



9 September, 2024

Teal Carbon

Context: India's first teal carbon study at Keoladeo National Park underscores wetland conservation for climate resilience.

➤ Overview:

- India's first teal carbon study was conducted at Keoladeo National Park (KNP), Rajasthan.
- The research highlights the urgent need for wetland conservation for climate adaptation.
- Preliminary results showed elevated methane emissions at KNP.
- Globally, teal carbon storage in peatlands, swamps and marshes totals 500.21 petagrams.

Teal carbon refers to carbon sequestered in **non-tidal freshwater wetlands**. This includes carbon stored in:

- Vegetation:** Biomass of aquatic and semi-aquatic plants.
- Microbial Biomass:** Carbon in soil-dwelling microorganisms.
- Organic Matter:** Dissolved and particulates organic carbon in water and sediments.
- Role in Climate Change:**
 - Carbon Sequestration:** Wetlands sequester and store large amounts of carbon, reducing atmospheric CO₂.
 - Methane Emission:** Wetlands are sources of methane (CH₄), a potent greenhouse gas; thus, effective management is crucial.

➤ Keoladeo National Park (KNP) Study

- Location:** Bharatpur, Rajasthan, India.
- Objective:** Evaluate the potential of teal carbon in climate mitigation and develop nature-based solutions for managing wetlands.
- Key Findings:**
 - Methane Emissions:** High levels of methane emissions detected. Indicates the need for intervention to mitigate these emissions.
 - Biochar Application:** Use of specialised biochar, a carbon-rich material, can help reduce methane emissions from wetlands.

➤ Wetland Degradation Factors

- Pollution:** Contamination from agricultural runoff, industrial waste.
- Land Use Changes:** Conversion of wetlands for agriculture or urban development.
- Water Extraction:** Excessive withdrawal affecting water levels and ecosystem health.
- Landscape Modifications:** Alterations to natural water flow and habitat structure.
- Consequences:** Degraded wetlands can become sources of methane and carbon dioxide, exacerbating climate change.

➤ Global Teal Carbon Storage

- Estimation:** Approximately 500.21 petagrams of carbon (PgC) are stored in global wetland ecosystems.
 - Peatlands:** Major storage site for teal carbon, accumulating carbon over millennia.
 - Freshwater Swamps and Marshes:** Significant contributors to global teal carbon reserves.

➤ Conservation and Management Strategies

- Urgent Actions:**
 - Protection:** Implement measures to safeguard wetland ecosystems from degradation.
 - Management:** Integrate conservation practices to maintain and enhance teal carbon storage.
 - Biochar Development:** Research and apply biochar to manage greenhouse gas emissions from wetlands.
- Measurement Tools:**
 - LI-COR Device:** Used for real-time measurement of greenhouse gases such as CO₂ and CH₄.

➤ Recent Developments

- IUFRO World Conference:** Findings presented at the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) World Conference, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Discussion Points:**
 - Strategies for conservation and restoration to enhance carbon storage.
 - Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from teal carbon ecosystems.

Black Carbon: Carbon produced from incomplete combustion (e.g., wildfires, fossil fuels), contributing to global warming.

Brown Carbon: Carbonaceous material from combustion processes, also impacting climate change.

Parliamentary Committee

Context: The Union Ministry dissolved the 14-member Parliamentary Committee on Statistics after census delay concerns.

➤ Overview:

- The Union Ministry of Statistics dissolved the 14-member Parliamentary Committee on Statistics, led by Pronab Sen, over census delay concerns.
- The committee was dismantled due to overlapping work with the new Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys.

➤ Parliamentary Committees

- Definition:** Panels of Members of Parliament (MPs) appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker/Chairman.
- Function:** Operate under the Speaker's or Chairman's direction and report findings to the House or Speaker/Chairman.

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- **Origins:** Inspired by the British Parliament.
- **Authority:**
 - **Article 105:** Privileges of MPs.
 - **Article 118:** Parliament's authority to make rules to regulate its procedure and conduct of business.

➤ Need for Parliamentary Committees

- **Legislative Process:** Bills are introduced to start legislative work but the lawmaking process is complex and Parliament has limited time for detailed discussions.
- **Political Polarisation:** Increased polarisation leads to rancorous and inconclusive debates.
- **Committee Role:** Much legislative business is conducted in committees due to these issues.

➤ Types of Parliamentary Committees

- **Standing Committees:** Permanent and work on a continuous basis. Constituted every year or periodically.
- **Financial Committees:**
 - **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**
 - **Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU)**
 - **Estimates Committee**
- **Departmental Standing Committees:** Focus on specific government departments.
- **Committees to Enquire:** Investigate specific issues or incidents.
- **Committees to Scrutinise and Control:** Monitor and review the government's functioning.
- **Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House:**
 - **Business Advisory Committee**
 - **Rules Committee**
- **House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees:**
 - **House Committee**
 - **Library Committee**
- **Ad Hoc Committees:** Temporary and cease to exist once their task is completed.
- **Inquiry Committees:**
 - **Select Committees:** Examine specific bills or issues.
 - **Joint Committees:** Composed of both Houses of Parliament to scrutinise bills.
- **Advisory Committees:** Offer recommendations and advice.

➤ Significance of Parliamentary Committees

- **Provides Legislative Expertise:**
 - MPs often lack specialised knowledge. Committees allow detailed examination and expert consultation.

- **Acting as a Mini-Parliament:**
 - Committees include MPs from different parties in proportion to their parliamentary strength, reflecting a mini-parliamentary setup.
- **Instrument for Detailed Scrutiny:**
 - Bills are examined in detail and feedback is gathered from external stakeholders and the public.
- **Provides a Check on the Government:**
 - Committee reports are not binding but create a public record and can pressure the government to reconsider decisions.

The 'Act East Policy'

Context: PM's recent Brunei and Singapore visit highlights India's strategic push in "Act East" policy.

➤ Overview:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visits to Brunei and Singapore highlight India's renewed focus on its "Act East" policy, emphasising strategic engagement in Southeast Asia.
- Discussions covered defence and geo-strategic issues, with a renewed focus on space cooperation through an ISRO station in Brunei.
- The visit centred on collaboration in the semiconductor industry, with Singapore's significant role in electronics supply chains.

The **Act East Policy (AEP)** was introduced in November 2014 as an upgrade to the earlier Look East Policy (LEP).

➤ Purpose and Aims

- **Economic Cooperation:** Enhance trade and investment with countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Cultural Ties:** Strengthen cultural exchanges and people-to-people contact.
- **Strategic Relations:** Develop a robust strategic partnership with nations in the region.
- **Development of North Eastern Region (NER):** Improve connectivity and infrastructure in the NER to serve as a gateway to Southeast Asia.

➤ Look East Policy (1992)

- **Background:** Launched by then Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao to counterbalance the influence of China and recover from the loss of the USSR as a strategic partner.
- **Focus:** Strengthen ties with Southeast Asian countries and integrate economically with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- **Milestones:**
 - **Dialogue Partner:** India became a dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1996.
 - **Strategic Partnership:** Upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2012.

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- **Trade Growth:** ASEAN is one of India's major trading partners with a share of 11 percent in India's global trade. Bilateral trade during the year 2023-24 stood at US \$ 122.67 billion.

➤ Act East Policy (2014)

- **Enhanced Focus:**
 - Expands the scope beyond ASEAN to include East Asian countries.
 - Integrates security cooperation into the policy framework.
- **4Cs of Act East Policy:**
 - **Culture:** Promote cultural exchanges and mutual understanding.
 - **Commerce:** Strengthen economic ties and trade relations.
 - **Connectivity:** Improve physical and logistical connections.
 - **Capacity Building:** Support development projects and enhance regional capabilities.
- **Security Dimension:** Address issues related to freedom of navigation, particularly in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean and engage in regional

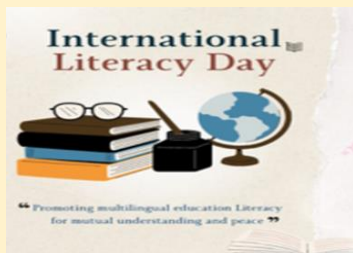
security dialogues and collaborations such as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue).

➤ Key Initiatives to Enhance Connectivity

- **Agartala-Akhaura Rail Link:**
 - **Objective:** Improve rail connectivity between India and Bangladesh.
- **Intermodal Transport and Inland Waterways:**
 - **Projects:** Develop transport linkages and utilise inland waterways through Bangladesh.
- **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project:**
 - **Purpose:** Connect India's North East with Myanmar and Thailand.
- **Trilateral Highway Project:**
 - **Objective:** Enhance road connectivity between India, Myanmar and Thailand.
- **India-Japan Act East Forum (Established 2017):**
 - **Collaborations:** Focus on infrastructure projects like roads, bridges and hydro-electric power modernization.
 - **Platform:** Facilitates cooperation between India's Act East Policy and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

International Literacy Day



The International Literacy Day was celebrated on 8th of September 2024.

About the International Literacy Day:

- International Literacy Day (ILD) is **celebrated annually on 8 September** since its inception in **1967**.
- The theme for 2024 is **"Promoting Multilingual Education: Literacy for Mutual Understanding and Peace."**
- This day was first proclaimed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- It **aims to raise awareness** about the critical importance of literacy for creating a more just, peaceful and sustainable society.
- **As of 2022, approximately 754 million adults** (1 in 7) lacked basic literacy skills, and **250 million children (aged 6-18)** were out of school, indicating a global literacy challenge.
- The global celebration will take place on 9-10 September 2024 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and will feature a global conference and the UNESCO **International Literacy Prizes award ceremony**.

Semicon India



Recently, the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government announced that it will host **Semicon India 2024** at Greater Noida's India Expo Mart from September 11 to 13.

About the Semicon India:

- The Semicon India program, also known as the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**, is a program that **aims to develop a sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in India**.
- The program was approved by the **Union Cabinet in 2021** with a financial outlay of INR 76,000 crore.
- **Semicon India 2024** aims to elevate India's semiconductor sector and position the country as a significant **global player in the industry**.
- Semicon India 2024 will be held alongside **Electronica India** and **Productronica India**, which are the **largest electronics fairs in Southeast Asia**.
- It is being organized by the Uttar Pradesh government in collaboration with **SEMI, Messe Muenchen India** and the **Electronic Industries Association of India**.

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Gulf Cooperation Council



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will attend the first India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Riyadh today on 9th of September.

About the Gulf Cooperation Council:

- The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a **political, economic, social and regional organization of six Arab countries** including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- It was established in **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 1981** and has held a summit meeting every year since.
- Its objective is to promote economic, cultural, security and social cooperation between the member states.
- It consists of two councils: the **Supreme Council**, comprising heads of state and meeting annually with decisions made unanimously and the **Ministerial Council**, made up of foreign ministers, meeting quarterly to develop policies and promote collaboration.
- It has launched several initiatives, including a **common market in 2008** and a **patent office in 1992**.
- The Gulf Cooperation Council **Secretariat is based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**.

GST Council



Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** to chair **54th GST Council meeting** in New Delhi today on 9th of September.

About the GST Council:

- The GST (Goods and Services Tax) Council is a **constitutional body** established under **Article 279A (1) of the Indian Constitution** by the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016.
- As per **Article 279A (1)** of the amended Constitution, the GST Council has to be constituted by the President within **60 days** of the commencement of **Article 279A**.
- It is responsible for making recommendations to the **Union and State governments** on important issues related to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), including **tax rates, exemptions, threshold limits and model GST laws**.
- The Council is **chaired by the Union Finance Minister** and includes the Union Minister of **State for Finance and the Finance Ministers** of all the states.
- Article 279A (5)** mandates that the Council recommends the date for levying GST on petroleum products and aviation turbine fuel.
- Article 279A (8)** determines procedures for the Council's functions.
- Article 279A (11)** establishes mechanisms to adjudicate disputes arising from the Council's recommendations.
- The last GST Council meeting was held in June this year, in which the council had **recommended a uniform rate of 12 percent GST** on all steel, iron and aluminium milk cans.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Where were the findings presented at the IUFRO World Conference? – **Stockholm, Sweden.**
- With which country is the Yudh Abhyas exercise conducted? – **The United States.**
- In which year was the NATO treaty signed? – **1949**
- To which sport does Aryna Sabalenka belong? – **Tennis.**
- When was the Outer Space Treaty formed? – **1967.**

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