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THE HINDU

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DownToEarth
FORTNIGHTLY ON POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Science Reporter

सत्यमेव जयते
विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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THE HINDU Page 1

MAHSA AMINI PROTESTS
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Affairs)

In rare gesture, Iran shuts morality police

The move comes after over two months of protests over the death in custody of a young woman arrested in Tehran for not wearing the hijab

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran has scrapped its morality police after more than two months of protests triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini following her arrest for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code for women, local media said on Sunday.

Women-led protests, labelled "riots" by the authorities, have swept Iran since the 22-year-old Iranian of Kurdish origin died on September 16, three days after her arrest by the morality police in Tehran.

Demonstrators have burned their mandatory hijab head coverings and shouted anti-government slogans, and a growing number of women have failed to wear the hijab, particularly in several parts of Tehran. "Morality police have nothing to do with the judiciary and have been abolished," Attorney-General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency.

The announcement of the units' abolition came a day after Mr. Montazeri said "both parliament and the judiciary are working" on the issue of whether the law requiring women to cover their heads needs to be changed.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10



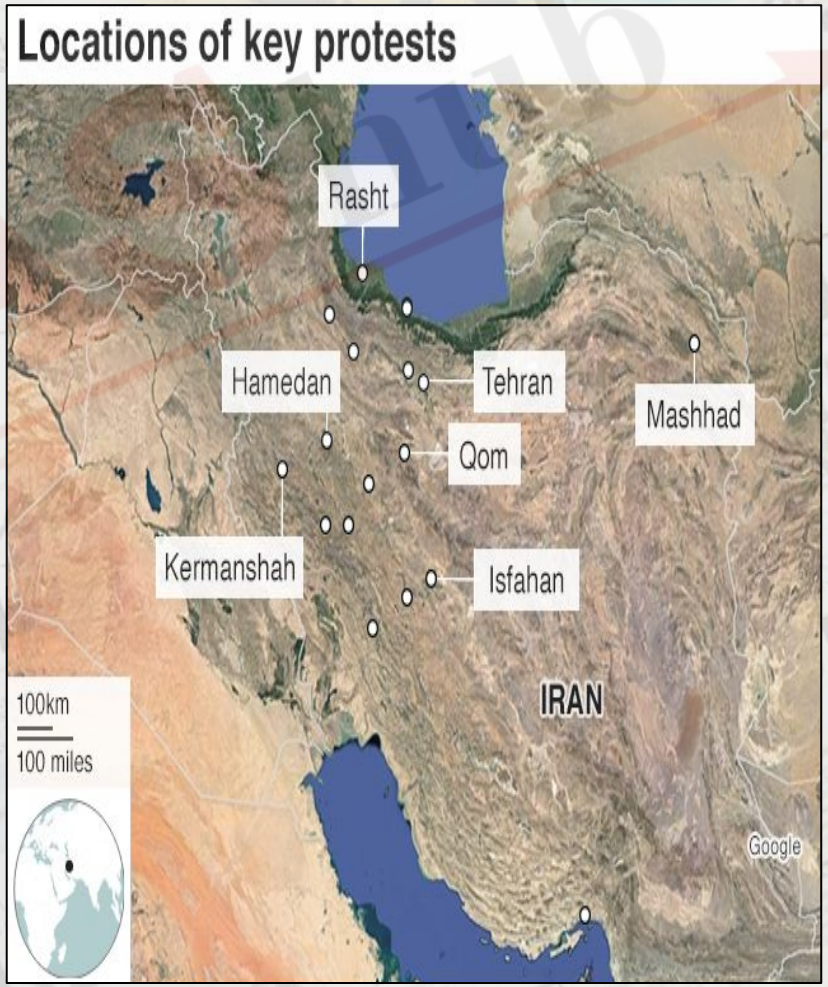
Long battle: Protests against the morality police have swept across Iran since September, after the death of Mahsa Amini in custody. AFP

Context: Iran has scrapped its '**morality police'** after more than two months of protests triggered by the arrest of Mahsa Amini for allegedly violating the country's strict female dress code.

- The 'morality police' – known formally as the **Gasht-e Ershad or "Guidance Patrol"** – was established under hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2006 to spread the culture of modesty and hijab.

Mahsa Amini protests

- **About**: An o**ngoing series of protests and civil unrest against the government of Iran** began in Tehran on 16 September 2022.
  - Norway-based Iran Human Rights said a total of 4**16 people have been killed** by Iranian security forces during protests sparked by Mahsa Amini's death in September.
  - Several towns in **Kurdish-populated western Iran,** including Mahabad, Javanroud, and Piranshahr, have seen large protests, often starting at the funerals of those previously slain in demonstrations.
- **Reason**: **Reaction to the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini**, who had been arrested by the Guidance Patrol for wearing an "improper" hijab - in violation of Iran's mandatory hijab law.
  - The hijab became **mandatory four years after the 1979 revolution** that overthrew the US-backed monarchy and established the Islamic Republic of Iran.



BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 1

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

DESH Bill: FinMin turns down tax sops for SEZs

Bill unlikely to come this Winter Session following objections

SHRIMI CHOUDHARY
New Delhi, 4 December

The Union finance ministry has turned down the commerce ministry's proposal to provide tax incentives to units set up in special economic zones (SEZs) as part of the Development of Enterprises and Services Hub (DESH) Bill, 2022, holding that it would "create havoc" for units outside such zones.

It has been explicitly communicated that they (the commerce department) should do whatever it takes to make the scheme beneficial to encourage these units but tax incentives should be kept out of the scheme. Such concessions under the proposed scheme may help one identified sector, but it will create havoc for the other business units. So it has been suggested that one should not create islands of no taxation within the country," a senior finance ministry official privy to the development told *Business Standard*.

First proposed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her FY23 Budget speech in February this year, the DESH Bill aims to replace the existing special economic zone (SEZ) law. "This will cover all large existing and new industrial enclaves to optimally utilise the available infrastructure and enhance competitiveness of exports," Sitharaman said.

Key tax proposals under the Bill devised by the commerce ministry include allowing SEZ units to sell in the domestic tariff area (an area within the country that falls outside the zones) on payment of duties foregone on raw materials. It also offers a concessional corporate tax rate of 15 per cent for an extended period to greenfield as well as brownfield units in such development hubs.

With the revenue department in the finance ministry objecting to the proposed benefits, the government may have to modify the Bill and that can delay the implementation of the proposal of the Bill. According to sources, the Bill is unlikely to be presented in the upcoming Winter Session as the scheme needs to be reworked.

Further explaining the rationale, the official said that if the proposal under the DESH Bill to allow SEZ units to sell within the country is accepted, the country will have one business unit which is in a "DESH area" and is not required to pay taxes, another similar unit in "videsh area" which is required to pay taxes.

"This will lead to conflict and disparity which is not the idea," he added.

Experts too feel that tax incentives should be examined carefully. "Providing fiscal incentives to identified sectors or business areas in terms of the DESH scheme should be carefully calibrated as the objective is to make them more competitive in the global arena," said M S Mani, partner, Deloitte India.

A TAXING AFFAIR

- The DESH Bill proposes a concessional corporate tax rate of 15 per cent for an extended period to greenfield, as well as brownfield units in development hubs
- It allows SEZ units to sell in domestic tariff areas (parts of the country outside these zones) on payment of duties foregone on inputs, and not on final goods
- The finance ministry's revenue department is of the view that offering incentives to such SEZs could create tax disparity among sectors
- The Union Cabinet will take a final call in this matter



Context: The Union finance ministry has **turned down the commerce ministry´s proposal to provide tax incentives** to units set up in **special economic zones (SEZs)** as part of the Development of Enterprises and Services Hub (DESH) Bill, 2022, holding that it would "create havoc" for units outside such zones.

Special Economic Zone

- **Definition**: It is a territory within a country that is **typically duty-free (Fiscal Concession)** and has different business and commercial laws chiefly to encourage investment and create employment
- **Origin**: The Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy in India first came into inception on April 1, 2000.
  - SEZs in India **functioned from 2000 to 2006 under the provisions of the Foreign Trade Policy and fiscal incentives** were made effective through the provisions of relevant statutes.
- **Prime objective**: to enhance foreign investment and provide an internationally competitive and hassle free environment for exports.
- **SEZ act:** The **Special Economic Zones Act** was passed in 2005 and came into force along with the SEZ Rules in 2006.
  - **SEZ 2.0: Budget 2022-23 announcement:** The SEZ Act will be replaced by a new legislation that will enable large existing and new industrial enclaves to optimally utilise available infrastructure and enhance competitiveness of exports.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of **Commerce and Industry.**
- **Apex body**: The **Board of Approval** is the apex body and is headed by the Secretary, Department of Commerce (Ministry of Commerce and Industry).
- **Eligibility**: Any private/public/joint sector or state government or its agencies can set up an SEZ.
  - A foreign agency also can set up SEZs in India.
- **Role of state governments in establishing SEZs:** Representative of the state government, who is a member of the inter-ministerial committee on private SEZ, is consulted while considering the proposal.
  - Before recommending any proposals to the ministry of commerce and industry (department of commerce), the states must satisfy themselves that they are **in a position to supply basic inputs like water, electricity, etc.**
- **Facilities and Incentives:**
  - **Duty free import/domestic procurement** of goods for development, operation and maintenance of SEZ units
  - **100% Income Tax exemption** on export income for SEZ units under the Income Tax Act for first 5 years, 50% for next 5 years thereafter and 50% of the ploughed back export profit for next 5 years.
  - Exemption from **Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT).**
  - **Exemption from Central Sales Tax,** Exemption from Service Tax and Exemption from State sales tax.
    - These have now subsumed into GST and supplies to SEZs are zero rated under IGST Act, 2017.
  - **Other levies** as imposed by the respective State Governments.
  - **Single window clearance** for Central and State level approvals.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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INDIA INEQUALITY REPORT 2022

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Social Justice)

OXFAM FLAGS DIGITAL DIVIDE

Women constitute one-third of Internet users in India: Study

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 4

WOMEN CONSTITUTE only one third of internet users in India, said a study conducted by NGO Oxfam India.

According to 'India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide' released by the NGO on Sunday, Indian women are 15 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone and 33 per cent less likely to use mobile internet services than men.

In Asia-Pacific, India fares the worst with the widest gender gap of 40.4 per cent, says the study. The report also points to rural-urban digital divide. "Despite registering a significant (digital) growth rate of 13 per cent in a year, only 31 per cent of the rural population uses Internet compared to 67 percent of their urban counterparts," says the report.

The report analyses the primary data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) household survey held from Jan 2018 to Dec 2021.

Among states, Maharashtra has the highest internet penetration, followed by Goa and Kerala, while Bihar has the lowest, followed by Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, the report said.

"As per the NSS (2017-18), only about 9 per cent of the students who were enrolled in any course had access to a computer with internet and 25 percent of enrolled students had access to the internet through any kind of devices," says the report.

The digital push driven by the pandemic resulted in India experiencing the largest number of real-time digital transactions in 2021 at 48.6 billion.

However, the likelihood of a digital payment by the richest 60 per cent is four times more than the poorest 40 per cent in India.

In rural India, the tendency to use formal financial services is lowest for ST households, followed by SC households and OBC households.

According to UN's e-participation index (2022), which is a composite measure of three important dimensions of e-government, namely provision of online services, telecommunication connectivity and human capacity, India ranks 105 out of 193 nations, it said.

The likelihood of access to a computer is more for the General and OBC groups than for the SC and ST populations. The difference between the general category and ST is as high as seven to eight per cent between 2018 and 2021.

The chances of having a computer are higher with higher levels of education as well as income. As much as 99 per cent rural population did not have a computer post the Pandemic – an increase of two per cent— while the urban population witnessed an increase of seven per cent to 91 per cent.

Among all religions, Sikhs have highest likelihood of having a computer followed by Christians, Hindus and lastly Muslims.

Context: According to **'India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide' released by the NGO Oxfam India**, Indian women are 15 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone and 33 per cent less likely to use mobile internet services than men.

- The report analyses the primary data from **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE)** household survey held from Jan 2018 to Dec 2021.

India Inequality Report 2022

- **Gender gap**: In Asia-Pacific, India fares the **worst with the widest gender gap** of 40.4 per cent.
  - **Women constitute only one third** of internet users in India.
- **Rural-urban digital divide:** Despite registering a significant (digital) growth rate of 13 per cent in a year, **only 31 per cent of the rural population uses Internet** compared to 67 percent of their urban counterparts.
  - As much as **99 percent rural population did not have a computer** post the Pandemic – an increase of two per cent— while the urban population witnessed an increase of seven per cent to 91 percent.
  - In rural India, the **tendency to use formal financial services is lowest** for ST households, followed by SC households and OBC households.
- **Status of Indian States**: Among states, **Maharashtra has the highest internet penetration**, followed by Goa and Kerala, while Bihar has the lowest, followed by Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.
- **E-participation**: According to **UN's e-participation index (2022),** which is a composite measure of three important dimensions of e-government, namely provision of online services, telecommunication connectivity and human capacity, India ranks 105 out of 193 nations.
  - **Only about 9 per cent of the students** who were enrolled in any course had access to a computer with internet and 25 percent of enrolled students had access to the internet through any kind of devices.
  - The likelihood of **access to a computer** is more for the General and OBC groups than for the SC and ST populations.
  - The **difference between the general category and ST** is as high as seven to eight per cent between 2018 and 2021.
  - The chances of having a computer are **higher with higher levels of education** as well as income.
  - Among all religions, **Sikhs have highest likelihood of having a computer** followed by Christians, Hindus and lastly Muslims.
- **Digital payment:** The **digital push driven by the pandemic** resulted in India experiencing the largest number of real-time digital transactions in 2021 at 48.6 billion.
  - However, the likelihood of a **digital payment by the richest 60 per cent** is four times more than the poorest 40 per cent in India.

LIVEMINT

Page 2

EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

ICAI: Open audit industry under FTAs reciprocally

Gireesh Chandra Prasad & Ravi Dutta Mishra

NEW DELHI

India should open up its market to foreign audit firms under free trade agreements (FTAs) only on a reciprocal basis, said Debashis Mitra, president of the accounting rule-maker Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).



Debashis Mitra, president of accounting rule-maker ICAI.

ICAI's committee on international trade will meet shortly to set out its position on FTAs relating to the audit sector, following which its governing council will deliberate the matter on 15 December. "After the deliberations in the council, we shall submit our recommendations to the government," Mitra said.

Without going into the details of the recommendations ICAI will make on FTAs, Mitra said that as a professional body, it has stood for greater opportunities for professionals.

"We have always said it should be reciprocal. If people from outside come, our professionals should also be allowed to go and practice there. That is what we have always maintained. It cannot be one-way. They must give us visas. In Europe, if you have to practice, visas should be given to our practitioners. Our qualifications should be recognized that much more," said Mitra.

India signed an early harvest deal with Australia in June, called the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, which includes a section on the movement of natural persons across borders covering accounting and book-keeping services, but it specifically excludes statutory audit.

The deal takes effect on 29 December. ICAI's views on the issue of opening up the statutory audit market come amid talks between India and Australia for a larger deal.

India is also in talks with the UK and the European Union for free trade deals and is set to start negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council. Movement of personnel is one of the modes of services trade covered under these deals.

Referring to the trade deal with Australia, commerce minister Piyush Goyal said on 22 November that for the first time, India has got visas for Indian chefs and yoga instructors and has also got a commitment that every student who goes from India to study in Australia will get an opportunity to work there, depending on the level of education.

TURN TO PAGE 13

Context: Labour and Employment ministry-backed **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** accorded approval for investments of surplus funds in equity, however, restricted to **Exchanged Traded Funds (ETFs).**

Employees' State Insurance Corporation

- **About**: ESIC was **established by ESI Act 1948** and one of the two main statutory social security bodies, the other being the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation.
- **Nodal Ministry**: An **autonomous corporation** under Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.
- **Functions**: As it is **a legal entity**, the corporation **can raise loans** and take measures for discharging such loans with the prior sanction of the central government and it can acquire both movable and immovable property and all incomes from the property shall vest with the corporation.
    - The corporation **can set up hospitals** either independently or in collaboration with state government or other private entities, but most of the dispensaries and hospitals are run by concerned state governments.

Employees State Insurance Act 1948

- **About**: The ESI Act 1948 **covers certain health-related incidents** the workers are exposed to, such as maternity, sickness, permanent or temporary disablement, or death due to employment injury, which can result in the loss of earning capacity.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The **Ministry of Labour & Employment** is responsible for the functioning of this Act.
- **Nodal Agency:** **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** administers Employees State Insurance Act 1948.
- **Schemes**: Employees State Insurance is **a self-financed comprehensive social security scheme** that comes under Employees State Insurance Act 1948.
    - Social security provisions made in the **ESI Act 1948 protect the employees** against financial distress arising out of events of disablement, sickness, or death due to employment injury.
    - Employees State Insurance provides **cash compensation** for the above cases.

ECONOMIC TIMES

Page 8

REAL ESTATE (REGULATION AND DEVELOPMENT) ACT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Buyers in Bengal Flag Non-functional RERA

Kailash.Babar
@timesgroup.com



Mumbai: All-India homebuyer's body, the Forum for People's Collective Efforts (FPCE), has raised concerns over non-implementation of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act in West Bengal despite assurances given by the state government to a central government-led delegation in September.

The state had earlier implemented its own legislation—West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act, 2017 (WBHIRA)—which was held unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in May last year, paving the way for implementation of RERA in the state. In February, the apex court had directed the state to implement RERA immediately.

However, the push from the central government and homebuyers has not met with any success so far. A sub-committee of the Central Advisory Council (CAC) constituted under RERA, in a meeting held recently, took cognizance of the non-implementation of RERA in the state and is mulling follow-up action.

"Since the Supreme Court struck down WBHIRA, we have been making efforts to ensure that RERA becomes fully functional in West Bengal but, very sadly, despite all our efforts including approaching the chief minister, RERA is still not functional here, allowing builders to escape regulatory framework and compromising with transparency and accountability as envisaged under RERA," Upadhyay told **ET**.

Context: All-India homebuyer's body, the Forum for People's Collective Efforts (FPCE), has raised concerns over non-implementation of the **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act** in West Bengal despite assurances given by the state government to a central government led delegation in September.

Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016

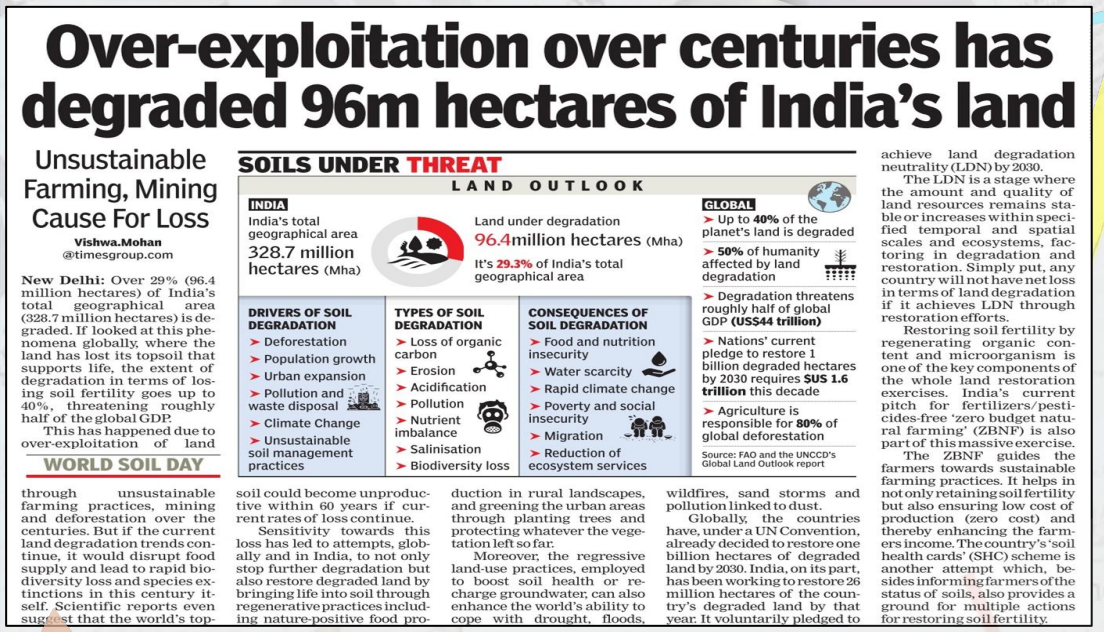
- **About**: An **Act of the Parliament of India** which seeks to **protect home-buyers** as well as help boost investments in the real estate industry.
  - The **Central and state governments are liable** to notify the Rules under the Act within a statutory period of six months.
- **Establishment of RERA**: The Act establishes a **Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)** in each state for regulation of the real estate sector and also acts as an adjudicating body for speedy dispute resolution.
- **Key provisions of the act:**
  - **Mandatory Registration**: **All projects** with plot size of minimum 500 sq.mt or eight apartments need to be registered with Regulatory Authorities.
  - **Deposits**: Depositing 70% of the funds collected from buyers in a separate **escrow bank account** for construction of that project only.
    - An escrow account is a **third party account** where funds are kept before they are transferred to the ultimate party.
  - **Liability**: Developer's liability to repair structural defects for five years.
  - **Penal interest in case of default**: **Both promoter and buyer** are liable to pay an equal rate of interest in case of any default from either side.
  - **Cap on Advance Payments:** A **promoter cannot accept more than 10% of the cost of the plot,** apartment or building as an advance payment or an application fee from a person without first entering into an agreement for sale.
  - **Carpet Area**: **Defines Carpet Area** as net usable floor area of flat. Buyers will be charged for the carpet area and not the super built-up area.
  - **Appellate Tribunal**: Decisions of RERAs can be **appealed in Real Estate Appellate tribunals.**
  - **Punishment**: **Imprisonment of up to three years** for developers and up to one year in case of agents and buyers for violation of orders of Appellate Tribunals and Regulatory Authorities.

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 13

LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



Over-exploitation over centuries has degraded 96m hectares of India's land

Unsustainable Farming, Mining Cause For Loss

Vishwa.Mohan
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Over 29% (96.4 million hectares) of India's total geographical area (328.7 million hectares) is degraded. If looked at this phenomena globally, where the land has lost its topsoil that supports life, the extent of degradation in terms of losing soil fertility goes up to 40%, threatening roughly half of the global GDP.

This has happened due to over-exploitation of land through unsustainable farming practices, mining and deforestation over the centuries. But if the current land degradation trends continue, it would disrupt food supply and lead to rapid biodiversity loss and species extinctions in this century itself. Scientific reports even suggest that the world's topsoil could become unproductive within 60 years if current rates of loss continue.

Sensitivity towards this loss has led to attempts, globally and in India, to not only stop further degradation but also restore degraded land by bringing life into soil through regenerative practices including nature-positive food production in rural landscapes, and greening the urban areas through planting trees and protecting whatever the vegetation left so far.

Moreover, the regressive land-use practices, employed to boost soil health or recharge groundwater, can also enhance the world's ability to cope with drought, floods, wildfires, sand storms and pollution linked to dust.

Globally, the countries have, under a UN Convention, already decided to restore one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030. India, on its part, has been working to restore 26 million hectares of the country's degraded land by that year. It voluntarily pledged to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) by 2030.

The LDN is a stage where the amount and quality of land resources remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems, factoring in degradation and restoration. Simply put, any country will not have net loss in terms of land degradation if it achieves LDN through restoration efforts.

Restoring soil fertility by regenerating organic content and microorganism is one of the key components of the whole land restoration exercises. India's current pitch for fertilizers/pesticides-free 'zero budget natural farming' (ZBNF) is also part of this massive exercise.

The ZBNF guides the farmers towards sustainable farming practices. It helps in not only retaining soil fertility but also ensuring low cost of production (zero cost) and thereby enhancing the farmers income. The country's 'soil health cards' (SHC) scheme is another attempt which, besides informing farmers of the status of soils, also provides a ground for multiple actions for restoring soil fertility.

WORLD SOIL DAY

SOILS UNDER THREAT

LAND OUTLOOK

INDIA

India's total geographical area 328.7 million hectares (Mha)

Land under degradation 96.4million hectares (Mha)

It's 29.3% of India's total geographical area

GLOBAL

- Up to 40% of the planet's land is degraded
- 50% of humanity affected by land degradation
- Degradation threatens roughly half of global GDP (US$44 trillion)
- Nations' current pledge to restore 1 billion degraded hectares by 2030 requires $US 1.6 trillion this decade
- Agriculture is responsible for 80% of global deforestation

Source: FAO and the UNCCD's Global Land Outlook report

DRIVERS OF SOIL DEGRADATION	TYPES OF SOIL DEGRADATION	CONSEQUENCES OF SOIL DEGRADATION
Deforestation	Loss of organic carbon	Food and nutrition insecurity
Population growth	Erosion	Water scarcity
Urban expansion	Acidification	Rapid climate change
Pollution and waste disposal	Pollution	Poverty and social insecurity
Climate Change	Nutrient imbalance	Migration
Unsustainable soil management practices	Salinisation	Reduction of ecosystem services
	Biodiversity loss	

Context: India, on its part, has been working to restore 26 million hectares of the country's degraded land by that year. It voluntarily pledged to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) by 2030.

Land Degradation Neutrality

- **About**: A condition where further **land degradation (loss of productivity caused by environmental or human factors)** is prevented and already degraded land can be restored.
  - **LDN has been defined by the Parties to the Convention**: A state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, **necessary to support ecosystem functions** and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.
- **Benefits**: As land is fixed in quantity, there is ever-increasing competition to control land resources and capitalize on the flows of goods and services from the land.
  - LDN represents a paradigm shift in **land management policies and practices.**
  - It is a unique approach that c**ounterbalances the expected loss of productive land** with the recovery of degraded areas.
- **Implementation**: The **implementation of LDN requires multi-stakeholder engagement** and planning across scales and sectors, supported by national-scale coordination that utilizes existing local and regional governance structures.
  - **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** and the **UN Environment Programme (UN Environment)** came together to mark the United Nations General Assembly adoption of the "**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".**
  - **Principles**:
    - **AVOID**: Aims at prevention of degradation through preventive and curative measures.
    - **REDUCE**: Reduction of activities which contribute to land degradation.
    - **REVERSE**: Reversal of conditions in degraded land through remedial measures.

India's Initiatives

- **UNCCD**: On 14th October 1994, **India became a signatory of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**. India ratified it in October 1996.
  - The UNCCD is the **only legally binding framework** set up to address desertification and the effects of drought.
- **National Action Programme for combating desertification:** It was prepared in 2001 to take appropriate action in addressing the problems of desertification.
  - India is on track to achieve its national commitment on **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) (Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3).**
  - Over the last 10 years, around 3 million hectares of forest cover has been added.
- **Centre of Excellence:** A Centre of Excellence is being set up in India to **promote a scientific approach towards land degradation issues.**
  - It is at Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, an autonomous body of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Part of the "Bonn Challenge"**: In 2019, India became part of the "Bonn Challenge", a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's **deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.**

PIB

Dec 5

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Awards & Sports)

President of India Presents National awards for The Empowerment of Persons With Disabilities for The Year 2021 and 2022

Context: The President of India presented the **National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** for the year 2021 and 2022 in New Delhi on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

- **About**: In order to recognise their effort and **encourage others to strive to achieve excellence in this field,** the National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities are being awarded every year.
- **Origin**: Established in 1969, it has been **administered by the Indian government's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
  - Till 2017, the Award Scheme was governed under the **National Awards Rules, 2013** which provided 7 categories of disabilities as per the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.
  - With the coming into force of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, the number of specified disabilities increased from 7 to 21 under the new Law.
- **Nodal Agency**: The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan),** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment gives away the National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities every year to Individuals, Institutions, Organizations, State/District etc for their outstanding achievements and work done towards empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Two Categories:**
  - National Awards for Individual Excellence
  - National Awards for Institutions engaged in empowering persons with disabilities
- **Eligibility**: Any **State/UT/ Autonomous Body / PSU and nongovernmental organization** registered under Trust Act/Society Act/Section 8 of **Company Act, 2013.**
- **Selection procedure**: All nominations/recommendations received for within the stipulated time are placed before the **Screening Committees**, constituted by the Department every year for shortlisting of applications and their recommendation for consideration by the National Selection Committee.
- **Award ceremony**: The award ceremony will be **presented in New Delhi on 3rd December,** every year which has been declared as the "**International Day of Persons with Disabilities".**

PIB

Dec 5

INDIA-VIETNAM MILITARY COOPERATION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International relations)

INDIAN NAVY SHIPS SHIVALIK AND KAMORTA VISIT HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Context: **Indian Naval Ships, Shivalik and Kamorta** which are forward deployed in the South China Sea are in **Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**.

- The ships would be **undertaking numerous professional interactions** with the Vietnam People's Navy during the visit.

Key points

- The visit is **part of the bilateral defence cooperation activities** to further enhance the robust ties between the two navies as also to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Vietnam.
- Earlier this year, two Indian Naval Ships, **Sahyadri and Kadmatt** had also visited Ho Chi Minh City.
    - **Indian Naval Ship INS Kiltan** undertook a visit to Ho Chi Minh City in 2020 to deliver flood relief materials for the people of Central Vietnam **(Mission Sagar III).**
- The visiting Indian Naval ships Shivalik and Kamorta form **part of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet** based at Visakhapatnam.
- The two ships, **designed and constructed in India**, are equipped with a versatile array of weapons and sensors, carry multi-role helicopters and symbolise India's advanced warship building capabilities.



DTE

Dec 5

TUNGARESHWAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

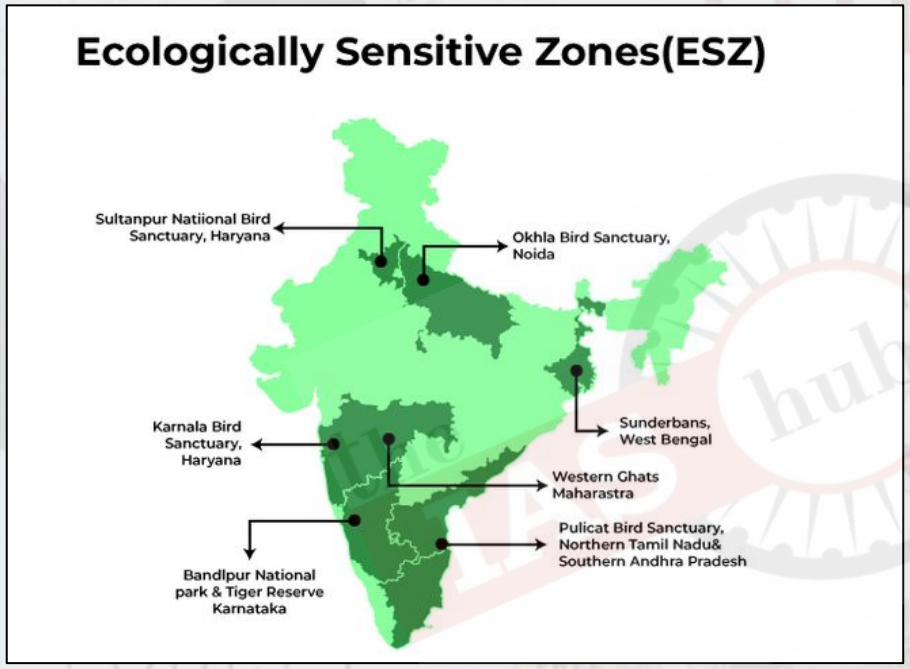


Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary near Mumbai exempted from ESZ mandate by SC

Practical difficulties and ground realities need to be taken in account for 1 km ESZ, says apex court

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By Shuchita Jha
Published: Saturday 03 December 2022



Context: The Supreme Court (SC) December 1, 2022, exempted **Maharashtra's Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary (TWS)** from its June 3 order mandating the creation of a one-kilometre eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around all Protected Areas in India.

Key points

- The bench observed that there are instances of notified forests within city areas, where **urban activities might have taken place for the past several years,** legal news website Live Law reported. TWS is located in the suburbs of Mumbai.
- The bench passed the order exempting TWS after hearing an application filed by **CREDAI-MCHI**, a body consisting of members from the real estate sector in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.
- It took an earlier order **exempting the Sanjay Gandhi National Park and Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary** in Mumbai into account.
- On September 3, the SC had clarified that the June 3 mandate had been modified June 30, **allowing ongoing projects to continue.**
- The Solicitor General of India submitted that he will d**iscuss the matter of some forests being exempted** from the June 3 order with the amicus curiae K Parameshwar.
- He added that the I**ndian Railways had also filed an application requesting modification** of the order as linear railway projects pass through different states, making it compulsory for them to seek permissions from different states individually.

Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

- **About**: Also known as Tungareshwar National Park is **located on a plateau east of Vasai and Virar in Palghar district,** north of Mumbai in the Indian state Maharashtra.
  - Tungareshwar is a **mountain plateau situated between Virar and Vasai**. It is a **dense forest region** – in the monsoon, the surroundings are lush and green, and interspersed with flowing waterfalls.
  - It forms a **corridor between Sanjay Gandhi National Park and Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary.**
- **Administration**: In 2003 it was brought under the administrative control of th**e Sanjay Gandhi National Park Division, Borivali, Mumbai.**
- **Threat**: There is **a temple at about 3 kms from the Tungareshwar WLS base**, due to which many devotees travel uphill to the temple by auto rickshaw or by foot.
  - This pilgrimage site within the wildlife sanctuary has brought unrest amongst the wildlife, due to **increased footfall of devotees.**

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TRIASSIC PERIOD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)



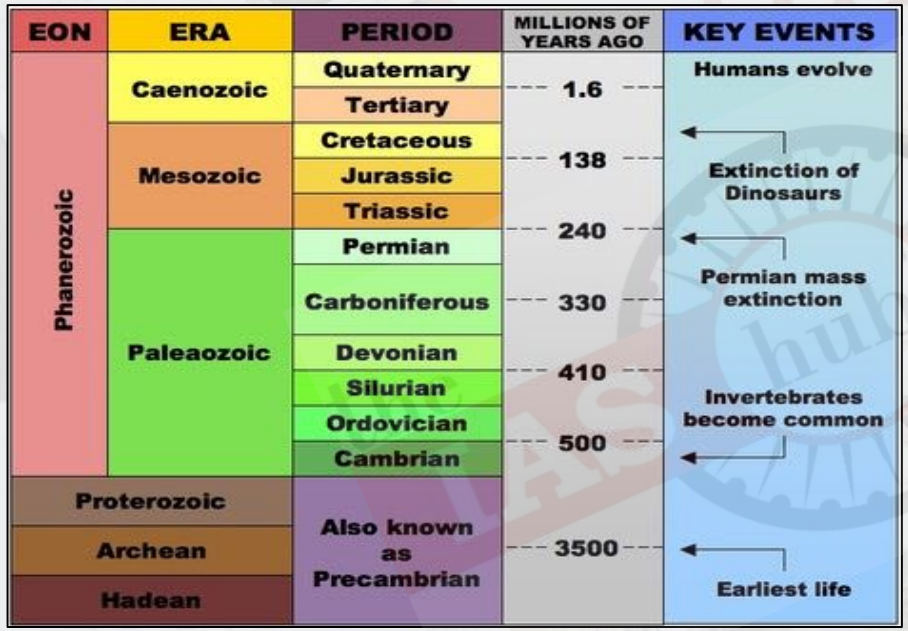
WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY

When did modern lizards originate? A beast from the Triassic Period offers answers

'Cryptovaranoides microlanius' lived in limestone cracks around Bristol about 250-200 million years ago

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By Rohini Krishnamurthy
Published: Saturday 03 December 2022



EON	ERA	PERIOD	MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO	KEY EVENTS
Phanerozoic	Caenozoic	Quaternary		Humans evolve
		Tertiary	1.6	
	Mesozoic	Cretaceous		
		Jurassic	138	Extinction of Dinosaurs
		Triassic		
	Paleaozoic	Permian	240	Permian mass extinction
		Carboniferous	330	
		Devonian		
		Silurian	410	Invertebrates become common
		Ordovician		
		Cambrian	500	
Proterozoic	Also known as Precambrian		3500	Earliest life
Archean				
Hadean				

Context: Modern lizards could have descended from a 'beast' roaming in the late Triassic Period, spanning 252-201 million years ago, according to a new study.

Key Points

- Previous estimates suggested that **modern lizards originated 35 million years** later in the Middle Jurassic Period.
- The **Triassic beast**, measuring 25 cm long, is **Cryptovaranoides microlanius**.
  - **Cryptovaranoides means 'hidden**, lizard-like' animal, while the species name means 'small butcher' owing to the presence of sharp-edged slicing teeth.
  - It **belongs to Squamates**, a clade comprising 11,000 living species of lizards, snakes, and relatives.
- A related clade **Rhynchocephalia** also originated in the late-Triassic Period.
  - Currently, **Tuatara**, found in New Zealand, is the only survivor of this group. It split from the Squamates over 240 million years ago.
- The **Triassic Period** saw the origin of new life forms - new plant groups, especially modern-type conifers, insects, and the origin of turtles, crocodilians, dinosaurs, and mammals.

Triassic Period

- **About**: Starting **approximately 250 million years ago and ending about 200 million years ago**, the Triassic is a period of which is usually broken down into 3 major epochs – The Early Triassic, The Middle Triassic, and the Late Triassic Epochs.
- **Animals Evolution**: During this period, a **variety of different animals began evolving** including nothosaurs and ichthyosaurs.
  - All types of **crustaceans and corals** also began to proliferate.
- **Reptilian evolution**: By the end of the Triassic Period, there was an **explosion in reptilian evolution and dinosaurs** also began to evolve.
- **Fourth Major Extinction**: As temperatures on Earth began to rise, the **Fourth Major Extinction occurred – also known as the Triassic-Jurassic Extinction Event.**
  - This event **killed off all archosaurs**, except for crocodiles, and almost all of the large amphibians that existed at the time.
  - It also **killed off over 30%** if all marine animals.

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