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CONSTITUTION ORDERS BILL 2024

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

RS passes Bills to add Paharis, Valmikis to ST, SC lists in J&K

The Bills also added Paddari Tribe, Gadda Brahmin, and Kolis to the ST list

Abhinay Lakshman
Peerzada Ashiq
NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

Amid ongoing protests in Jammu and Kashmir by the Scheduled Tribe Gujjar-Bakarwal community, the Rajya Sabha on Friday cleared the way for the addition of the Pahari ethnic group to the Union Territory's ST list.

Along with it, the Upper House passed the Bills that added the Paddari Tribe, Gadda Brahmin, and Koli communities to the ST list and the Valmiki community (including synonyms) to the Scheduled Castes list of Jammu and Kashmir.

During his reply to the discussion on the Bills, Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda addressed the concern of the existing ST communities in Jammu and Kashmir like the Gujjar-Bakarwal and Gaddi communities.

He said, "This Bill will ensure that the reservation already available for these existing tribes will be maintained while giving these new communities additional reservation. The work of ensuring that everyone gets justice and no community's reservation is affected is being done through this Bill."

'No dilution'

And given the growing protests by Gujjars and Bakerwals, the BJP has started percolating this message on the ground as well. "The ST quota of Gujjar and Bakarwal will remain unaffected and there would be no dilution in the same," Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina said.

Context: Amid ongoing protests in Jammu and Kashmir by the Scheduled Tribe Gujjar-Ba- karwal community, the Rajya Sabha on Friday cleared the way for the addition of the Pahari ethnic group to the Union Territory's ST list.

Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2024

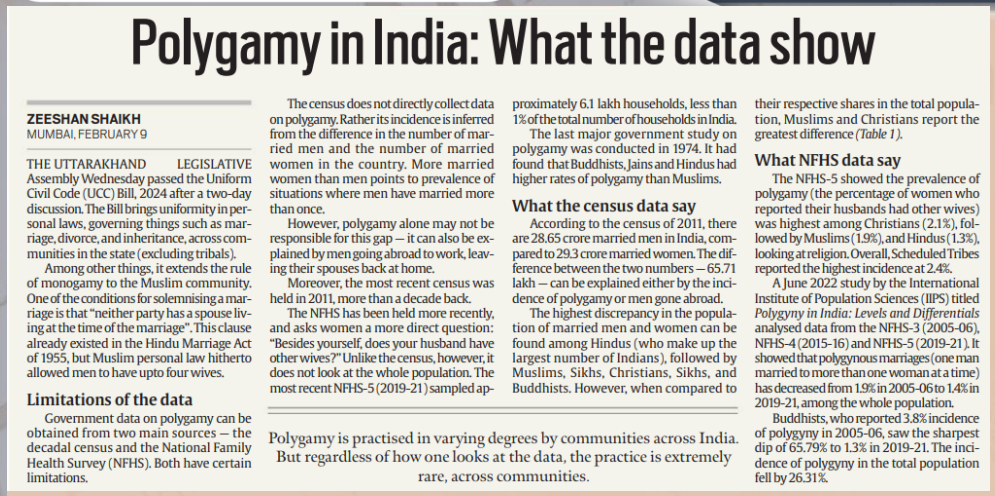
- **About**: The Bill amends the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 to modify the list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Odisha.
- **Communities added to the list of Scheduled Tribes**: The Bill adds following communities to the list of Scheduled Tribes in Odisha: (i) Muka Dora, Mooka Dora, Nuka Dora, Nooka Dora (for districts of Koraput, Nowrangapur, Rayagada, and Malkangiri), and (ii) Konda Reddy, Konda Reddi.
- **Certain communities moved from list of Scheduled Castes to Scheduled Tribes**: The Bill removes Tamadia and Tamudia communities from the list of Scheduled Castes in Odisha, and instead adds them to the list of Scheduled Tribes.
- **Synonyms for certain communities**: The Bill also adds synonyms or phonetic variations for certain communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Odisha.

Addition or Removal from SC/ST Lists:

- **Constitutional Basis**: The inclusion or exclusion of any community in the Scheduled Tribes or Scheduled Castes list comes into effect only after the President assents to a Bill that amends the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.
- **Process to include/exclude tribes in the SC/ST list:**
  - **Article 342(1):** The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory as the case may be.
  - **Article 342(2):** Parliament may be law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

POLYGAMY IN INDIA

Syllabus GS Paper 1 – Social Issues)



Polygamy in India: What the data show

ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 9

THE UTTARAKHAND LEGISLATIVE Assembly Wednesday passed the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2024 after a two-day discussion. The Bill brings uniformity in personal laws, governing things such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, across communities in the state (excluding tribals).

Among other things, it extends the rule of monogamy to the Muslim community. One of the conditions for solemnising a marriage is that "neither party has a spouse living at the time of the marriage". This clause already existed in the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, but Muslim personal law hitherto allowed men to have upto four wives.

Limitations of the data

Government data on polygamy can be obtained from two main sources — the decadal census and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). Both have certain limitations.

The census does not directly collect data on polygamy. Rather its incidence is inferred from the difference in the number of married men and the number of married women in the country. More married women than men points to prevalence of situations where men have married more than once.

However, polygamy alone may not be responsible for this gap — it can also be explained by men going abroad to work, leaving their spouses back at home.

Moreover, the most recent census was held in 2011, more than a decade back.

The NFHS has been held more recently, and asks women a more direct question: "Besides yourself, does your husband have other wives?" Unlike the census, however, it does not look at the whole population. The most recent NFHS-5 (2019-21) sampled approximately 6.1 lakh households, less than 1% of the total number of households in India.

The last major government study on polygamy was conducted in 1974. It had found that Buddhists, Jains and Hindus had higher rates of polygamy than Muslims.

What the census data say

According to the census of 2011, there are 28.65 crore married men in India, compared to 29.3 crore married women. The difference between the two numbers — 65.71 lakh — can be explained either by the incidence of polygamy or men gone abroad.

The highest discrepancy in the population of married men and women can be found among Hindus (who make up the largest number of Indians), followed by Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Sikhs, and Buddhists. However, when compared to their respective shares in the total population, Muslims and Christians report the greatest difference *(Table 1)*.

Polygamy is practised in varying degrees by communities across India. But regardless of how one looks at the data, the practice is extremely rare, across communities.

What NFHS data say

The NFHS-5 showed the prevalence of polygamy (the percentage of women who reported their husbands had other wives) was highest among Christians (2.1%), followed by Muslims (1.9%), and Hindus (1.3%), looking at religion. Overall, Scheduled Tribes reported the highest incidence at 2.4%.

A June 2022 study by the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) titled *Polygyny in India: Levels and Differentials* analysed data from the NFHS-3 (2005-06), NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21). It showed that polygynous marriages (one man married to more than one woman at a time) has decreased from 1.9% in 2005-06 to 1.4% in 2019-21, among the whole population.

Buddhists, who reported 3.8% incidence of polygyny in 2005-06, saw the sharpest dip of 65.79% to 1.3% in 2019-21. The incidence of polygyny in the total population fell by 26.31%.

Context: The Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly recently passed the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2024 after a two-day discussion, aiming to bring uniformity in personal laws governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance across communities in the state (excluding tribals).

Polygamy in India

- **About**: Polygamy is defined as marriage between one person and two or more spouses simultaneously.
- **Types of Polygamy**: Polygyny, Polyandry and Bigamy

Legal Provisions

- **Hindu Marriage Act 1955**: It made Hindu polygamy would be abolished and criminalized.
- **Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936**: It had outlawed bigamy.
- **Muslim Personal Law Application Act (Shariat) of 1937**: Polygamy is not prohibited in Muslim legislation because it is recognised as a religious practice, hence they tend to preserve and practice it.
- **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**: Marrying again during the lifetime of a husband or wife, imposes a penalty for bigamy or polygamy, including imprisonment for up to seven years and a fine.
- **Article 44**: The provision states that the State shall strive to ensure a Uniform Civil Code for all citizens.

Sources of Government Data on Polygamy

- **Decadal Census and NFHS**: The government collects data on polygamy primarily through the decadal census and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS).
- **Limitations**: Both sources have limitations, with the census relying on indirect inference and the NFHS having a smaller sample size.
- **Census Data on Polygamy**: The census infers polygamy based on the difference in the number of married men and women.
- 2011 Census Limitation: The most recent census was in 2011, posing a limitation due to its age.
- **Sampling Size Limitation**: NFHS-5 (2019-21) sampled only a small fraction (less than 1%) of households, limiting its representativeness.
- **1974 Study**: The last major study on polygamy in 1974 highlighted variations across religious groups.
- **Religious Disparities**: Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists had higher polygamy rates than Muslims according to the 1974 study.
- **Discrepancy Analysis**: The 2011 census revealed a significant difference between the number of married men and women.
- **Community Variances**: Hindus showed the highest gap, followed by Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and Buddhists.
- **Religious Breakdown**: NFHS-5 data revealed varying polygamy rates across religions, with Christians having the highest incidence.
- **Scheduled Tribes**: Scheduled Tribes reported the highest overall incidence at 2.4%.

PIB

Feb 9

STARTUP INDIA SEED FUND SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Startup India Seed Fund Scheme provides financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization

Context: The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) provides financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization through eligible incubators.

Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)

- **Launch**: Flagship initiative introduced in April 2021 under the Startup India initiative.
- **Objective**: To provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization.
- **Operational Period**: Implemented from April 1, 2021, with a 4-year span and a fund allocation of Rs. 945 crores.
- **Implementation**: Under the purview of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), part of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Funding Mechanism**: DPIIT establishes an EAC responsible for executing and monitoring the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS).
- **Grant Allocation**: Selected incubators are eligible for grants of up to Rs 5 Crores each.
- Startups' Funding: Incubators, in turn, provide startups with up to Rs 20 lakhs for proof of concept validation, prototype development, and product trials.
- **Eligibility Criteria**:
  - **Startup Recognition:** DPIIT-recognized startups incorporated within the past 2 years are eligible.
  - **Business Idea Requirements**: Startups must have a viable business idea with market fit, potential for commercialization, and scalability.
  - **Technology Integration**: Essential requirement for startups to incorporate technology in their core product, service, business model, or distribution methodology.
  - **Monetary Support Limit:** Startups should not have received more than Rs 10 lakh from any other Central or State Government scheme.
  - **Promoter Shareholding:** At the time of application, Indian promoters must hold a minimum of 51% shareholding in the startup applying for the scheme.

The Need For Startup India Seed Fund Scheme

- Easy availability of capital is essential for entrepreneurs at the early stages of growth of an enterprise.
- Funding from angel investors and venture capital firms becomes available to startups only after the proof of concept has been provided. Similarly, banks provide loans only to asset-backed applicants.
- It is essential to provide seed funding to startups with an innovative idea to conduct proof of concept trials.

Startup India

- **About**: The Startup India initiative of the Government of India envisages building a robust Start-up ecosystem in the country for nurturing innovation and providing opportunities to budding entrepreneurs.

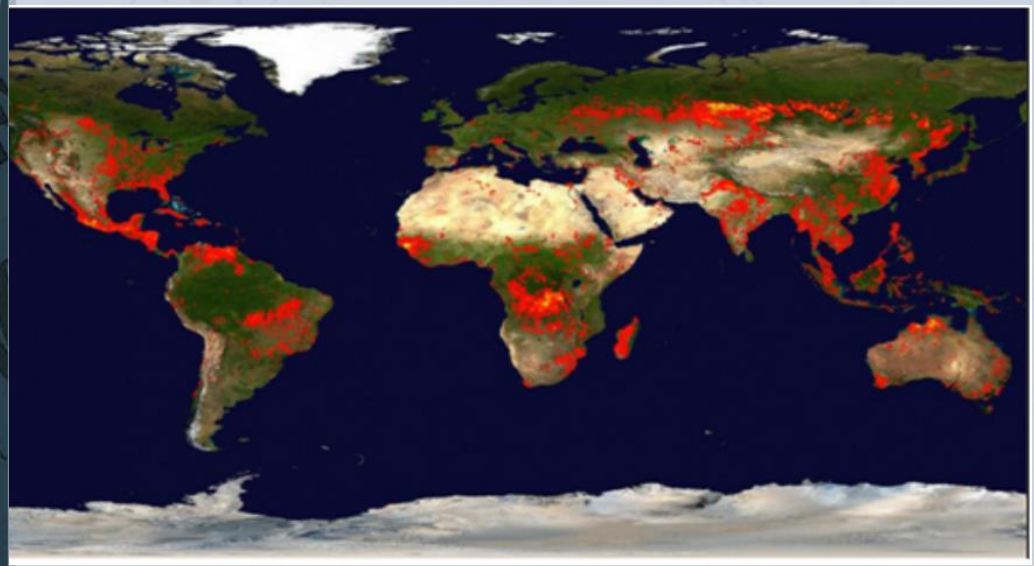
DTE

Feb 9

WILDFIRE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Chile records its deadliest wildfire in 123 years, may be linked to climate change



The Recent Forest Fires (2022-2023)

- Wildfires in Hawaii (Lahaina)
- **USA**: Northern California
- **Canada**: British Columbia and Alberta province
- **Russia**: Black Sea town of Gelendzhik
- **Spain**: Tenerife, Canary Islands and La Palma
- **Greece**: Plataniostos in Evia Island; city of Alexandroupolis, Evros region
- **India**: Fires in Simlipal National Park (Odisha), Goa
- **South Central Chile**: Ñuble, Maule, Biobío and Auracanía.

Context: At least 131 people have died in the wildfire that ravaged Chile in February 2024, according to the National Disaster Prevention and Response Service (SENAPRED), the National Disaster Prevention and Response Service, Chile.

Wildfire

- **About**: Wildfires, also known as bushfires, brush fires, or forest fires, are expansive, uncontrollable, and potentially devastating fires that can impact both rural and urban areas.
- **Spread and Unpredictability**: These fires have the ability to spread rapidly, change direction unexpectedly, and can even "jump" across large distances as embers and sparks are carried by the wind.
- **Causes**: Wildfires can be triggered by a variety of natural causes, such as lightning, or by human activities, including carelessness like the improper disposal of items like discarded cigarettes.
- **Factors**: The extent of a wildfire's spread is influenced by the arrangement of the landscape, the availability of fuel (such as vegetation or dead wood), and prevailing weather conditions, including wind and heat.
- **Rapid Onset and Intensity**: Wildfires can initiate within seconds, transforming into intense infernos within a matter of minutes, making them highly unpredictable and dangerous.
- **Naturally Occurring Wildfires**: They are most frequently caused by lightning. There are also volcanic, meteor, and coal-seam fires, depending on the circumstances.
- **Human Caused Wildfires**: It can be accidental, intentional (arson), or from an act of negligence.

PIB

Feb 9

M.S SWAMINATHAN

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Agriculture)

Dr. MS Swaminathan to be awarded Bharat Ratna: PM

Context: Eminent agronomist and agricultural scientist Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan will be conferred the prestigious Bharat Ratna award for his unparalleled contributions to Indian agriculture and farmers' welfare, Prime Minister of India announced.

M.S. Swaminathan

- **Early Life:** Born in Kumbakonam, Madras Presidency, on August 7, 1925, Swaminathan was the second son of general surgeon MK Sambasivan and Parvati Thangammal Sambasivan.
- **Professional life**: After doing his post-doctoral research associateship at the University of Wisconsin's Laboratory of Genetics in the US, Swaminathan returned to India in 1954.
  Advocating Self-Reliance in Agriculture: Criticizing India's food grain imports despite a 70% dependence on agriculture, Swaminathan and Nobel laureate American agronomist toured India, developing new crop varieties.
- **Achieving Self-Sufficiency**: Their efforts led to the government declaring India self-sufficient in food production in 1971.
- **Leadership in Agricultural Research**: Swaminathan was appointed Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and a secretary to the Government of India.
- **International Contributions: IRRI**: Becoming the first Asian director-general of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines in 1982, Swaminathan served in this role until 1988.
- **Global Environmental Stewardship**: In 1984, he assumed the roles of president and vice-president of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and World Wildlife Fund.
- **Awards**: He was awarded the first World Food Prize in 1987 and the prize money was used to set up the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation.
- **Recognitions**
  - 1961: Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award
  - 1965: Mendel Memorial Medal from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences
  - 1971: Ramon Magsaysay Award
  - 1986: Albert Einstein World Science Award
  - 1987: The first World Food Prize
  - 1991: Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement
  - 2000: Four Freedoms Award
  - 2000: Planet and Humanity Medal of the International Geographical Union

TIMES OF INDIA

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PREAMBLE OF THE CONSTITUTION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)



Can Preamble be amended without changing date: SC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Friday raised a question whether Preamble to Constitution could have been amended without changing its adoption date — Nov 26, 1949.

Preamble had initially declared India as a 'sovereign, democratic republic', but Indira Gandhi govt through 42nd amendment of Constitution during Emergency in 1976 inserted two words, 'socialist' and 'secular' in it.

SC's query came while it was responding to BJP former MP Subramanian Swamy's petition seeking removal of these insertions.

> It is not that Preamble could not have been amended (in 1976), but for academic purpose, could it have been done without changing its date of adoption ('49)?
>
> – Justice Dipankar Datta | SC

'Secularism' and 'socialism' are Constitution's inherent features, so their insertion did not alter its nature – Binoy Viswam | CPI

▶'Comes with a date', P 28

Context: The Supreme Court recently questioned whether the Preamble of the Constitution could be amended while keeping the date of adoption, November 26, 1949, intact.

- A bench of Justices posed the question to former Rajya Sabha MP who have sought deletion of the words "Socialist" and "Secular" from the Preamble of the Constitution.

Important Aspects of Preamble

- **Sovereign:** Sovereignty refers to the independent authority of a state, free from external control. It includes internal sovereignty (lawmaking) and external sovereignty (territory).
- **Socialist:** Inserted by 42nd Amendment Act in 1976, the term "Socialist" made explicit the implicit ideals of socialism already present in the Constitution.
  - **In the case of D.S. Nakara v. Union of India (1983),** the Supreme Court held that the primary objective of a socialist state is to eradicate inequality in income, status, and the standard of living.
  - Regarding the inclusion of **'socialist,' Dr B.R. Ambedkar argued in Constituent Assembly debates** that it goes against the essence of democracy to decide within the Constitution the type of society in which the people of India should live.
- **Secular:** In India, a secular state implies equal protection of all religions by the State. It was incorporated into the Constitution through the 42nd Amendment Act in 1976.
  - **Fundamental Rights** (Articles 14, 15, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30) safeguard individual and collective religious rights.
  - **The Directive Principles of State Policy** include Article 44, which promotes the concept of a Uniform Civil Code.
  - **Dr B.R. Ambedkar reasoned in Constituent Assembly** debates that the term 'secular' was unnecessary in the Preamble because the entire Constitution embodied the concept of a secular state.

Whether Preamble can be amended?

- **Berubari Union Case (1960)**: The Supreme Court (SC) ruled that the Preamble cannot be considered as a part of the Constitution and therefore cannot be amended.
- **Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973)**: SC clarified that the Preamble is indeed a part of the Constitution and can be amended, as long as it does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Union Government Vs LIC of India Case (1995)**: SC reaffirmed that the Preamble is an integral part of the Constitution, but its provisions are not directly enforceable in court.
- **Private member Bill in 2021**: Former Minister KJ Alphons introduced a bill in Rajya Sabha to amend the Indian Constitution's preamble, seeking to replace "socialist" with "equitable" and make other changes.

ALL INDIA RADIO

Feb 9

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF TRIPURA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Internal Security)

Six militants of the banned insurgent group NLFT surrendered before police with arms & ammunition

Context: A total of six militants of the banned insurgent group National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) surrendered before police with arms and ammunition.

National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)

- **About:** It is a banned Tripuri nationalist terrorist organisation based in Tripura, India.
- **Formation:** March 12, 1989
- **Objective:** To establish an 'independent' Tripura through an armed struggle following the liberation from 'Indian neo- colonialism and imperialism' and furtherance of a 'distinct and independent identity'.
- **Personal Ambitions and Religious Factors**: Nayanbasi Jamatiya and Biswamohan Debbarma lead factions due to personal ambitions and religious considerations.
- **Debbarma's Deposition (June 2003)**: Biswamohan Debbarma deposed, Mantu Koloi appointed leader allegedly at Bangladesh's behest.
  - Debbarma establishes separate camps on Tripura-Bangladesh border.
- **Split and Reasons**
  - **Internal Division (February 2001)**: Split into Biswamohan Debbarma and Nayanbasi Jamatiya factions.
  - **Reasons:** include reluctance to nominate Joshua Debbarma as 'Tripura Kingdom' King, fund misappropriation, lavish lifestyles, and forced religious conversions.



The following major militant groups have been active in the Northeast

Arunachal Pradesh
- United Liberation Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh (ULVA)
- United People's Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh (UPVA).
- United Liberation Movement of Arunachal Pradesh (ULMA)

Assam
- United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA).
- Bodo Security Force. (BSF)

Nagaland
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak/Muviah), (NSCN I/M).
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)-NSCN(K
- Naga National Council (Adinno)/Naga Federal Govt.(NFG).
- Naga National Council (Khodao)-NNC(K).

Meghalaya
- Achick Liberation Matgrik Army (ALMA).

Manipur
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN I/M)
- People's Liberation Army (PLA)/Revolutionary People's Front (RPF).
- United National Liberation Front (UNLF).
- Peoples Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPA

Tripura
- All Tripura Tribal Force (ATTF).
- Tripura National Volunteer Force (TNVF)

Mizoram
- Hmar People's Convention (HPC).

PRIVATE JETS AS POLLUTER

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Context: American Pop star's legal team has threatened legal action against Jack Sweeney, 21-year-old University of Central Florida student who runs social media accounts sharing publicly available information about private jet landings and take-offs.

The problem with private jets

- **Major Polluters**: Private jets, when assessed per capita, rank among the leading contributors to pollution globally.
- **Alarming Discrepancy:** According to a 2023 report by Transport and Environment, a European climate NGO, private jets prove to be 5 to 14 times more polluting per passenger than commercial planes, and a staggering 50 times more polluting than trains.
- **Significant Carbon Footprint**: The same report highlighted that private jets have the potential to emit approximately 2 tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) per hour, equivalent to about a quarter of the yearly carbon emissions of an average European.
- **Celebrities and Billionaires' Impact**: An estimate from a report by British media outlet Yard suggested that, in 2022, celebrities and billionaires contributed roughly 3376.64 tons of CO_2 emissions each through their private jets alone.
- **Soaring Private Jet Usage**: Despite environmental concerns, private jet usage has consistently risen over the years. A Reuters report in May 2023, citing a Greenpeace study, revealed a 64% increase in private flights in Europe during 2022, resulting in the emission of over 5.3 million tonnes of CO_2.

Representative of a much larger problem

- **Disproportionate Environmental Impact:** Private jet travel exemplifies how the affluent significantly contribute to CO_2 emissions and climate change, reflecting an unequal environmental impact.
- **Focus on Responsibility Amid Global Warming**: The escalating consequences of global warming prompt heightened scrutiny on culpability, with attention directed towards the actions of the rich and powerful.
- **UN Acknowledgment of Wealth Disparity**: The United Nations emphasizes the profound influence of lifestyles on the planet, noting that the top 1% of the global population is accountable for more greenhouse gas emissions than the bottom 50%.



WHY TAYLOR SWIFT'S PRIVATE AIR TRAVEL IS A PROBLEM FOR THE PLANET

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 9

TAYLOR SWIFT'S legal team has threatened legal action against Jack Sweeney, a 21-year-old University of Central Florida student, who runs social media accounts sharing publicly available information about private jet landings and takeoffs.

In a cease and desist letter sent to Sweeney in December, Swift's lawyers said his social media accounts cause "direct and irreparable harm, as well as emotional and physical distress", and that unless he stops the "stalking and harassing behaviour", the artist would "have no choice but to pursue any and all legal remedies", *The Washington Post* reported.

Sweeney and critics of Swift, however, have pointed out that this is an attempt to stifle criticism about the pop icon's massive carbon footprint.

Problem with private jets

Private jets, on a per capita basis, are amongst the biggest polluters in the world.

A 2023 report by Transport and Environment, a European climate NGO advocating for cleaner transportation systems, estimated that private jets were 5 to 14 times more polluting, per passenger, than commercial planes, and 50 times more polluting than trains.

The report said that private jets could emit about 2 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO_2) every hour, roughly a quarter of the yearly carbon emissions of an average European. A report by British media outlet *Yard* estimated the average amount of CO_2 produced by celebrities and billionaires — only by their private jets — to be roughly 3376.64 tonnes each in 2022.

Private jet use, however, has consistently gone up over the years. A Reuters report from May 2023, quoting a Greenpeace study, said private flights in Europe had increased by 64% in 2022, and emitted more than 5.3 million tonnes of CO_2.

World's worst CO_2 emitter

Taylor Swift, often hailed by fans as an 'ethical billionaire', has routinely copped criticism for her widespread use of private jets, even for distances that could easily be covered by road.

For instance, her January 30 flight from St Louis to St Louis. She took off from St Louis Downtown Airport in Illinois, and landed 13 minutes later at the Spirit of St Louis Airport in Missouri, only 45 km (and 40 odd minutes) away by road.

In 2022, *Yard* carried out a study listing celebs with the worst private jet CO_2 emissions using data collated from Sweeney's Celebrity 'Jets Twitter' (now X) page. Despite not being on tour at the time, Swift came out on top, amassing a whopping 22,923 minutes, or 15.9 days, in air. This, *Yard* estimated, resulted in CO_2 emissions of 8,293.54 tonnes — 1,184.8 times more than the average person's total annual emissions.

Other famous persons on the list are boxing superstar Floyd Mayweather, hip-hop legend Jay-Z, baseball star Alex Rodriguez, country singer Blake Shelton, director Steven Spielberg, socialite Kim Kardashian, actor Mark Wahlberg, media personality Oprah Winfrey, and rapper Travis Scott.

Taylor Swift at the 66th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on February 4. *Reuters*

A much larger problem

Private jet travel is but one example of how the rich and powerful disproportionately contribute to CO_2 emissions and climate change.

As the world begins to suffer from global warming's catastrophic effects, there has been an ever-increasing focus on the question of culpability.

The United Nations' website on climate change says: "Our lifestyles have a profound impact on our planet. The wealthiest bear the greatest responsibility: the richest 1 per cent of the global population combined account for more greenhouse gas emissions than the poorest 50 per cent."

At the level of nations, this can be seen in the vast gulf in carbon footprints between the rich and the poor. Analysis by *The New York Times* found that 23 rich industrialised countries are responsible for 50% of all historical emissions and more than 150 countries are responsible for the rest.

This gulf persists even today. For example, the US records a per capita annual carbon emissions of 15.32 metric tonnes, while India reports only 1.89 metric tonnes annually, according to the *Global Carbon Atlas, 2021*.

At the same time, it is the poorest who are bearing the brunt of global warming's impact. "People who have contributed least to the climate crisis are right now suffering its worst impacts," Elizabeth Wathuti, a Kenyan climate activist, told Oxfam.

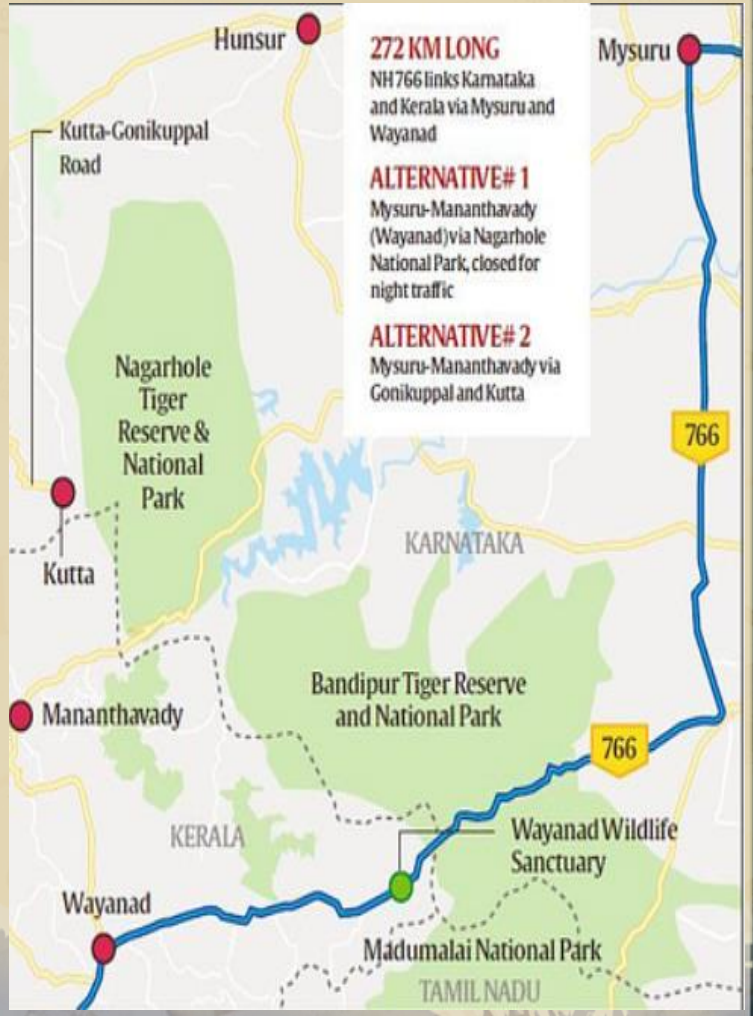
This is why climate justice is intrinsically linked to socio-economic justice. The announcement of the Loss and Damage Fund in last year's Conference of Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC in Dubai is aimed towards addressing this issue. But more needs to be done.

DTE Feb 9

BANDIPUR NATIONAL PARK
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Plan for Nilambur-Nanjangud railway line through Bandipur National Park evokes protests over ecological impact

Context: A proposal for a 236 kilometre broad-gauge railway line that will run through Bandipur National Park has conservationists rallying to protect the protected area.



Bandipur National Park

- **Established**: In 1931 as Venugopala Wildlife Park
  - Expanded with the name Bandipur Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger in 1973.
- **Location:** Two contiguous districts (Mysore and Chamarajanagar) of Karnataka and located at the tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala
- **Rivers**: It is surrounded by River Kabini in its north and River Moyar in its south.
- **Vegetation**: Dry deciduous to tropical mixed deciduous.
- **Flora**: Rosewood, Indian kino tree, sandalwood, Indian laurel, clumping bamboo, giant clumping bamboo etc.
- **Fauna**: Wild Asian elephants, bengal tiger, gaur, sloth bear, golden jackal, dhole, four-horned antelope, etc.

Other Tiger Reserves in Karnataka

- Bhadra Tiger Reserve
- Nagarahole Tiger Reserve
- Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve

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INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

U.S.-China tussle, warships in Indian Ocean dominate IOC conference

Suhasini Haidar
PERTH


S. Jaishankar

The militarisation of the Indian Ocean and "great power rivalry" are growing concerns for smaller countries in the region, said Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, inaugurating the Indian Ocean Conference in Perth on Friday, as the forum focused on regional cooperation for Indian Ocean Rim and littoral states got under way. As External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke of challenges to international rule of law from the Red Sea to the Indo-Pacific, taking aim specifically at China, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said it was necessary to find ways to reduce conflict in the region.

"Instability increases when long-standing agreements are no longer observed, with no credible justification to justify a change of stance," Mr. Jaishankar said, delivering a keynote address at the conference organised by the India Foundation, in a veiled reference to China's amassing of troops at the Line of Actual Control since April 2020. He also made an oblique reference to Chinese actions in the South China Sea, as he spoke of the challenges to freedom of navigation and overflights, and a disregard for internationally negotiated regimes like UNCLOS as "disturbing".

Speaking at the same event, Sri Lankan President Wickremesinghe said several countries, including India, the U.S., Australia, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and China were all increasing their naval presence in the Indian Ocean "significantly". "Balancing between the great power rivalry is becoming an increasingly more complex task," said Mr. Wickremesinghe, explaining smaller states have the question of choosing "one over the others" over them. "As a result, the space for manoeuvrability for littoral states is shrinking fast as this rivalry in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) intensifies," he added.

Last month, Sri Lanka announced a one-year moratorium on all foreign research ships docking at its ports, after India objected to dual purpose "spy ships" being allowed into Colombo and Hambantota ports. The moratorium came even as a Chinese warship *Xiang Yang Hong 3* made plans to dock in Male for what the Maldives government called a routine "port call", but added to tensions between the Muizzu and Modi governments, already roiled by Maldives's demand that Indian soldiers leave the islands in the next few months.

President Wickremesinghe was the only head of state at the Indian Ocean Conference, that is organised annually by the India Foundation, that was held for the first time in Australia this year. He was joined by Foreign Ministers from several regional countries and delegates from 40 countries.

(The Hindu correspondent was an invitee to the Indian Ocean Conference)

Context: Recently, the External Affairs Minister of India traveled to the Australian city of Perth to attend a two-day conference on the Indian Ocean.

Indian Ocean Conference

- **About:** It is a flagship consultative forum for countries in the Indian Ocean Region, organized annually by the Ministry of External Affairs, in association with the India Foundation.
- **7th edition held in**: Perth, Australia
- **Theme of the 7th Conference is:** 'Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean'.
- **Started in**: 2016
- **Aim:** To deliberate upon the prospects of regional cooperation for Security and Growth for All in Region (SAGAR).

Significance of the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)

- **Enhancing Regional Collaborations**: The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) strives to fortify alliances with countries in the Indian Ocean region, fostering stronger partnerships.
- **Promoting Political Engagement**: The conference serves as a platform to elevate regional political involvement, encouraging active participation and dialogue among member nations.
- **Crisis Decision-Making Facilitation**: One of the primary objectives of the IOC is to facilitate effective decision-making during crisis situations, ensuring timely and coordinated responses.
- **Global Event Discussions:** Participating countries seize the opportunity to engage in discussions about ongoing global events, enabling them to stay well-informed and make strategic decisions for future actions.

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