serve as a "natural continuation of extensive contacts" between the two countries and help create the foundation for stronger and more vibrant relations in the years ahead. He will visit Ukraine next.

"My visit to Poland comes as we mark 70 years of our diplomatic relations. Poland is a key economic partner in Central Europe. Our mutual commitment to democracy and pluralism further reinforces our relationship. I look forward to meeting my friend Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Andrzej Duda to further advance our partnership. I will also engage with the members of the vibrant Indian community in Poland," Mr. Modi said in a statement before he embarked for Poland.



Warm welcome: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Władysław T. Bartoszewski on his arrival in Warsaw on Wednesday. Aie

Mr. Modi landed in Warsaw around 2 p.m. and was welcomed by members of the Indian community as he arrived at the hotel. There was a *Garbha* performance by an Indo-Polish group. One community member, Sahiba Patni, an entrepreneur based in London, flew down just to see Mr. Modi.

In his first engagement, Mr. Modi laid a wreath at the memorial to Jam Saheb

Dipvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja of Nawanagar, Gujarat who provided sanctuary to over 1,000 Polish students in the 1940s. In his honour, a square in the heart of Warsaw has been named "Dobrego Maharadzy" or "Good Maharaja Square".

Mr. Modi later paid homage at the monument for the Battle of Monte Cassino. The monument honours Indian and Polish

battles fought and won by the Polish forces (as part of the larger Allied powers) in Italy against the Axis forces, said Krzysztof Iwanek, an Indologist and Asia Coordinator at the Warsaw-based Foundation Institute for Eastern Studies. "It is remembered as one of the glorious moments in the history of Polish military. Altogether, I think it is a good place for India's PM to pay his respects," he told *The Hindu*.

On the significance of Mr. Modi's visit to Poland, Mr. Iwanek observed that this visit, as he understands, will have main two angles. "New Delhi's balancing act between the West and Russia (as PM

Modi visited Russia recently and will visit Ukraine after Poland)," he said. "As far as the second aspect is concerned, I would hope that opportunities for deepening trade and investments will be discussed, especially with Poland being a part of the EU, and the EU being currently in negotiations with India regarding a possible investment deal and a separate FTA deal," he added.

Context: The Prime Minister of India arrived in Poland, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in 45 years.

India-Poland Relations

- **Political Relations:** Diplomatic relations were initiated in 1954, followed by the opening of the Indian Embassy in Warsaw in 1957. The two nations shared similar ideological views, rooted in their mutual opposition to colonialism, imperialism, and racism.
- **Economic & commercial Relations:** Poland remains India's largest trading and investment partner in Central and Eastern Europe. Between 2013 and 2023, the total bilateral trade with Poland has grown by 192%, rising from US\$1.95 billion in 2013 to US\$5.72 billion in 2023.
- **Mining/Energy Sector:** Poland's expertise in clean coal technologies and intelligent mining has significantly contributed to India's mining and power sectors, with collaborative efforts formalized through a 2019 MoU.
- **Agro-food Processing:** Poland's advanced food processing technologies are well-suited for participation in India's Mega Food Parks, supported by a Joint Working Group on Food Processing.
- **IT and ICT:** Indian and Polish IT companies complement each other, with many Indian firms, including Infosys and HCL, using Poland as a hub for European operations.
- **Cultural and Educational Relations:** Poland has a strong Indology tradition with early Sanskrit studies and prominent Indology departments, supported by recent ICCR initiatives and Indian professor appointments.
 - Yoga has flourished in Poland for over a century with 300,000 practitioners and numerous centers, and the International Day of Yoga is widely celebrated.

- **Consular Relations:** Since January 2018, India has an Honorary Consulate in Wrocław. In addition to the Polish Embassy in New Delhi and the Consulate General in Mumbai, Poland has two Honorary Consulates in Kolkata and Bengaluru.
- **Indian Community:** Estimated at approximately 25,000, the Indian community in Poland consists of traders who came after the collapse of communism and professionals working with multinational and Indian companies and software/IT businesses.

WHY MALAYSIA CHANGED TACK ON ITS 'ORANGUTAN DIPLOMACY'?

ALIND CHAUHAN

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 21

MALAYSIA'S PLANTATION and Commodities Minister Johari Ghani on August 18 tweaked his earlier proposal of sending critically endangered orangutans as gifts to palm oil-purchasing countries. The new proposal will see importers of Malaysian palm oil being offered to "sponsor" one or more orangutans, the funds from which will be used for the apes' conservation within Malaysia. Ghani revised the policy after facing widespread criticism from wildlife conservationists, who called it "obscene" and "repugnant".



Orangutans in Malaysia. Reuters

This announcement came not long after the European Union banned the import of goods linked to deforestation.

'Orangutan diplomacy'

Ghani first announced his plans to gift orangutans to palm oil-buying countries in May this year, saying the policy was inspired by China's "panda diplomacy" — the practice of sending pandas from China to other countries as a diplomatic tool.

Malaysia, the world's second-largest palm oil producer, has been under immense pressure to make its palm oil industry more sustainable. The industry has been linked to deforestation, which is behind the loss of habitat for orangutans, and the primary reason they are at risk today. These apes, whose population currently stands at 1.2 lakh, are found in the rainforests of the islands of Borneo and Sumatra — shared by Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei.

With his proposed "orangutan diplomacy", Ghani wanted to alleviate concerns regarding the impact of palm oil production on orangutans. While making his policy public, the minister said, "Malaysia must not take a defensive stance on palm oil... Instead, we have to show the world that Malaysia is a producer of sustainable palm oil and is committed to safeguard forests as well as environmental sustainability."

The criticism

Animal welfare groups severely criticised Malaysia's initial strategy, saying it was hypocritical to destroy forests (for palm oil production) where orangutans live, and give them as gifts in exchange for "getting favours" from trading countries.

"Protecting the forest, which is the natural habitat of orangutans, is the most important step that needs to be taken," the organisation Justice for Wildlife Malaysia told *The Guardian*.

In an interview with CNN in May, Stuart Pimm, chair of conservation ecology at Duke University, said that there was a huge difference between Malaysia's proposed "orangutan diplomacy" and China's "panda diplomacy". "China has state-of-the-art facilities for pandas and more importantly, has established protected areas that safeguard wild panda populations. What Malaysia's government is proposing is hardly anything comparable," he said.

Conservation programmes under the revised scheme, according to Ghani, will include "collaborating with a team of experts, to monitor the presence, safety and condition of these wild animals".

Context: Malaysia's Plantation and Commodities Minister revised his earlier proposal of gifting critically endangered orangutans to palm oil-purchasing countries.

Orangutan

- **About:** These are the largest tree-dwelling mammals, with arms significantly longer than their legs, adapted for life in the trees.
- **Meaning:** The name "orangutan" translates to "man of the forest" in Malay, reflecting their close association with forest environments.
- **Population:** 120,000
- **Behavior:** In their lowland forest habitats, orangutans are solitary animals, leading mostly independent lives.
- **Habitat:** Orangutans are native to the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the Malaysian and Indonesian regions of Borneo.
- **Nesting Habits:** They build nests in trees from vegetation to sleep at night and rest during the day.
- **Conservation Status:** IUCN - Critically Endangered.

Orangutan Diplomacy

- **About:** Malaysia is inviting countries that buy its palm oil to adopt orangutans but leave them in their natural habitat.
- **Inspired by:** China's "panda diplomacy."
- Malaysia, the world's second-largest palm oil producer, has been under immense pressure to make its palm oil industry more sustainable.

'WHO investigating suspected new polio strain in Meghalaya'

Health Department officials in Meghalaya have been on high alert since a poliomyelitis case was diagnosed in a two-year-old child from Tikrikilla.

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Meghalaya Health Minister Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh on Wednesday said the World Health Organization (WHO) was conducting a thorough investigation to determine if a new strain of polio has infected a two-year-old child at Tikrikilla in West Garo Hills district of the State.

Though the State government is awaiting the sample test reports from laboratories in Kolkata and Mumbai, the Union Health Ministry said the child's case was not that of wild polio but a vaccine-derived infection that presents in some people with low immunity. The test reports are expected by the end of the week.

"Another case has apparently been identified in some other State. It is a different strain of polio to my understanding but WHO is investigating the case further for certainty," Dr. Lyngdoh said.

She said the State go-



The WHO declared India polio-free in 2014 after the last case of wild poliovirus was reported in 2011. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

vernment and the Health Department had been closely monitoring the situation at Tikrikilla, where people have a history of opposing vaccination. "The child is under observation and we are in touch with the family. The doctors attending to the child said the child is okay," she said, observing that the case may impact vaccination efforts in the future. The Minister did not rule out the possibility of the WHO issuing an advisory if the new strain is confirmed. The WHO declared

India polio-free in 2014 after the last case of wild poliovirus was reported in 2011.

Health officials in Meghalaya have been on high alert after the emergence of the poliomyelitis case from Tikrikilla.

While the oral polio vaccine has helped eliminate wild polio, the live virus in the vaccine can mutate and lead to vaccine-derived poliovirus, which can cause polio in unvaccinated individuals or in areas with low immunisation coverage.

Context: Meghalaya's Health Minister announced that the World Health Organization (WHO) is investigating whether a new strain of polio has affected a two-year-old child from Tikrikilla.

Vaccine-Derived Polio Infection

- **About:** It is a strain related to the weakened form of the virus used in oral polio drops for immunisation.
- **Safety and Efficacy:** The vaccine is generally safe and has been instrumental in eradicating polio in most countries.
- **Risks:** In rare cases, the vaccine can trigger polio in children with weakened immune systems.
- **Immune Response:** The vaccine activates an immune response, and the vaccine-virus can be excreted and change genetically in the bloodstream over time.
- **Circulation and Transmission:** The vaccine-derived virus can continue circulating among children, regaining the ability to transmit and cause severe infection.
- **Chronic Infection:** The vaccine virus can cause chronic infection in children with weakened immune systems, replicating in their gut and potentially gaining the ability to cause severe disease.
- **Last Case in India:** India's last case of wild poliovirus — infection caused by the naturally occurring virus was detected in West Bengal's Howrah district in 2011.
- **India's Polio Status:** After successfully preventing any wild polio infections for three years, the country was declared polio-free in 2014.
 - India continues to be polio-free unless cases of wild polio virus infection are detected.
- **Types of Polio Virus:** Wild poliovirus type 1, 2 and 3 (WPV1, WPV2 and WPV3).
 - There are three types of polio virus that cause infections in humans. The weakened forms of all these viruses were included in the oral polio vaccine.

'Census likely to begin in September'

India is likely to begin conducting a long-delayed population census in September, two people aware of the matter said, as Prime Minister Modi looks to plug important data gaps in his third term after years of criticism.

India's once-a-decade census was due to be completed in 2021 but was delayed because of the covid-19 pandemic. It will take about 18 months to complete the new survey after it begins next month, two people directly involved in the matter said.

Economists within the government and outside have criticized the delay in the latest census as it impacts the quality of many other statistical surveys including economic data, inflation and jobs estimates.

At present, most of these data sets—and government schemes based on their results—are based on the last population census released in 2011. The ministry of home affairs, which takes lead in conducting the census, and the ministry of statistics and programme implementation have drawn up a timeline and aim to release results by March 2026, covering a period of 15 years, the officials said. **REUTERS**

Context: The Union government is yet to take a call on conducting the next Census exercise but active discussion is on to expand the data collection to include caste enumeration.

Census

- **About:** The total process of collecting, compiling, analyzing, and disseminating demographic, economic, and social data for all persons in a specific area at a given time.
- **Purpose:** Serves as a basis for reviewing past progress, monitoring current government schemes, and planning for the future.
- **Nodal Authority:** Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Historical Context:**
 - **First Non-synchronous Census:** It was conducted in India in 1872 during the reign of Governor-General Lord Mayo.
 - **First Synchronous Census:** The first synchronous census was taken under British rule on February 17, 1881,
- **Legal Framework:** The Census of India Act of 1948 provides the legal basis for the Census but does not specify its timing or periodicity.
- **Global Practices:** While many countries, like the US and UK, follow a 10-year interval, others like Australia and Canada conduct their censuses every five years.
- **Phases:**
 - **Houselisting/Housing Census:** Records details of all buildings, including type, amenities, and assets.
 - **Population Enumeration:** Gathers more detailed individual information of residents, whether Indian nationals or others.
 - **Survey Process:** Conducted after listing all households to be surveyed.
- **National Population Register (NPR):** It is a record of all usual residents in the country. Registration in the NPR is compulsory for every usual resident of India.

Assam: Endangered primate Slow Loris rescued by villagers in Chirang, handed over to forest department

Context: Villagers in Shimlabagan, Shantipur, near the Indo-Bhutan border in Chirang, have reported sighting a rare endangered primate, the Slow Loris. This rare sighting has drawn attention to the region's rich biodiversity.

Slow Loris

- **About:** Lorises belong to the subfamily Lorisinae and comprise about 11 species of tail-less or short-tailed primates.
- **Habitat:** South and Southeast Asian forests.
- **Physical Characteristics:** They are arboreal and nocturnal, with soft gray or brown fur, large eyes encircled by dark patches, and short index fingers.
- **Slender Lorises:** The two species of slender lorises, the red slender loris (*Loris tardigradus*) and the gray slender loris (*L. lydekkerianus*), are found in India and Sri Lanka, measuring about 20–25 cm (8–10 inches) in length.
- **Behavior and Naming:** Slow lorises are solitary and territorial.
 - They are known for their ability to remain motionless for extended periods, which led to their name due to their slower pace compared to other forest animals.
- **Conservation Status:** According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), all species except the gray slender loris are considered threatened.
 - The red slender loris, with its subspecies, has been classified as endangered since 2004.
 - The Philippine slow loris is vulnerable.
 - Sunda slow loris and Bengal slow loris are endangered.
 - The Javan slow loris and Bangka slow loris are critically endangered.



Nomadic Dhangar community demands dedicated grazing corridors in Maharashtra forests

Context: The Dhangar community, a pastoral and nomadic tribal group in Maharashtra, has intensified their efforts to reclaim traditional grazing lands amid growing concerns about the shrinking spaces for their sheep and goats.

Dhangars Community

- **About:** The Dhangars are shepherds who live mostly in Western Maharashtra and Marathwada.
- **Population:** The Dhangar community is estimated to be around 1 crore, which is about 9% of Maharashtra's roughly 11.25 crore population.
- **Current Classification:** The Dhangars are currently on Maharashtra's list of Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT).
- **Demand for ST Status:** They have been demanding Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for several decades.
- **Similar with:** Dhangar leaders claim their community in Maharashtra is the same as the one identified as "Dhangad" elsewhere in the country, which is listed as a Scheduled Tribe.
- **Nomadic Tribes:** These are some of the most interesting communities in the world. They don't belong to one particular region, in fact, they are spread across the world. The nomadic tribes are diverse, each with its unique culture and traditions.

Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006

- **Recognition of Rights:** The FRA acknowledges the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities to forest resources for livelihood, habitation, and socio-cultural needs, addressing the historical neglect of their traditional relationship with forests.
- **Scope of Rights:** The Act covers individual rights to self-cultivation and habitation, community rights such as grazing and fishing, habitat rights for particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), and rights to access traditional resources and biodiversity.
- **Role of Gram Sabha:** The Act empowers the Gram Sabha to oversee conservation and protection of biodiversity, forests, and water sources, and to influence local policies affecting forest dwellers.
- **Objective:** The FRA aims to rectify historical injustices, ensure land tenure and livelihood security for forest-dwelling communities, and strengthen forest conservation by involving these communities in sustainable management and ecological balance.

Food and Consumer Affairs Minister launches pilot for transformation of 60 Fair Price Shops into Jan Poshan Kendras

Context: The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and New and Renewable Energy launched pilot for transformation of 60 Fair Price Shops into Jan Poshan Kendra.

Jan Poshan Kendra

- **About:** The initiative will boost FPS dealers' incomes by offering additional revenue streams through a broader range of products, addressing financial concerns.
- **Focus:** The Jan Poshan Kendras will dedicate 50% of their space to nutrition-rich products and the rest to other household items, ensuring a steady supply of essential foods.
- **Features:**
 - **FPS Sahay Application:** The FPS Sahay app provides paperless, presence-less, collateral-free financing to FPS dealers, facilitating smoother financial transactions.
 - ✓ The initiative will see the transformation of 15 FPS each in Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Jaipur (Rajasthan), and Hyderabad (Telangana) into Jan Poshan Kendras.
 - **Mera Ration App 2.0:** The upgraded Mera Ration App enhances service delivery and user experience, allowing seamless access to ration services across states.
 - **Quality Management Systems:** QMS will monitor transactions in real-time during procurement, storage, and distribution to ensure quality control.
 - **Quality Manual Handbook:** It has been introduced to detail procedures, standards, and policies for rigorous quality management.
- **Socio-Economic Impact:** Jan Poshan Kendras will address nutritional deficiencies and improve health outcomes, fostering economic resilience and social well-being, especially in underserved areas.
- **Implications:** The initiative demonstrates the government's commitment to PDS reform and aligns with the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, potentially influencing public support and perceptions of the current administration.

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