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MK Yadav Sir

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PANCHAMASALI LINGAYATS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Indian Society)



The politics around Panchamasali Lingayats' quota demands in Karnataka

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, JULY 24

Panchamasali Lingayats, a sub-caste of Karnataka's dominant Lingayat community, have been demanding inclusion in Category 2A of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) for more than three years. This will enable them to avail the 15% quota in government jobs and college admissions earmarked for this category, as against the 5% quota the Lingayat community currently enjoys under Category 3B of Karnataka's OBC quota matrix.

On Tuesday, community leaders held a meeting with lawyers to look at how to take forward their agitation.

EXPLAINED POLITICS

CURRENT QUOTA MATRIX

Category	Quota
Other Backward Classes	32
Cat 1 (Backward Castes)	4
Cat 2A (OBC)	15
Cat 2B (Muslims)	4
Cat 3A (Vokkaliga, etc.)	4
Cat 3B (Lingayat, etc.)	5
Scheduled Castes (SC)	15
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	3
EWS	10
Total reservations	60

Who are the Panchamasalis?

The Lingayats (officially classified as Hindu sub-caste 'Veerashaiva Lingayats') are followers of Basavanna, a 12th century philosopher-saint who rejected orthodox ritualistic Hindu practices and caste hierarchies in favour of a more personal, affective relationship with God, specifically Lord Shiva.

Today, the Lingayat community is an amalgamation of many sub-castes who hold sway in 90-100 of Karnataka's 224 state assembly seats. The agriculturalist Panchamasalis make up nearly 70% of the Lingayat population, numbering around 85 lakhs (as per the community's own claims).

Yet the Panchamasalis have long felt under-represented in Karnataka politics. The state's Lingayat chief ministers like B S Yediyurappa (the preeminent Lingayat leader for decades), and Basavaraj Bommai have belonged to other sub-castes. The community also claims to be economically worse-off than other Lingayat sub-castes.

How does OBC reservation work? When did the Panchamasalis' demand arise?

OBCs comprise different castes and sub-castes who are often at different levels of marginalisation. To prevent any one dominant OBC group from cornering all quota benefits, most states further sub-categorise OBCs based on different castes' relative marginalisation. In Karnataka, the 32% quota for OBCs is distributed among five categories.

Of these, the largest quota is for Category 2A which, at present, includes 102 castes. Panchamasalis have wanted to be included in this category for over two decades.

Their disaffection translated to an agitation in 2020 when Murugesh Nirani, a wealthy BJP MLA, was not inducted in then Chief Minister Yediyurappa's cabinet. Nirani galvanised support among Panchamasali leaders by positioning himself as a champion for their long-standing demand.

He would later backtrack, but leaders like the BJP's Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, and Congress' Vijayanand Kashappanavar and Lakshmi Hebbalkar continued to make the quota demand a political issue. Panchamasali pontiff Basavaraja Mruthyunjaya Swamy led a state-wide agitation for the demand. This agitation was called off in July 2021 after Yediyurappa assured to "resolve" the issue on the floor of the Karnataka assembly.

How did the BJP try to placate the Panchamasalis? Did it succeed?

Amidst growing troubles in the Karnataka BJP, Yediyurappa resigned as chief minister on July 26, 2021. He was succeeded by Basavaraj Bommai who made a controversial decision to secure the entire Lingayat [and Vokkaliga] vote in the 2023 assembly elections. On March 27, 2023, the Bommai government scrapped the 4% quota under Category 2B for Muslims, and distributed it (2% each) among the Vokkaligas and Lingayats in newly-created Categories 2C and 2D. This meant that the Lingayat quota increased from 5 to 7%.

The Panchamsalis, however, were insistent on their Category 2A demand. Moreover, after the Supreme Court observed that the changes made were "shaky and flawed", the Karnataka government provided an undertaking saying that it will not make any changes to the state's OBC sub-categorisation. The matter was subsequently adjourned, and has seen no progress since.

Ultimately, the Lingayat community, which had staunchly backed the BJP since the 1990s, ended up playing a major role in the party's loss in the May 2023 assembly elections. The BJP won only 18 of the 68 seats where it fielded Lingayat candidates, including 7 of 27 seats where it fielded candidates from the Panchamasali sub-sect. The Congress, on the other hand, won 37 seats of the 48 seats where it fielded Lingayat candidates, including 10 of the 14 seats it gave to Panchamasali candidates.

How is the Congress government dealing with the situation?

The Congress, which has been buying time for the Supreme Court to provide a legal solution in the matter, is likely to defer any decision on the quota demand until findings of the Karnataka Social, Economic and Caste Survey are accepted, and made public, by the state cabinet. This report was handed to the government in February this year.

The Congress, which is heavily reliant on the support of the existing Category 2A OBC communities, could also recommend the inclusion of all Lingayats in the central OBC list — this would curry some goodwill among the Lingayats while keeping the party's existing base happy.

Currently, 16 Lingayat sub-castes who are considered "very backward" are provided reservations for central government jobs and college admissions under the OBC quota.

Table 1: Karnataka's current quota matrix

CATEGORY		QUOTA
Other Backward Classes (OBC)		32
Category 1	Backward Castes	4
Category 2A	Other Backward Classes	15
Category 2B	Muslims	4
Category 3A	Vokkaliga, etc.	4
Category 3B	Lingayat, etc.	5
Scheduled Castes (SC)		15
Scheduled Tribes (ST)		3
Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)		10
TOTAL RESERVATIONS		60

Context: The Panchamasali Lingayats, a sub-caste of Karnataka's dominant Lingayat community, have been demanding inclusion in Category 2A of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) for over three years.

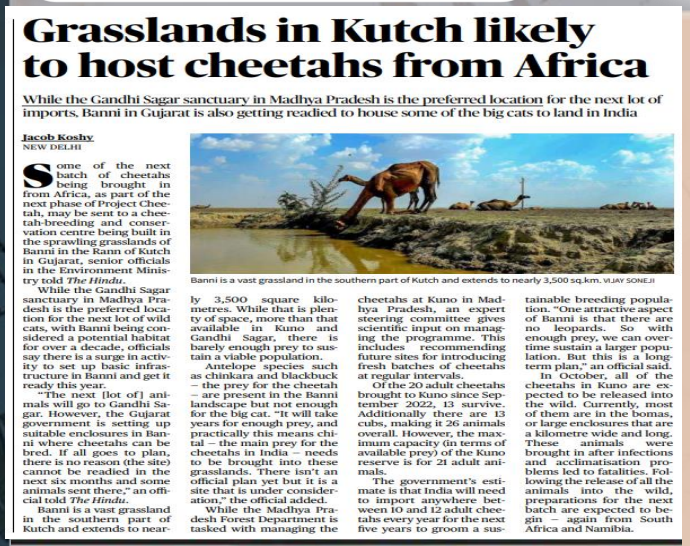
Panchamasali Lingayats

- **About:** The Lingayats (officially classified as Hindu sub-caste 'Veerashaiva Lingayats') are followers of Basavanna, a 12th century philosopher-saint.
- **Anti-Caste Movement:** Basavanna started a radical anti-caste movement which rejected orthodox ritualistic Hindu practices in favour of a more personal, affective relationship with God, specifically Lord Shiva.
- **Separate Religion for Lingayats**: Lingayats had distanced themselves from Hindu Veerashaivas because the latter followed the Vedas and supported the caste system, which Basaveshwara opposed.
- **Religious Centers**: Veerashaivas are the followers of the five peethas (religious centers), called Pancha Peethas.
    - These peethas are set up similarly to the four peethas established by Adi Shankara.
- **Community Composition**: Today, the Lingayat community is an amalgamation of many sub-castes.
- **Largest Sub-Caste**: Among the Lingayat sub-castes, the agriculturalist Panchamasalis are the largest, making up nearly 70% of the Lingayat population.
- **Population of Panchamasalis**: The Panchamasalis claim to number around 85 lakh — about 14% of Karnataka's population of roughly six crore.

THE HINDU Page 14

BANNI GRASSLAND

(Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)



Grasslands in Kutch likely to host cheetahs from Africa

While the Gandhi Sagar sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh is the preferred location for the next lot of imports, Banni in Gujarat is also getting readied to house some of the big cats to land in India

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Some of the next batch of cheetahs being brought in from Africa, as part of the next phase of Project Cheetah, may be sent to a cheetah-breeding and conservation centre being built in the sprawling grasslands of Banni in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, senior officials in the Environment Ministry told *The Hindu*.

While the Gandhi Sagar sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh is the preferred location for the next lot of wild cats, with Banni being considered a potential habitat for over a decade, officials say there is a surge in activity to set up basic infrastructure in Banni and get it ready this year.

"The next [lot of] animals will go to Gandhi Sagar. However, the Gujarat government is setting up suitable enclosures in Banni where cheetahs can be bred. If all goes to plan, there is no reason (the site) cannot be readied in the next six months and some animals sent there," an official told *The Hindu*.

Banni is a vast grassland in the southern part of Kutch and extends to nearly 3,500 square kilometres. While that is plenty of space, more than that available in Kuno and Gandhi Sagar, there is barely enough prey to sustain a viable population.

Antelope species such as chinkara and blackbuck – the prey for the cheetah – are present in the Banni landscape but not enough for the big cat. "It will take years for enough prey, and practically this means chital – the main prey for the cheetahs in India – needs to be brought into these grasslands. There isn't an official plan yet but it is a site that is under consideration," the official added.

While the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department is tasked with managing the cheetahs at Kuno in Madhya Pradesh, an expert steering committee gives scientific input on managing the programme. This includes recommending future sites for introducing fresh batches of cheetahs at regular intervals.

Of the 20 adult cheetahs brought to Kuno since September 2022, 13 survive. Additionally there are 13 cubs, making it 26 animals overall. However, the maximum capacity (in terms of available prey) of the Kuno reserve is for 21 adult animals.

The government's estimate is that India will need to import anywhere between 10 and 12 adult cheetahs every year for the next five years to groom a sustainable breeding population. "One attractive aspect of Banni is that there are no leopards. So with enough prey, we can overtime sustain a larger population. But this is a long-term plan," an official said.

In October, all of the cheetahs in Kuno are expected to be released into the wild. Currently, most of them are in the bomas, or large enclosures that are a kilometre wide and long. These animals were brought in after infections and acclimatisation problems led to fatalities. Following the release of all the animals into the wild, preparations for the next batch are expected to begin – again from South Africa and Namibia.

Banni is a vast grassland in the southern part of Kutch and extends to nearly 3,500 sq.km. VIJAY SONEJI



ASIA'S LARGEST GRASSLAND

- Spread over 3,000 sq km, Banni, Asia's largest grassland, is a reserve forest
- Around 48 villages, populated by around 8,000 families, are part of the Banni grassland
- Around 1 lakh animals graze on the grassland
- Out of the 8,760 hectares of encroached land in Banni, 540 hectors land cleared so far

HOME TO RICH FLORA AND FAUNA: The Banni area consists of two ecosystems – wetlands and grasslands – in juxtaposition. Banni falls under the Dichanthium-Cenchrus Lasiurus type of grass cover. These grasslands are home to a rich array of flora and fauna including 192 species of plants, 262 species of birds, several species of mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Traditionally, Banni grasslands were managed following a system of rotational grazing.

Context: Following their release in Kuno National Park, cheetahs from Africa will soon inhabit Gujarat's Banni grassland, as the central government has approved a proposal to establish a cheetah conservation breeding center in Kutch district.

Banni Grassland

- **Location:** It is situated near the Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.
- **Size**: It is considered to be the largest grassland in Asia, spreading over 2,497 kilometres and accounting for almost 45% of the pastures in Gujarat.
- **Formation**: The land in Banni was formed from the sediments deposited by the Indus and other rivers over thousands of years.
- **Ecosystem**: Two ecosystems, wetlands and grasslands, coexist in Banni.
- **Vegetation**: The vegetation is sparse and highly dependent on rainfall.
    - It is dominated by low-growing forbs and graminoids, many of which are halophiles (salt-tolerant).
    - The grasslands were traditionally managed by a system of rotational grazing.
- **Flora:** Prosopis Juliflora, Cressa critica, Cyperus spp, Sporobolus, Dichanthium, and Aristida.
- **Fauna:** It is home to mammals such as the Nilgai, Chinkara, Blackbuck, Wild boar, Golden Jackal, Indian Hare, Indian Wolf, Caracal, Asiatic Wildcat and Desert Fox etc.
    - It is also known for the Banni breed of buffaloes.
- **Reserve Forest Status:** In 1955, the court notified the grassland as a reserve forest. In 2019, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered the demarcation of the boundaries of Banni grassland and restricted non-forest activities.
- **Significance**: The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has identified Banni Grassland as one of the last remaining habitats of the cheetah in India.

WION July 24

NPS VATSALYA SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Gov. Policies)

Union Budget 2024: Govt introduces pension scheme for minor children. Know what is NPS Vatsalya

Context: The finance minister recently made the announcement of a new pension scheme under the National Pension Scheme (NPS), called NPS Vatsalya.

NPS Vatsalya Scheme

- **About**: It is a scheme under the National Pension Scheme (NPS).
- **Purpose**: It is designed to help parents and guardians plan for their children's future financial needs.
- **Account Opening**: Parents or guardians can open an account for their minor children and make contributions towards their retirement savings.
- **Accumulation Period**: The funds will accumulate until the child turns 18.
- **Transfer to Standard NPS**: Once the child reaches adulthood, the accumulated amount will be transferred to the standard NPS account.
- **Conversion Option:** This plan can be seamlessly converted into a non-NPS plan when the child becomes an adult.

National Pension Scheme (NPS)

- **About**: It is a voluntary retirement benefit scheme introduced by the Government of India to facilitate regular income post-retirement for all subscribers.
- **Eligibility**: A citizen of India, either a resident, non-resident, or an Overseas Citizen of India, can open an NPS account.
- **Contribution and Growth**: It helps individuals build a retirement corpus by making regular contributions throughout their careers.
- **Regulatory Body:** PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority) is the governing body for NPS.

GM MUSTARD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Why SC couldn't agree on environmental release of GM mustard

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

A TWO-JUDGE Bench of the Supreme Court on Tuesday delivered a split verdict on whether to allow the "environmental release" of Genetically Modified (GM) mustard.

Justices B V Nagarathna and Sanjay Karol disagreed on whether the approval given by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) — the body that is responsible for approving proposals relating to genetically engineered organisms — to proceed with field trials following the environmental release was done properly. This was the GEAC's second major push to introduce GM mustard as the first GM crop that is meant for human consumption. *Bacillus thuringiensis* cotton (or Bt cotton) is the only GM crop that has been approved for cultivation in India so far.

When a split decision is delivered, the case is referred to the Chief Justice of India for placing before a larger Bench. However, both judges directed the Union of India "to evolve a National Policy with regard to GM crops", and to consult experts, farmer representatives, and state governments during the process.

Story of GM mustard

On September 15, 2015, the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) at the Delhi University sought the GEAC's approval for the environmental release of a genetically engineered hybrid mustard called DMH-11 (commonly known as GM mustard).

Mustard flowers contain both female (pistil) and male (stamen) reproductive organs, which makes the plant largely self-pollinating. The GM mustard developed by the DU scientists contains two alien genes — the first, 'barnase', gene interferes with pollen production and renders the plant male-sterile, and the resulting plant is crossed with fertile mustard flowers containing the second, 'barstar', gene which blocks the action of the barnase gene. The resulting plants are meant to be high-yield variants of mustard.

Along with the proposal, the CGMCP submitted a biosafety dossier, and the GEAC created a sub-committee to examine its contents. Following some revisions, the sub-committee considered the dossier and submitted its report. In September 2016, the report was published and comments were invited.

EXPLAINED LAW

On May 11, 2017, the GEAC recommended the environmental release of GM mustard. If approved, this would allow field tests to be conducted to examine the effects of cultivating the crop.

However, after receiving several representations, the Ministry of Environment sent the proposal back to the GEAC for re-examination in March 2018. The GEAC then directed the CGMCP to examine the effect of GM mustard on honey bees and soil microbial diversity. But these tests were deferred through 2020-21.

In May 2022, gene scientist Prof Deepak Pental on behalf of the CGMCP wrote to the Minister for Environment urging him to accept the recommendation for the environmental release of GM mustard. The GEAC sought comments from various government departments, which recommended releasing GM mustard. The proposal was submitted on October 18, 2022. It was accepted by the Centre on October 25, and recommendations and conditions regarding the field tests were sent to Prof Pental.

Case before the SC

Environmentalist Aruna Rodrigues and the research and advocacy organisation Gene Campaign challenged the decision to approve the environmental release of GM mustard before the Supreme Court.

In their split decision, the judges disagreed on two key aspects: first, whether the GEAC's decision-making process was legal and, second, whether it violated the "precautionary principle" for scientific innovations. The precautionary principle, a standard test in environmental litigation, is recognised as a facet of the right to a clean environment, a subset of Article 21 (fundamental right to life).

JUSTICE NAGARATHNA said that the field tests that the GEAC committed to conducting with the CGMCP did not take place. Instead, the GEAC did a "volte-face" after Prof Pental sent the letter to the Centre in May 2022, and recommended the environmental release of GM mustard regardless. This shift in stance without providing any reasons, shows there was no "application of mind" by the GEAC, which is in "gross violation of the principle of public trust", Justice Nagarathna ruled.

She also said that the GEAC did not sanction any studies on the long-term effects that GM mustard could have on future generations. The process adopted by the GEAC "has failed to take into consideration the precautionary principles while approving the environmental release of the transgenic mustard", violating both the precautionary principle and the right to a safe and healthy environment, she said.

JUSTICE KAROL held that environmental release and the following tests and trials were in line with "the development of a scientific temper" and abided by the precautionary principle. "Without field trials, the performance of the plant in the field or environmental safety of such plant cannot be known. Studies, being conducted in open environment is necessary for studying the impact on human health and biodiversity, for the performance of a GM crop is dependent on a host environment," he said.

Justice Karol held that the GEAC's process was "independent" and "reasoned". He observed that the GEAC-appointed expert committee had found that honeybees do not discriminate between other GM crops such as genetically engineered canola. He noted that the Department of Biotechnology and the Department of Agricultural Research and Education had both recommended the environmental release of GM mustard.

Context: A two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court issued a split verdict on the "environmental release" of Genetically Modified (GM) mustard.

GM Mustard

- **About**: It is an indigenously developed transgenic mustard, resulting from a cross between Indian mustard variety 'Varuna' and East European 'Early Heera-2' mustard.
- **Approval:** On September 15, 2015, the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) at Delhi University sought the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) approval for the environmental release of DMH-11, a genetically engineered hybrid mustard.
- **Self-Pollination**: Mustard flowers are largely self-pollinating, containing both male (stamen) and female (pistil) reproductive organs.
- **Genetic Modifications:** The GM mustard, DMH-11, incorporates two alien genes: 'barnase,' which makes the plant male-sterile, and 'barstar,' which counters the action of 'barnase' to produce high-yield variants.
- **Alien Genes Used**: DMH-11 contains two alien genes ('barnase' and 'barstar') from the soil bacterium Bacillus amyloliquefaciens, which are essential for creating high-yielding commercial mustard hybrids.
- **Yield Improvement:** DMH-11 has shown approximately 28% higher yield compared to the national check and 37% more than zonal checks, with its use approved by the GEAC.

Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

- **About:** It is responsible for appraisal of activities involving large scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production from the environmental angle.
- **Purpose:** GEAC's primary purpose is to evaluate and assess the potential environmental impact of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and ensure their safe release into the environment.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change.

BUSINESS STANDARD July 23

SKILL LOAN SCHEME
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Govt Policies)

Budget 2024: Loan up to Rs 10 lakh for students' higher education, says FM

Context: The Finance Minister of India has announced a revision to the Model Skill Loan Scheme, aiming to enhance support for skill development initiatives.

Skill Loan Scheme

- **About**: It provides financial assistance to students pursuing technical courses offered by training institutes, polytechnics, and similar institutions.
- This programme is available through banks that are members of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) and other financial organisations approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for the Skill Loan Scheme, individuals must have secured admission to a course conducted by one of the following institutions:
  - Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)
  - Polytechnics
  - Schools recognised by the State or Central Board of Education
  - Colleges affiliated with a recognised university
  - Training partners affiliated with the Sector Skill Councils, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), State Skill Mission, or State Skill Corporation.
- **Duration of Course**: There is no minimum duration requirement for the course.
- **Quantum of Finance**: Loans range from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 1,50,000, now increased to Rs. 7.5 lakh.
- **Risk of banks:** It covered through Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Skill Development (CGFSSD)
  - Under the scheme of CGFSSD, interest rate to be charged by Member Lending Institution (MLI) should not be more than 1.5% per annum over Base Rate.

PIB July 24

CHANDRA SHEKHAR AZAD
(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - History)

Prime Minister pays homage to Chandra Shekhar Azad on his birth anniversary

Context: The Prime Minister of India has paid tributes to Chandra Shekhar Azad on his birth anniversary.

Chandra Shekhar Azad

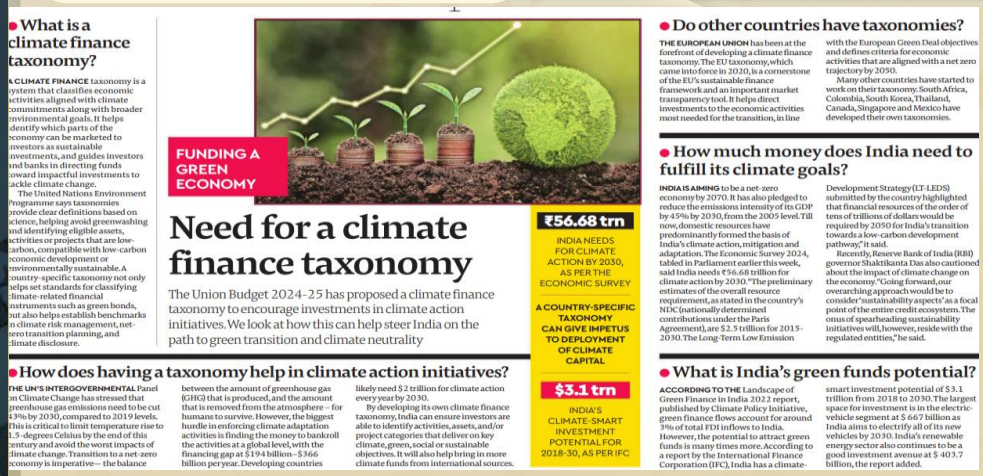
- **Birth**: He was born on 23 July 1906 in the Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Early Life**: At the age of 15, Chandra Shekhar joined the Non-Cooperation Movement in December 1921 and was subsequently arrested. During his court appearance, he adopted the name "Azad," meaning "The Free," which became his permanent identity.
- **Entry into Politics**: In 1921, Chandra Shekhar Azad joined the Non-Cooperation Movement, marking his entry into political activism at a young age.
- **Arrest and Defiance:** In December 1921, after his arrest, Azad displayed defiance by giving his name as "Azad," his father's name as "Swatantrata" (Independence), and his residence as "Jail."
- **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)**: After the Non-Cooperation Movement was suspended in 1922, Azad joined the HRA, a revolutionary organization founded in 1924 in East Bengal.
- **Kakori Conspiracy:** HRA members, including Azad, were involved in the Kakori Train Robbery in 1925, which was a significant act of revolutionary fundraising.
- **Reorganization into HSRA**: The HRA was reorganized into the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) in 1928. The HSRA, established at Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi by Azad and others, continued the revolutionary struggle against British rule.
- **Death**: On 27 February 1931, Azad was surrounded by police in Alfred Park (now Azad Park) in Allahabad. After a fierce shootout, he fought bravely, allowing his comrades to escape, and ultimately shot himself with his last bullet to avoid capture.
- **Legacy**: Chandra Shekhar Azad remains a symbol of fearless patriotism and dedication to the cause of Indian independence. His commitment to revolutionary ideals and sacrifices in the struggle against British rule are widely honored.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

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CLIMATE FINANCE TAXONOMY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)



What is a climate finance taxonomy?

A CLIMATE FINANCE taxonomy is a system that classifies economic activities aligned with climate commitments along with broader environmental goals. It helps identify which parts of the economy can be marketed to investors as sustainable investments, and guides investors and banks in directing funds toward impactful investments to tackle climate change.

The United Nations Environment Programme says taxonomies provide clear definitions based on science, helping avoid greenwashing and identifying eligible assets, activities or projects that are low-carbon, compatible with low-carbon economic development or environmentally sustainable. A country-specific taxonomy not only helps set standards for classifying climate-related financial instruments such as green bonds, but also helps establish benchmarks in climate risk management, net-zero transition planning, and climate disclosure.

FUNDING A GREEN ECONOMY

Need for a climate finance taxonomy

The Union Budget 2024-25 has proposed a climate finance taxonomy to encourage investments in climate action initiatives. We look at how this can help steer India on the path to green transition and climate neutrality

How does having a taxonomy help in climate action initiatives?

THE UN'S INTERGOVERNMENTAL Panel on Climate Change has stressed that greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut 43% by 2030, compared to 2019 levels. This is critical to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Transition to a net-zero economy is imperative— the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) that is produced, and the amount that is removed from the atmosphere — for humans to survive. However, the biggest hurdle in enforcing climate adaptation activities is finding the money to bankroll the activities at a global level, with the financing gap at $194 billion–$366 billion per year. Developing countries likely need $2 trillion for climate action every year by 2030.

By developing its own climate finance taxonomy, India can ensure investors are able to identify activities, assets, and/or project categories that deliver on key climate, green, social or sustainable objectives. It will also help bring in more climate funds from international sources.

Do other countries have taxonomies?

THE EUROPEAN UNION has been at the forefront of developing a climate finance taxonomy. The EU taxonomy, which came into force in 2020, is a cornerstone of the EU's sustainable finance framework and an important market transparency tool. It helps direct investments to the economic activities most needed for the transition, in line with the European Green Deal objectives and defines criteria for economic activities that are aligned with a net zero trajectory by 2050.

Many other countries have started to work on their taxonomy. South Africa, Colombia, South Korea, Thailand, Canada, Singapore and Mexico have developed their own taxonomies.

How much money does India need to fulfill its climate goals?

INDIA IS AIMING to be a net-zero economy by 2070. It has also pledged to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, from the 2005 level. Till now, domestic resources have predominantly formed the basis of India's climate action, mitigation and adaptation. The Economic Survey 2024, tabled in Parliament earlier this week, said India needs ₹56.68 trillion for climate action by 2030. "The preliminary estimates of the overall resource requirement, as stated in the country's NDC (nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement), are $2.5 trillion for 2015-2030. The Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) submitted by the country highlighted that financial resources of the order of tens of trillions of dollars would be required by 2050 for India's transition towards a low-carbon development pathway," it said.

Recently, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das also cautioned about the impact of climate change on the economy. "Going forward, our overarching approach would be to consider 'sustainability aspects' as a focal point of the entire credit ecosystem. The onus of spearheading sustainability initiatives will, however, reside with the regulated entities," he said.

₹56.68 trn

INDIA NEEDS FOR CLIMATE ACTION BY 2030, AS PER THE ECONOMIC SURVEY

A COUNTRY-SPECIFIC TAXONOMY CAN GIVE IMPETUS TO DEPLOYMENT OF CLIMATE CAPITAL

$3.1 trn

INDIA'S CLIMATE-SMART INVESTMENT POTENTIAL FOR 2018-30, AS PER IFC

What is India's green funds potential?

ACCORDING TO THE Landscape of Green Finance in India 2022 report, published by Climate Policy Initiative, green finance flows account for around 3% of total FDI inflows to India. However, the potential to attract green funds is many times more. According to a report by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), India has a climate-smart investment potential of $3.1 trillion from 2018 to 2030. The largest space for investment is in the electric-vehicle segment at $ 667 billion as India aims to electrify all of its new vehicles by 2030. India's renewable energy sector also continues to be a good investment avenue at $ 403.7 billion, the report added.

Context: India's Finance Minister announced plans to develop a 'climate finance taxonomy' to better structure and manage investments in climate-related projects.

Climate Finance Taxonomy

- **About:** It is a system that classifies which parts of the economy may be marketed as sustainable investments.
- **Purpose**: It helps guide investors and banks in directing trillions toward impactful investments to tackle climate change.
- **Standard Setting**: Taxonomies are frequently used to set standards for classifying climate-related financial instruments, such as green bonds.
- **Additional Use Cases**: They also serve other purposes, including climate risk management, net-zero transition planning, and climate disclosure.

Significance of Taxonomy

- **Guiding Transition to Net-Zero**: Taxonomies help align economic activities with science-based transition pathways essential for achieving net-zero emissions.
- **Reducing Greenwashing Risks**: They ensure that climate-related investments are credible and genuinely contribute to sustainability, mitigating the risk of greenwashing.
- **Attracting Climate Capital**: By clarifying what qualifies as sustainable, taxonomies can attract more international climate funds, addressing the current shortfall in green finance.
- **Enhancing Investment Clarity**: They provide clear definitions of sustainable activities, reducing ambiguity and improving the effectiveness of green finance flows.

Potential for Green Investments in India

- **Climate-Smart Investment**: India's climate-smart investment potential is estimated at $3.1 trillion from 2018 to 2030, according to the International Finance Corporation (IFC).
- **Electric-Vehicle Investment Opportunities:** The electric-vehicle segment presents the largest investment opportunity, valued at $667 billion, as India targets electrification of all new vehicles by 2030.
- **Taxonomies in Other Countries**: South Africa, Colombia, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Canada, and Mexico have developed or are working on their taxonomies.
- **European Union Taxonomy:** The European Union has also established its own taxonomy.

DTE July 24

SOFI REPORT 2024
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Social Issues)

1 in 11 people faced hunger globally in 2023: SOFI Report

Context: The latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report reveals that global undernourishment levels remained at pre-pandemic figures for the third consecutive year, with one in 11 people experiencing hunger in 2023.

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report 2024

- **About:** It was launched in the context of the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force Ministerial Meeting in Brazil.
- **Prepared by:** Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Released by**: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Key Findings

- **Estimated Hunger Figures**: Between 713 and 757 million people may have faced hunger in 2023.
- **Warning Sign for SDG 2**: This figure indicates a significant shortfall in meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger, by the 2030 deadline.
- **15-Year Regression**: The world has reverted to levels of undernourishment seen in 2008-2009, setting back progress by 15 years.
- **Persistent Food Insecurity**: Around 2.33 billion people globally experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023, a number that has not improved since the pandemic.
- **Severe Food Insecurity**: Over 864 million people faced severe food insecurity, sometimes going an entire day or more without food.
- The percentage of the population facing hunger continued to rise in Africa (20.4%), remained stable in Asia (8.1%) and showed progress in Latin America (6.2%). From 2022 to 2023, hunger increased in Western Asia, the Caribbean, and most African subregions.

PIB July 24

TAX INCIDENCE
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

GST A SUCCESS OF VAST PROPORTIONS, DECREASED TAX INCIDENCE ON COMMON MAN: FINANCE MINISTER

Context: The Union government recently said Goods and Services Tax (GST) has decreased tax incidence on the common man.

Tax Incidence

- **About**: It is an economic term describing how the burden of a tax is shared among various stakeholders, such as buyers and sellers or producers and consumers.
- **Two Forms of Tax Incidence**:
  - **Initial Incidence**: This refers to the legal obligation of taxpayers to remit tax payments to the government, as established by law.
  - **Final Incidence**: This refers to the actual burden of the tax on economic welfare in society, affecting consumers, workers, and investors.
- **Example of Incidence Shift:** For corporate income taxes, the legal incidence is on companies, but the economic incidence is often passed on through higher consumer prices, lower wages, or reduced shareholder returns.
- **Tax Shifting:** The difference between initial and final incidence is known as tax shifting, where the actual economic burden of the tax may differ from the legal obligation.
- **Impact of Price Elasticity**: The incidence of a tax depends on the price elasticity of supply and demand. Elastic goods see a larger tax burden shift to producers, while inelastic goods shift the burden to consumers.
- **Tax Incidence on Inelastic Goods**: For inelastic goods, such as cigarettes, consumers bear the tax burden since they continue to buy the product despite the price increase.
- **Tax Incidence on Elastic Goods**: For elastic goods, producers bear more of the tax burden as the demand decreases with higher prices, leading to a lower shift in the tax incidence to consumers.

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 8

HUMAYUN'S TOMB

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture)

Mughal-era coins, helmet that doubled as cooking vessel: What's inside Humayun's Tomb museum

SAMAN HUSAIN
NEW DELHI, JULY 24





Glimpses of the museum; (right) A visitor clicks a photograph. *Amit Mehra*

DID YOU know that Humayun travelled three times more than Marco Polo, the famed explorer, covering 34,000 kilometers in his life? Or that he was so obsessed with astronomy and astrology that he wore a specific colour each day of the week to align with the planet of the day? Or that he was so fond of books that he used to carry his libraries on camelbacks during his travels?

Such fascinating nuggets about the life of the second Mughal Emperor and more will be highlighted as the long-awaited Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site Museum, situated between Sunder Nursery and Humayun's Tomb in Nizamuddin, will be inaugurated on July 29.

"For every world heritage site, UNESCO recommends a center for historical and cultural knowledge. Visitors quickly realise that this is not just a tomb and often end up visiting all the heritage sites in the area. The idea is to promote tourism and help people understand this place and its history better," explained Ratish Nanda, the project director for the museum.

The museum, managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), is part of a larger conservation effort encompassing the 300-acre Humayun's Tomb-Sunder Nursery-Nizamuddin Basti area of Delhi.

Upon entering the museum, visitors are greeted with a 40-feet-wide 3D illustration and architectural models highlighting World Heritage monuments along the Yamuna River.

At the entrance, a wall features a map detailing Delhi's 2,500-year history, illustrating its seven ancient cities.

Designed like a baoli (stepwell), the museum building is set underground. It includes a 100-seat auditorium, temporary galleries, cafés, meeting rooms, and a library. "When curating objects for a museum, we look for a narrative. We have been very specific in selecting pieces to build this story," Nanda explained during a tour of the museum.

Among the most interesting artefacts that narrate Humayun's story is a pear-shaped water vessel of Jauhar Aftabchi, who later wrote one of the emperor's three biographies. A helmet in which Humayun cooked horse meat while facing food shortage during his travel to Persia also finds a place here.

The principal gallery, named 'Where the Emperor Rests', focuses on the architecture of Humayun's Mausoleum and the personality of the emperor. The exhibits convey stories of his travels, administration, interest in reading, astrology, the arts, and his patronage of architecture. Another gallery, called the 'Icons of a Sacred Landscape', highlights four cultural figures associated with the Nizamuddin area from 14th century: Sufi Saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, his disciple and poet Amir Khusrau Dehalvi, Rahim (a commander-in-chief of Akbar's army and poet), and Dara Shukoh (known for translating the Upanishads into Persian).

The artefacts displayed in the museum are on loan from the National Museum for 10 years.

The museum also features artefacts from other Mughal rulers. Among the exhibits are coins from the reigns of 18 Mughal-era kings and the throne of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor. "Coins from Akbar's era have 'Allah' on one side and 'Ram' on the other.

Coins from Jahangir's era were the most expensive, and those minted by Bahadur Shah Zafar are the hardest to find," Nanda said, pointing to the display.

Context: The long-awaited Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site Museum, located between Sunder Nursery and Humayun's Tomb in Nizamuddin, will showcase intriguing details about the second Mughal Emperor's life.

Humayun's Tomb

- **About**: Built in 1570, this tomb holds particular cultural significance as the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent.
- **Also known as**: 'Dormitory of the Mughals' as it houses the graves of over 150 Mughal family members.
- **Architectural Influence:** The design of Humayun's Tomb inspired several major architectural innovations, culminating in the construction of the Taj Mahal.
- **Patronage**: It was constructed under the patronage of Humayun's son, Emperor Akbar.
- **Charbagh Design**: Humayun's Tomb is an example of the charbagh, a four-quadrant garden representing the four rivers of Quranic paradise, with pools connected by channels.
- **World Heritage Site:** In 1993, UNESCO recognized Humayun's Tomb as a World Heritage Site.
- **Humayun Museum**: Managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), is part of a larger conservation effort encompassing the 300-acre Humayun's Tomb-Sunder Nursery-Nizamuddin Basti area of Delhi.

Mughal Architecture

- **Period and Patronage**: Mughal architecture flourished in northern and central India under the Mughal emperors from the mid-16th to the late 17th century.
- **Revival of Islamic Architecture**: The Mughal period marked a significant revival of Islamic architecture in northern India, blending Persian, Indian, and provincial styles to produce works of high quality and refinement.
- **Influence on Colonial Architecture**: Mughal architectural elements became widespread in north India and influenced the Indo-Saracenic style of colonial architecture.

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