

DECEMBER

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MK Yadav Sir



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MINISTRY OF
SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY

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COP-15 summit adopts historic biodiversity deal

Kunming-Montreal Agreement is aimed at saving the lands, oceans and species from pollution, degradation and climate change, and is being compared to the landmark Paris Agreement

Press Trust of India
MONTREAL

After four years of fractious talks, nearly 200 countries, including India, approved a historic Paris-style deal on Monday to protect and reverse dangerous loss to global biodiversity, following an intense final session of negotiations at the UN COP-15 summit here in Canada.

Amid applause, Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu, the president of the COP-15 biodiversity summit, which started on December 7, declared the Kunming-Montreal Agreement adopted.

The Chair manoeuvred to ignore Congo's last-minute refusal, demanding greater funding for developing countries.

'Peace pact with nature'

The Kunming-Montreal pact is hailed as a landmark to protect biodiversity. Here are a few points:

'30 by 30'

The cornerstone of the agreement is the so-called 30 by 30 goal — a pledge to protect 30% of the world's land and seas by 2030

Indigenous rights

Indigenous rights were addressed throughout the text, including in areas covered by the 30 by 30 pledge — safeguarding Indigenous peoples' right to remain stewards of land they use and ensuring they are not subject to mass evictions

Finance

The text approves the objective for rich countries to provide "at least \$20 billion per year by 2025, and ... at least \$30 billion per year by 2030", approximately double and then triple the current international aid for biodiversity. Also it creates a "trust fund" within an existing financial mechanism called the Global Environment Facility, as a stepping stone to a new fund in the future



Adopted: China's Minister Huang Runqiu passes the deal in Montreal on Monday. REUTERS

The Chinese-brokered deal is aimed at saving the lands, oceans and species from pollution, degradation and climate change. Monitored wildlife populations have seen a devastating 69% drop on average since 1970, according to the Living Planet Report

(LPR) 2022 of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Environment Minister, Bhopender Yadav, who was part of negotiations, told *The Hindu* that broadly the agreement was "positive" as far as India was concerned. On Saturday, he laid out India's position

that goals and targets set in the Global Biodiversity Framework ought to be ambitious, as well as "realistic and practical".

(With inputs from Jacob Koshy)

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KUNMING-MONTREAL AGREEMENT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Context: After four years of fractious talks, nearly 200 countries, including India, approved a historic Paris-style deal, **Kunming-Montreal Agreement**, to protect and reverse dangerous loss to global biodiversity following an intense final session of negotiations at the **UN COP15 summit here in Canada**.

Kunming-Montreal Agreement

- **About:** The **15th Conference of Parties (COP15)** to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** December 19, 2022.
- **Objective:** The **Chinese-brokered deal** is aimed at saving the 30% of world's lands, oceans and species from pollution, degradation and climate change by 2030. (**30 by 30 target**)
- **Targets:** The framework has 23 targets that the world needs to achieve by 2030.
 - **Increasing the level of financial resources:** The deal commits to progressively **increase the level of financial resources from all sources by 2030**, mobilising at least USD 200 billion per year. This represents roughly a doubling from a 2020 baseline.
 - A major achievement is the commitment to USD 20 billion in international finance flows by 2025 and USD 30 billion by 2030.
 - **Cutting subsidies:** The 23 targets in the accord **include cutting environmentally "destructive" farming subsidies**, reducing the risk from pesticides, and tackling invasive species.
 - **Reduce to near zero:** The deal aims to **reduce to near zero the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance**, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity and cut global food waste in half and significantly reduce overconsumption and waste generation.
 - **Monitoring of institutions:** The deal requires large and transnational companies and financial institutions to **monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies, and impacts on biodiversity** through their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios.

FinMin red-flags misuse of CSS funds by Chhattisgarh

ASIT RANJAN MISHRA
New Delhi, 19 December

The finance ministry has raised concern over violation of guidelines by the Chhattisgarh government in utilisation of funds transferred to the state for the centrally sponsored schemes (CSS).

In two separate letters to the Chhattisgarh chief secretary last month, Union Finance Secretary TV Somanathan said action should be initiated against officers responsible, if necessary.

The Union finance ministry has claimed that around ₹1,213 crore has not been transferred to the Single Nodal Agency (SNA) accounts and the expenditure is being incurred directly from the state treasury in violation of guidelines. It also pointed out that over ₹11 crore has been diverted from SNA accounts to time deposits to incur interest income. To bring more efficiency in the public expenditure management, the finance ministry had in March last year established a new procedure of fund flows to states under CSS. According to this notification, all expenditure under CSS is to be incurred

THE ISSUE IN POINT

- FinMin claims that CSS funds in Chhattisgarh have been diverted to fixed/other deposits in violation of expenditure department's norms
- Over ₹11 crore diverted from SNA accounts to time deposits to incur interest income
- Union finance secretary has written twice to Chhattisgarh, asking for action against officers responsible, if necessary
- Chhattisgarh finance ministry has sent the letters for "necessary action"
- Around ₹1,213 crore not been transferred to Single Nodal Agency accounts and the expenditure being incurred directly from state treasury



from the dedicated SNA accounts only, in order to prevent states from diverting such funds and earning interest by parking such funds in fixed deposits. Every state was asked to open a SNA for each CSS in a Scheduled Commercial Bank authorised to conduct government business. In case of umbrella schemes that have multiple sub-schemes, if needed, the states were allowed to designate separate SNAs for

each sub-scheme.

"An analysis of the data of transactions from the SNA account has revealed that from several SNA accounts in your state(s), CSS funds have been diverted to fixed/other deposits in violation of DoE's (Department of Expenditure's) guidelines dated March 23, 2021. You are requested to issue strict instructions to revert back these funds to SNA accounts immediately and, if

appropriate, initiate action against the officers concerned for violation of the instructions," Somanathan said in a November 14 letter.

In another letter on the same day, Somanathan wrote: "An analysis of data shared by your state regarding release/expenditure of CSS funds from the state treasuries has revealed that a substantial portion of funds are being transferred to the SNA account and the expenditure is being incurred directly from the state treasuries in violation of guidelines."

"You are requested to stop direct expenditure of CSS from the treasury forthwith, and if appropriate, initiate action against the officers concerned responsible for the violation of the instructions. Henceforth, we will not treat expenditure incurred in violation of DoE's guidelines as valid CSS expenditure," Somanathan added.

Business Standard has reviewed copies of both the letters. The finance ministry of Chhattisgarh government on its part has sent the letters for "necessary action". An email sent to the Chhattisgarh chief secretary didn't elicit any response till press time.

CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

Context: The finance ministry has raised concern over violation of guidelines by the Chhattisgarh government in utilisation of funds transferred to the state for the centrally sponsored schemes (CSS).

Centrally sponsored schemes (CSS)

- **About:** The category of centrally sponsored schemes comprises programmes that have a **national character or a regional character**.
 - Earlier, there were nearly 67 centrally sponsored schemes, but many of them were **phased out after the suggestions of the 14th Finance Commission were implemented**.
- **Different from central sector scheme:** The central welfare schemes at the state level fall into two broad categories: The first category is centrally sponsored schemes, and the second is the central sector schemes.
 - While the Union government fully funds the central sector schemes, **centrally sponsored schemes are jointly funded by the Centre and states**.
- **Categories:** CSS are broadly divided into two categories: **Core of the core schemes and core schemes**.
 - **6 centrally sponsored schemes** fall in the category of core of the core schemes, or the most crucial schemes for the government of India:
 - National Social Assistance Programme
 - MGNREGA or the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
 - Umbrella Scheme for Development of Scheduled Castes
 - Umbrella Programme for Development of Scheduled Tribes
 - Umbrella Scheme for Development of Minorities
 - Umbrella Scheme for Development of Other Vulnerable Groups
 - There are **23 other centrally sponsored schemes**, which are listed under core schemes. Most of the flagship schemes of the Union government are covered under this category.
- **Funding pattern:** There are **several models of funding of centrally sponsored schemes**, but a large part of the funding comes from the Centre.
 - In most of the cases, the Union government and the states fund these schemes at a **60:40 ratio**.
 - In some cases, the funding ratio could be **80:20**.
 - In the case of **north-eastern states**, 90 percent of the funds come from the central government.
 - Union government spends nearly **12% of its annual budget on centrally sponsored schemes**.

Survey sheds light on bleak state of elementary education in Jharkhand

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, DECEMBER 19

ONE TEACHER in 20 per cent of the 138 schools sampled, zero schools with functional toilets, electricity and water supply—all three taken together, inadequate government funds for midday meals, very few schools with the prescribed pupil-teacher ratio of below 30, and grossly misleading data on the number of functional toilets in schools. These are some of the findings that point out the dismal state of the schooling system, especially post Covid-19, in Jharkhand as per a new survey titled: 'Gloom in the Classroom' in 138 primary and upper-primary schools in 16 districts.

The survey was conducted by Gyan Vigyan Samiti Jharkhand and the report was prepared by economist Jean Dreze and researcher Paran Amitava. The report, released on roadscholarz.net—a portal run by freelance scholars and student volunteers interested in action-oriented re-

search, socio-economic rights and related issues—said basic comparisons between the sample schools and all-Jharkhand data from the Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) did not uncover any evidence of 'serious bias'.

The survey covered topics such as the condition of the school infrastructure, teaching methods, midday meals, obstacles to better quality education, remedial measures initiated to help children affected by the Covid-19 crisis, and teachers' views on various matters.

The report said: "The dismal state of the schooling system in Jharkhand reflects decades of state apathy towards elementary education. This apathy is both a mistake and an injustice. It is a mistake because quality education for all could transform the economy and society of Jharkhand. It is an injustice because it keeps oppressed classes and communities where they are."

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

U-DISE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

Context: The survey was conducted by **Gyan Vigyan Samiti Jharkhand** and the report, prepared by economist Jean Dreze and researcher Paran Amitava, slammed "decades of state apathy" towards education in the state and said it was "both a mistake and an injustice".

- The report said basic comparisons between the sample schools and all-Jharkhand data from the **Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE)** did not uncover any evidence of 'serious bias'.

Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE)

- **About:** Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) was **initiated in 2012-13**.
 - It is one of the **largest Management Information Systems** on School Education.
 - It covers more than 15 lakh schools and more than 26.4 crore children.
 - In this system, **data was first filled in paper format** and then manually entered into the computer. However, this system is prone to errors & misuse.
- **UDISE+:** UDISE+ is an **updated version of UDISE**, where the data from the schools is collected online and in real-time.
 - It is to **overcome the issues present in the UDISE system** such as errors in data and delays.
 - UDISE+ was **developed by the Department of School Education and Literacy** in 2018-19.
 - In the UDISE+ system, improvements were made regarding data capture, data mapping, and verification of data.
- **UDISE+ 2020-21 report data**
 - **Enrolments:** In 2020-21, 25.38 crore students enrolled in school education from primary to higher secondary. There is an **increase of 28.32 lakh enrolments as compared to 2019-20**.
 - **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has **improved in 2020-21** at all levels of school education compared to 2019-20.
 - **Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR):** Teachers engaged in school education during 2020-21 stood at 96.96 lakh. There is an increase of 8800 teachers, compared to 2019-20.
 - The **Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in 2021-22** is 26 for primary, 19 for upper primary, 18 for secondary and 27 for higher secondary. This is a significant progress when compared to the 2018-19 figures.
 - **Girls in schools:** In 2021-22, around 12.29 crore girls enrolled in primary to higher secondary education. This is an **increase of 8.19 lakh when compared with the 2020-21 report**.
 - **Schools and amenities:** The total number of schools in **2021-22 decreased from 15.09 lakhs in 2020-21 to 14.89 lakhs**. More than 20,000 schools have been shut down in a year. This may be because of closure of private and other management schools and grouping or clustering of schools by various states.
 - 39.7 lakh students from private and government-aided schools shifted to government schools in 2020-21. This shows the impact of COVID-19 on education.

Centre, Punjab split over textile scheme

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Availability of land for the scheme is causing a rift. REUTERS

Punjab is unlikely to get a mega textile park under a central scheme to bring scale and efficiency in textile manufacturing, with the state and Centre yet to agree on making land available for the scheme.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) state government had planned the park near Mattewara forest in Ludhiana, but scrapped it later. A central government official said the state is yet to propose an alternative area.

A Punjab government official said the state wants an assurance that it would get the park before it starts acquiring 1,000 acres, a key criterion under the ₹4,445 crore Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA).

"Punjab is yet to propose an alternative land parcel for a textile park. About 13 states have sent 18 proposals. Some states have proposed multiple land parcels and we will soon finalize seven parks," a central government official said.

Among states that have shown interest are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. Commerce minister Piyush Goyal recently indicated that the Centre may announce the names of seven parks after the winter session of parliament.

"We have communicated our willingness to offer 1,000 acres of land for the textile park, but will they (central government) give us the textile park? We have given 2-3 options," an official with Punjab's Department of Industries & Commerce said.

PM MITRA SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Infrastructure)

Context: Punjab is unlikely to get a mega textile park under a central scheme to bring scale and efficiency in textile manufacturing, with the state and Centre yet to agree on making land available for the scheme

- Punjab government wants an assurance that it would get the park before it starts acquiring 1,000 acres, a key criterion under the ₹4,445 crore Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA).

PM MITRA scheme

- **About:** PM MITRA (Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) scheme was first announced in **Union Budget for 2021-22**.
 - Under the scheme, a park will be developed by a **Special Purpose Vehicle** which will be owned by the Central and State Government and in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.
- **5F vision:** The PM MITRA scheme is inspired by the 5F vision - **Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign**.
 - It aspires to fulfill the vision of building an **Atma Nirbhar Bharat** and to position India strongly on the Global textiles map.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Textiles.
- **Components of the project:** The parks will have **50% area for manufacturing activity, 20% for utilities, and 10% area for commercial development**.
 - The textile parks will include an incubation centre and plug-and-play facility, developed factory sites, roads, power, water, and waste-water system, common processing house and CETP, and other related facilities like design centre, testing centre, among others.
 - The parks will also have workers' hostels and housing, logistics park, warehousing, medical, training and skill development facilities.
- **Funding and Capital:**
 - **Greenfield PM MITRA park:** The Government of India development capital support will be **30 percent of the project cost**, with a cap of Rs 500 crore.
 - **Brownfield PM MITRA park:** After assessment, development capital support at **30 percent of project cost of balance infrastructure and other support facilities** to be developed and restricted to a limit of Rs 200 crore.
 - **Competitiveness incentive support (CIS):** The Centre will also provide a **fund of ₹300 crores for each PM MITRA Park** to incentivize the establishment of manufacturing units.
 - It will be **paid up to 3 percent of the turnover** of a newly established unit in the parks.
 - State government support will include the **availability of "contiguous and encumbrance-free land parcel of over 1,000+ acres"** along with other textiles-related facilities and ecosystems.

TIGHT SYSTEM LIQUIDITY to see borrowing rates increasing by 50-75 bps by March-end NBFCs to Face Higher Fund Costs as Banks Look to Pass on MCLR Hikes

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Mumbai: Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are likely to see an uptick in their cost of funds as banks are expected to pass on rate changes to loans linked to the Marginal Cost Lending rates (MCLR). So far, non-banks have been able to protect their margins as banks have not passed on the entire rate increase costs to MCLR borrowers.

Since the start of the hardening rate cycle in May, while repo rates have been hiked by 225 basis points, banks have increased MCLR rates only by 70-130 bps. One basis point is 0.01%.

"While we have managed to limit the impact of rate hikes on borrowers and our margins so far due to slower transmission in the MCLR linked loans, we see costs rising by 50-75 bps starting from December 2022 to March 2023 as banks look to pass on these hikes due to tight system liquidity," said the chief financial officer of a mid-sized non-bank.

Bottom Line Stress

Repo hiked by **225 bps**
MCLR hiked by **70-130 bps**

NBFCs' cost of funds expected to rise by **100-120 bps**
Gross spreads could decline by **40-60 bps**

Banking system liquidity surplus has narrowed to around **₹1.5 lakh cr** from **₹6.3 lakh cr** at the start of FY23



Liquidity has generally been trending down with the central bank seeking to reduce excess liquidity from the system to manage inflation. The banking system liquidity surplus has narrowed to around ₹1.5 lakh crore from ₹6.3 lakh crore at the start of the fiscal year. Due to tightening liquidity conditions as banks are forced to hike deposit rates, they will pass on this hit through MCLR loans.

"Banks, which are the largest funding source for these non-banks, have not passed on the entire cost increase and these entities have been able to pass on the limited rate hikes to the end-borrowers," said Manushree Sagar, vice president, financial sector ratings at ICRA.

More than 55% of PSU banks' floating rate loans are still linked to MCLR. Almost 41% of SBI's loans are still linked to MCLR.

As per a Crisil report, the cost of funds for the sector is expected to rise by 100-120 bps, while gross spreads during the second half of this fiscal year are likely to narrow down by 40-60 bps.

"Rising rates will also lift the borrowing cost of NBFCs and lower their competitiveness versus banks, which have access to lower-cost funds," Crisil Ratings said in a report. "Competition from banks will remain intense and the rising interest rate environment will exert pressure on margins and limit competitive ability, especially in the largest traditional segments of home loans and new vehicle finance."

Context: Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are likely to see an uptick in their cost of funds as banks are expected to pass on rate changes to loans linked to the Marginal Cost Lending rates (MCLR).

Marginal Cost Lending rates (MCLR)

- **About:** This Interest Rate is used by all banking and non-banking institutions as their minimum interest rate applicable for lending any loan.
 - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gives a fixed **Internal Reference Rate for banks under it.**
 - It has replaced the earlier **Base Rate System**, which was introduced in the year 2010, for determining lending rates for commercial banks.
- **Objectives:** MCLR is implemented to bring transparency and uniformity at the interest rate on advances followed by banks.
- **MCLR calculation:** All the sources where a bank borrows its fund should be considered.
 - These include - **fixed deposits, current accounts, savings accounts and equity** or the retained earnings, etc.
 - The rate of interest used in these sources gives us the Marginal Borrowing Cost of the bank.
- **Key features:**
 - It is the **lowest rate** of fund lending.
 - No bank is permitted to **lend below this.**
 - It is **determined by banks internally**, depending upon the loan repayment time.
 - The **rate varies** from one bank to another.

Base Rate	MCLR Rate
Frequency of revision is once in a quarter.	Frequency of revision is monthly.
Base Rate=Cost of Fund+Margin+Operating Expenses+CRR	MCLR Rate=Marginal Cost of Funds+CRR+Operating Cost+Tenor Premium
Cost of Fund arrived at based on the cost of old deposits	Marginal Cost of Funds arrived at based on the CURRENT cost of deposits
Margin is separately calculated	Margin is part of the Marginal Cost of Funds
Interest rate for you=Base Rate+Spread	Interest rate for you=MCLR Rate+Spread

Name removed from voter's list: Notice to judge, DM for 'inaction'

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Bareilly: Following a plea by a Dalit woman who said her name was "removed" from the voter's list during the 2022 UP assembly polls, Allahabad HC has issued notices to Sambhal's special SC/ST Act judge along with DM Manish Bansal, SDM, tehsildar, naib tehsildar and a booth level officer.

According to Seema Devi, a resident of Akbarpur village in Sambhal, she had raised several complaints but no one took action and "she couldn't exercise her voting rights". Later, she tried to lodge a complaint under section 156(3) of CrPC in the court of the SC/ST judge but the latter, she said, refused to order an FIR. Consequently, Seema approached the HC and filed a criminal appeal.

Seema's counsel Vimlesh Kumari told **TOI** on Monday: "My client's vote was cancelled without giving her any notice. Despite staying in the same address, she couldn't vote. After failing to get any response from administrative officials, she filed a case in the special SC/ST court but the judge, instead of ordering an FIR, directed the police to carry out a probe."

Context: Following a plea by a Dalit woman who said her name was "removed" from the voter's list during the 2022 UP assembly polls, Allahabad HC has issued notices to Sambhal's special SC/ST Act judge along with DM, SDM, tehsildar, naib tehsildar and a booth level officer.

Electoral roll

- **About:** An electoral roll is a list of people who have enrolled to vote for particular elections in a particular jurisdiction.
 - The **Election Commission of India is a permanent Constitutional Body** that Prepares and periodically revises electoral rolls and registers all eligible voters.
- **Types of electoral rolls:** In many states, the **voters' list for the panchayat and municipality elections** is different from the one used for Parliament and Assembly elections.
 - **Some state laws** allow the SEC (State Election Commission) to borrow and use the Election Commission of India voter's rolls for the local body elections.
 - In others, the **state commission uses the EC's voters list** as the basis for the preparation and revision of rolls for municipality and panchayat elections.
 - **Few states have their own electoral rolls and do not adopt EC's roll** for local body polls like those of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - The distinction stems from the fact that the supervision and conduct of elections in our country are entrusted with two constitutional authorities - the **Election Commission (EC) of India and the State Election Commissions (SECs)**.
- **Disqualification:** Section 16 (1) of the **Representation of People Act, 1950** says a person shall be disqualified for registration in an electoral roll if he :
 - is not a citizen of India; or
 - is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; or
 - is for the time being disqualified from voting under the provisions of any law relating to corrupt practices and other offences in connection with elections.

PM greets people of Goa on Goa Liberation Day

Context: The Prime Minister has greeted the people of Goa on Goa Liberation Day.

Goa Liberation Day

- **About:** The Liberation of Goa was a military action undertaken by the Government of India to liberate the territories of **Diu, Daman and Goa from Portuguese** rule on 17 -19 December 1961.
 - India observes Goa Liberation Day every year on **December 19** to celebrate the independence of the smallest state of the Union in 1961.
- **Operation Vijay:** The “armed action” was **code-named Operation Vijay by the Indian Armed Forces**.
 - It involved **air, sea and land strikes** for over 36 hours during which Goa was liberated from 450 years of Portuguese rule.
- **Liberation of Goa:** The Goa was annexed into the Indian Union and **became the Union Territory** of India along with Daman and Diu.
 - In 1967, however, the question of whether the state should merge with Maharashtra or not was answered through a plebiscite in which the majority of the Goan people voted against a merger.
 - It continued to **remain a Union Territory until 1987** when it was accorded statehood.
 - **Goa became India's 25th state** even as Daman and Diu continue to be Union Territories.
- **Key Facts:** Goa is **located on the southwestern coast of India** within the **region known as the Konkan**, and geographically separated from the Deccan highlands by the Western Ghats.
 - It is bounded by the states of Maharashtra on the north and Karnataka on the east and south and by the Arabian Sea on the west.
 - It's official language is **Konkani**, is one of the 22 languages from the Eight Schedule. It was added in the list along with Manipuri and Nepali by the **71st Amendment Act of 1992**.
 - The highest point of Goa is Sonsogor.
 - **Goa's seven major rivers** are the Zuari, Mandovi, Terekhol, Chapora, Galgibag, Kumbarjua canal, Talpona and the Sal.
 - Most of Goa's soil cover is made up of **laterites**.

OCEAN SAILING EXPEDITION ON INDIAN NAVAL SAILING VESSEL (INSV) TARINI FOR CAPE TO RIO RACE - 23

Context: Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini has set sail for an expedition to Cape Town, South Africa for participating in the **50th edition of Cape to Rio Race 2023**.

Key Points

- The expedition is being undertaken by an **Indian Navy**.
- This **ocean sailing race** will be flagged off from Cape Town on 02 Jan 23 and will culminate at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- The race is one of the most prestigious **Trans-Atlantic ocean races**.
- During this expedition whilst transiting from **Goa to Rio de Janeiro via Cape Town and back**, INSV Tarini would be covering a distance of almost 17000nm (approx. 30000 km).
- The crew, over a **period of 5-6 months in this transoceanic voyage** is expected to face extreme weather and rough sea conditions of the Indian, Atlantic and the Southern oceans
- The expedition aims to train the crew onboard, in essential seamanship skills including **Navigation, Communication, Technical, Planning, etc.**
- The expedition is an important milestone in training of the **two women officers onboard** for undertaking solo circumnavigation sailing expedition of the globe.

INSV Tarini

- **About:** INSV Tarini is the **second sailboat of the Indian Navy**.
 - Tarini is similar to her predecessor, the **INSV Mhadei**, which has travelled over 115,000 nautical miles during her eight years of service.
- **Commissioned to Navy:** It was constructed at **Aquarius Shipyard located in Goa**.
 - After undergoing extensive sea trials, It was **commissioned to Indian Navy service on 18 February 2017**.
- **Key Features:** The boat has six sails, including **mainsail, genoa, stay, downwind and storm sail**.
 - It is capable of **sailing in extreme conditions**.
 - It is fitted with advanced features such as **satellite communications, Raymarine navigation suite and a Monitor windvane** equipped for emergency steering.
 - INSV Tarini is **known for circumnavigating the globe** with an all women officer crew in the historic expedition titled '**Navika Sagar Parikrama**' in 2017.
 - Navika Sagar Parikrama is the name of expedition for circumnavigation the globe on INSV Tarini **by Indian Navy's Women Naval Officers**.

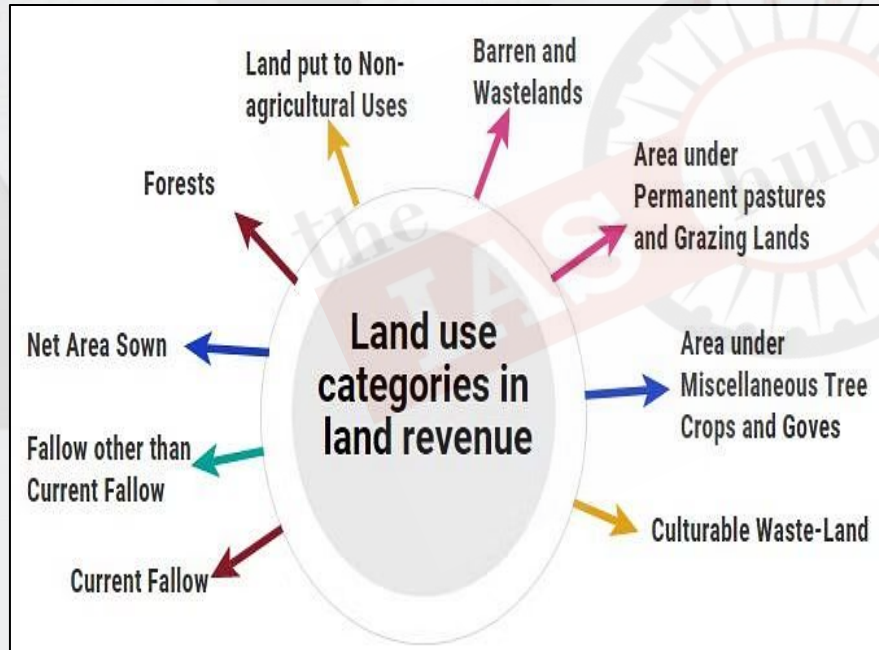
Jaisalmer villagers march 225 kilometres to get sacred groves listed as 'oran land'

More than 100 orans documented by a non-profit still listed as wastelands



NEXT NEWS >

By Shuchita Jha
Published: Monday 19 December 2022



Context: Residents from around 40 villages of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan have walked 225 kilometres to protect community-conserved **sacred spaces known as 'orans'**.

- Currently, the biodiversity hotspots are **classified as wastelands**.
- Wastelands are those lands which are **either unavailable for cultivation or left out without being cultivated**, like fallows and culturable waste.

Key Points

- **Demands:** The villagers walked to the district headquarters of Jaisalmer to submit a letter to the collector December 19, 2022. They asked them to **re-categorise the area as 'oran land'**.
- **Issue:** The **current categorisation is causing a loss of biodiversity** and is affecting the livelihood of the locals in the area, as huge chunks of land are being allotted for setting up solar plants.
- **Orans:** The orans are among the **last natural habitats of the great Indian bustard**.
 - The orans are **listed as 'wastelands'** in the revenue records.
 - The **Degrai Oran** is around 10,000 hectares (60,000 bighas), but only 4,000 hectares are recognised as oran, which are listed as common land. The rest is **categorised as wasteland**.
 - There are other orans like **Mokla, Salkha, Kemde**, which also spread across several hectares but are listed as wastelands..
 - These orans are **hotspots of biodiversity with trees and flowers** like rohida, bordi, kumbhat, and desi babool in large numbers.
 - There are **different varieties of grasses** like sevan and murath as well, making these grasslands home to more than 250 species of birds and animals, including the great Indian bustard, McQueen bustard, chinkara, Indian desert cat, desert fox, etc.
- **Solar projects:** The open stretch of land, which receives long hours of sunlight and brisk winds, has become a **hub of green energy** with windmills and solar photovoltaic dotting it.
 - The government is allotting these lands for solar projects to make them 'useful'.
- **SC Judgement:** The Supreme Court in 2018 had ordered the orans be recorded as 'deemed forests' in the revenue records in the **TN Godavarman vs. Union of India case**, but not even one oran has been recorded as a deemed forest so far.
 - Deemed Forests are **physical parcels that look to be forested** but aren't listed as such in historical or official records.
 - In India, deemed forests account for **about 1% of total forest land**.

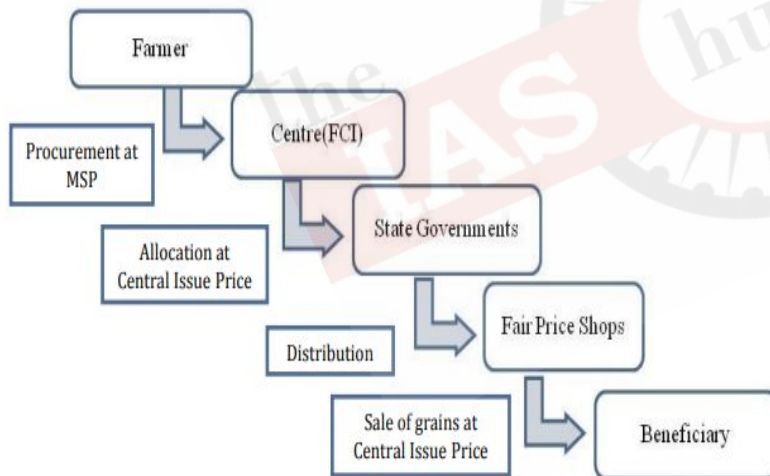
Dying for ration: These Barmer widows and orphans are being turned away from PDS shops

Settlement has lost most of its men to liquor abuse; Women work as waste pickers



NEXT NEWS >

By Himanshu Nitnaware
Published: Monday 19 December 2022



Context: Despite living in pathetic conditions, many people from Barmer district, Rajasthan are being turned away from ration shops despite having valid cards.

- At least 20 orphans in the settlement don't have a ration card and receive no benefits through the **Public Distribution System (PDS)**.

PDS Scheme

- About:** The Public distribution system (PDS) is an **Indian food Security System** for the poor people established by the Government of India under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution.
 - This scheme was first started on 14 January 1945, during the **Second World War**, and was launched in the current form in June 1947.
 - In September 2013, Parliament enacted the **National Food Security Act, 2013**. The Act relies largely on the existing Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to deliver food grains as legal entitlements to poor households.
- Joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments:** The central and state governments share responsibilities in order to provide food grains to the identified beneficiaries.
 - The **centre procures food grains from farmers** at a minimum support price (MSP) and sells it to states at central issue prices.
 - It is responsible for transporting the grains to godowns in each state.
 - States bear the responsibility of transporting food grains** from these godowns to each fair price shop (ration shop), where the beneficiary buys the food grains at the lower central issue price. Many states further subsidise the price of food grains before selling it to beneficiaries.
 - The **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** is the nodal agency at the centre that is responsible for transporting food grains to the state godowns. Specifically, FCI is responsible for:
 - procuring grains at the MSP from farmers
 - maintaining operational and buffer stocks of grains to ensure food security
 - allocating grains to states
 - distributing and transporting grains to the state depots
 - selling the grains to states at the central issue price to be eventually passed on to the beneficiaries.
- Major commodities:** Under the PDS, presently the commodities namely **wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene** are being allocated to the States/UTs for distribution.
 - Some States/UTs also distribute additional items of mass consumption through the PDS outlets such as pulses, edible oils, iodized salt, spices, etc.
- Key Features:** Under the PDS scheme, each family below the poverty line is eligible for **35 kg of rice or wheat every month**, while a household above the poverty line is entitled to **15 kg of foodgrain on a monthly basis**, redeemable with a card.

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