

10 July, 2023

Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023

Context: The entire proposed amendment Bill to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, has been endorsed by a Parliamentary committee established to review its controversial provisions.

- The proposed changes aim to boost forest carbon stock through increased plantations.
- The Bill seeks to allocate land for compensatory afforestation.

Background

- **Post-Independence:**
 - Vast forest areas designated as reserved and protected forests.
 - Some forested areas excluded, while non-forested areas included as 'forest' lands.
- **1996 Supreme Court ruling:**
 - Nationwide suspension of tree felling.
 - FC Act applies to recorded 'forest' land or land resembling the dictionary meaning of a forest.
- **June 2022 Forest Conservation Rules amendment:**
 - Proposed mechanism for developers to raise plantations on non-FC Act applicable land.
 - Provision for swapping such plots to meet future compensatory afforestation requirements.

Proposed Changes to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

- **Preamble to the Act:**
 - Insert a preamble to acknowledge the country's tradition of preserving forests, biodiversity, and addressing climate change challenges.
- **Restrictions on Activities in Forest:**
 - The Act currently prohibits de-reservation of forests and non-forest use of forest land.
 - The proposed changes expand the list of restricted activities to include:
 - Zoos and safaris under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 in forest areas (excluding protected areas).
 - Eco-tourism facilities.
 - Silvicultural operations (enhancing forest growth).
 - Any other purpose specified by the central government.
- **Land under the Purview of the Act:**
 - Act will apply to two types of land:
 - Land declared/notified as a forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or any other law.
 - Land notified as a forest on or after October 25, 1980, in a government record.
 - Land converted from forest to non-forest use before December 12, 1996, will not be covered by the Act, if authorized by a state/UT.
- **Power to Issue Directions:**
 - The central government may issue directions for Act implementation to other authorities/organizations recognized by the central, state, or union territory governments.
- **Exemptions:**
 - Strategic linear projects of national importance and related to national security within 100 km of international borders, the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and the Line of Control (LoC) are exempted.
 - "Security-related infrastructure" up to 10 hectares is exempted.
 - Additional activities exempted include:
 - Silvicultural operations.
 - Construction of zoos and wildlife safaris.
 - Eco-tourism facilities.
 - Any other activities specified by the Central Government.

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Global Peace Index 2023

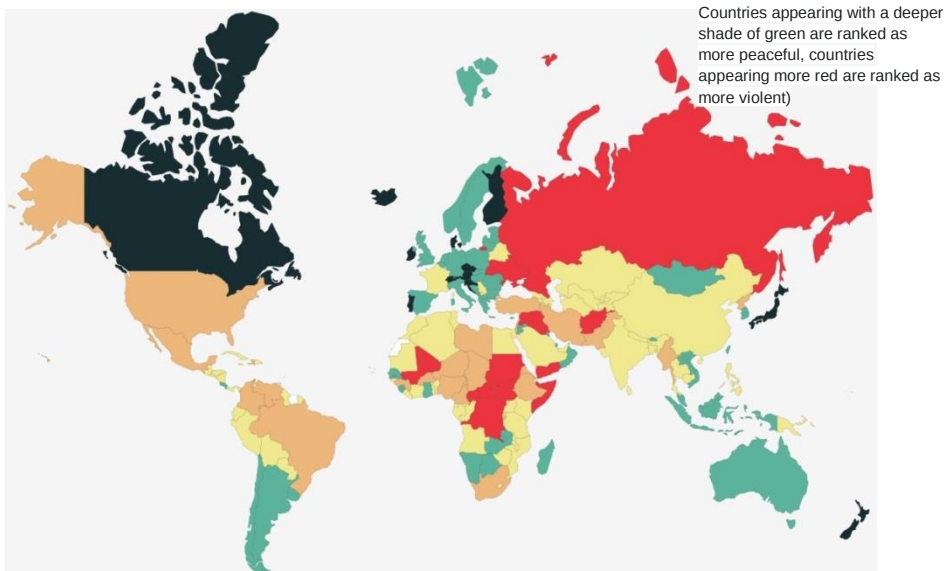
Context: The Institute for Economics and Peace has recently released the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI), ranking the most peaceful countries worldwide.

Key highlights

- **Global Peace Deterioration:** The average level of global peacefulness declined by 0.42% compared to the previous year. However, more countries improved their peacefulness levels than deteriorated.
- **Increase in conflict-related deaths:** The total number of conflict-related deaths rose by 96%.
- **Global economic cost of violence:** The global economic cost of violence reached \$17.5 trillion PPP in 2022, equivalent to 12.9% of global GDP or \$2,200 per person.
- **Most Peaceful Countries:** Iceland retains its position as the most peaceful country since 2008, followed by Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, and Austria.
- **Least Peaceful Countries:** Afghanistan continues to be the least peaceful country for the eighth consecutive year, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- **India's Ranking:** India has moved up two spots to 126th in the rankings.
- **Positive Progress in India:** The report highlights India's 3.5% improvement in overall peacefulness due to factors such as a decrease in violent crime, improved relations with neighbouring countries, and reduced political instability.
- **Rankings of Other Countries:** Nepal, China, Sri Lanka, the United States of America, and Pakistan are ranked 79th, 80th, 107th, 131st, and 146th, respectively.
- **Indicator improvements and deteriorations:** Of the 23 GPI indicators, ten indicators improved, 11 deteriorated, and two remained unchanged. Conflict-related external conflicts fought and deaths from internal conflict were the indicators with the largest deteriorations, followed by political instability. The indicators showing the biggest improvements were UN peacekeeping funding and military expenditure.

About Global Peace Index

- The Global Peace Index (GPI) is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) and serves as the leading measure of global peacefulness.
- The report provides a comprehensive and data-driven analysis on peace trends, economic value, and strategies for building peaceful societies.
- The GPI covers 99.7% of the world's population and utilizes 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from reputable sources.
- The index measures peace across three domains:
 - Societal Safety and Security
 - Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict
 - Militarisation.



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Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP)

- **Organization:** Independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization.
- **Founded:** Established in 2007.
- **Headquarters:** Based in Sydney, Australia.
- **Mission:** Aims to promote understanding of the relationship between peace, economics, and well-being.
- **Global Reach:** Operates globally, conducting research and analysis worldwide.
- **Key Reports:**
 - Global Peace Index (GPI)
 - Global Terrorism Index
 - Positive Peace Report
 - Safety Perception Report
 - Ecological Threat Report

Note: Dhyeya IAS doesn't agree to the map of India as given in the report. The image is only for representational purpose and has been taken from the Original Report.

Social Stock Exchange

Context: Raintree Foundation, a non-profit focused on climate resilience in the Western Ghats, has registered on the BSE Social Stock Exchange.

What is it?

- Social Stock Exchange (SSE) allows investors to invest in social enterprises or initiatives.
- Proposed in the Union Budget 2019-20, SSE aims to create a stock exchange under SEBI's jurisdiction.
- SEBI formed a group in 2019, chaired by Ishaat Hussain, to initiate SSE establishment.
- In 2020, SEBI set up the Technical Group (TG) led by Harsh Bhanwala for expert advice.
- SSE channels capital to private and non-profit sector providers.
- SSE exists in countries like Singapore and the UK, enabling social sector firms to raise risk capital.

Eligibility for registration on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE):

- Non-profit organizations (NPOs) and for-profit social enterprises (FPSEs) that prioritize social intent are recognized as social enterprises (SEs).
- SEs meeting the criteria are eligible for registration or listing on the SSE.
- NPOs can raise funds through the issuance of Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instruments via private placement or public issue, as well as through donations from mutual funds.

Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instruments

- Not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) issuing Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments need to be registered with the Social Stock Exchange (SSE) segment of a recognized stock exchange.
- The Finance Ministry has officially classified ZCZP instruments as securities under the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956.
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) will establish rules and regulations governing these instruments.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Enteroviruses

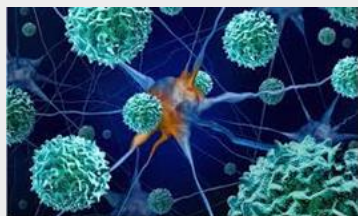
Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a warning about the increasing cases of enterovirus infections in several European countries.

Enteroviruses: Enteroviruses are a group of viruses that belong to the Picornaviridae family. They are small, single-stranded RNA viruses that can cause a wide range of infectious illnesses in humans.

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Types: Enteroviruses include coxsackieviruses, echoviruses, polioviruses and the hepatitis A virus.

Transmission: Enteroviruses can be transmitted through multiple routes including intrapartum transmission from exposure to maternal blood, secretions or stool, as well as postnatal transmission from close contact with infected caregivers.

Symptoms: Common symptoms include fever, mild cold symptoms (such as runny nose, sneezing, coughing) and muscle aches.

Treatment: There is no specific treatment for enterovirus infections. The focus is on managing symptoms until the infection runs its course, which typically takes a few days.

Annapurti (The Grain ATM)



Recently, the World Food Programme (WFP) India showcased Annapurti, an Automated Multi-Commodity Grain Dispensing Machine, during the 'National Conference of Food Ministers of States/UTs.'

What is Annapurti?

Annapurti is a Grain ATM developed by WFP India, providing fast and precise distribution of subsidized grains to beneficiaries through the Public Distribution System. It offers automated multi-commodity dispensing, ensuring efficient access to commodities like rice, wheat and grains.

Features: Annapurti offers 24x7 access to full entitlements, eliminating spillage, waste and inaccurate weighing. It can dispense one or two grain commodities up to 50 kilograms within five minutes, with minimal error.

Advantages:

Food Security: Annapurti ensures prompt distribution of subsidized grains, preventing losses and ensuring beneficiaries receive their entitled portions.

Emergency Distribution: Annapurti facilitates efficient and timely distribution of food grains during emergencies, reducing manual labor and errors.

Market Access for Farmers: Annapurti expands market access for smallholder farmers, providing a reliable distribution channel and reducing intermediaries.

INS Vikrant



Recently, the Indian Navy has announced its plan to acquire 26 Rafale-M fighters for INS Vikrant, along with three additional Kalveri class submarines from France.

INS Vikrant: INS Vikrant (IAC-I) is India's first indigenous aircraft carrier built by Cochin Shipyard (CSL) in Kochi, Kerala for the Indian Navy. Its construction began in 2009.

Motto: "Jayema Sam Yudhi Sprdhah" meaning "I defeat those who fight against me."

Air Wing: INS Vikrant is designed to carry and operate a variety of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, including the MiG-29K/KUB multirole fighters and various utility helicopters.

Length: 262 meters, Width: 62 meters, Depth: 30 meters (minus superstructure). Consists of 14 decks, including five in the superstructure.

Propulsion: Powered by four General Electric LM2500+ gas turbines on two shafts, generating over 80 MW (110,000 hp) of power.

Ambergris



Recently, the scientists have found 9.5 Kgs worth of "Floating Gold" inside a dead Sperm Whale on Nogales Beach in La Palma, Canary Islands.

What is Ambergris?

Ambergris is a waxy substance formed in the digestive system of protected sperm whales. It is a valuable substance often referred to as "floating gold."

Formation: It is believed that ambergris is produced in the gastrointestinal tract of sperm whales to aid the passage of hard objects ingested during feeding.

Uses and Rarity: Ambergris is highly valued in the perfume industry for its musky note. It was historically used to flavor food, beverages, and tobacco in certain cultures. Its rarity fuels its demand and substantial value in the global market.

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	Legal Restrictions in India: Ambergris and its by-products, sourced from protected sperm whales, are banned for possession and trade in India under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
Place in News Takeshima Island (Dokdo/Takeshima)	Recently, Japan protested against South Korea's military drills on the disputed Takeshima islands. Geographic Location: Takeshima Island is located in the middle of the Sea of Japan, almost equidistant between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Disputed Territory: The island is subject to a territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea. Japan refers to it as Takeshima, while South Korea calls it Dokdo. Historical Naming: The island was named Liancourt Rocks by French whalers after their ship in 1849. Island Composition: Takeshima consists of two main islands and approximately 30 smaller rocks. Military Drills: Recently, Japan lodged a protest with South Korea over military drills conducted by South Korea on the disputed Takeshima Islands. 

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