

NEWS D.A.D.

100% COVERAGE OF EACH & EVERY RELEVANT NEWS

— SOURCES —

**PIB » The Hindu » Live Mint » HT » TOI
RBI » ET » Indian Express » PRS Blog** and more.....

14
leading sources for
CURRENT AFFAIRS
covered on
Daily basis.



Topic-wise
Daily News

For all those who don't
want to be left out

“Every News counts and we make sure that
you don't miss any relevant News.”



CRACKACADEMY

Index

Big concerns over big cats	2
Explained	4
Massive extinct whale 'may be heaviest animal that ever lived'	7
Explained	9
Experts go back on letter raising concern over cheetah deaths	11
Great Nicobar Project may see 9.64 lakh trees axed, says Minister	13
Lula to host South American summit on saving the Amazon	15
The enigmatic Indian eagle-owl	18
PRESIDENT OF INDIA VISITS THEPPAKADU ELEPHANT CAMP AT THE MUDUMALAI TIGER RESERVE AND INTERACTS WITH MAHOUTS AND CAVADIES	20
Miyawaki method of greening losing favour in Chennai	22
5% of birds in India are endemic, reveals Zoological Survey of India publication	24
M.P. strategy for tigers can help cheetahs too	27
The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023	30
Leaders from South American Nations Challenge Developed Countries to Stop Amazon Destruction at Belem Summit	34
India succeeds in reducing emissions rate by 33% over 14 years: sources	37

BIG CONCERNS OVER BIG CATS

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 02, 2023 12:15 am | Updated 12:15 am IST

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Tigers numbers and density are high in Bandipur and Nagarahole in Karnataka.
Photo:M.A.SRIRAM | Photo Credit: SRIRAM M.A.

The results of the latest survey on tiger population published by the Karnataka Forest Department and the all-India figures published by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) indicate that the number of big cats has grown in the State. According to the NTCA status report, Karnataka has the second highest number of tigers (563) after Madhya Pradesh (785). While authorities are happy with this development, there is also anxiety over the way forward.

The minimum tiger estimates for Karnataka have been pegged at 435 by the State's Forest Department, based on camera trap images, and 563 by the NTCA, based on direct and indirect evidence apart from camera trap images.

But the growth is skewed. It is high in areas such as the Bandipur Tiger Reserve where tigers have been protected ever since the inception of Project Tiger 50 years ago. Besides, Bandipur was brought under protection by the maharajas as early as in 1941 when 800 sq km of forest was notified as the Venugopal Wildlife Park. Nagarahole, too, has enjoyed such protection since the 1950s. The Bandipur and Nagarahole reserves together account for 290 out of the 563 tigers in the State.

However, there are 136 villages in a radius of 1 km around Bandipur and nearly as many villages around Nagarahole with a large livestock population. Livestock are easy prey for tigers lurking in the forest fringes. There are concerns among communities that any further increase in the tiger population may escalate the man-animal conflict, which is especially high in habitats with elephants. Local communities in these habitats suffer crop damages (by elephants) and human deaths (due to tiger and elephant attacks).

Some argue that a high prey base will reduce the range of the resident tigers and their propensity to stray into human habitats. This means bracing for a higher density of tigers per sq km. Bandipur and Nagarahole already have 7.97 tigers and 10.88 tigers per 100 sq km, respectively.

However, others argue that Bandipur and Nagarahole may have reached saturation point in terms of their tiger population and prey population and efforts to augment numbers may only fuel more conflict.

Besides, experts have cautioned against artificial intervention or habitat manipulation in order to augment the population of tiger prey. They say that an increase in tiger density beyond the carrying capacity of the habitat could adversely impact the population of other co-predators such as leopards and dholes, which are equally important to conserve.

Another long-term challenge in Karnataka is to protect potential tiger habitats with low densities and strengthen corridor connectivity. Doing so will facilitate the dispersal of tigers in ranges where the forests are contiguous. A case in point is the Malai Mahadeshwara Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, which is spread over 906.18 sq km and is said to be ideal as a sink to absorb the surplus tiger population. This sanctuary was mooted as a tiger reserve. The NTCA supported the proposal on the grounds that additional inviolate space could be created for the dispersal of both tigers and prey. The Malai Mahadeshwara Hills Wildlife Sanctuary is linked to the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka to its north and east, the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu to its south, and the BRT Tiger Reserve in Karnataka to its west. It is therefore considered vital for securing the future of tigers in the State. But political compulsions before the Karnataka Assembly elections forced the Bharatiya Janata Party government to put the proposal on hold.

Providing a viable wildlife habitat and creating additional space for tigers calls for ensuring strict implementation of Eco Sensitive Zone rules, reducing anthropogenic pressure on existing habitats, taking the local populace into confidence and allaying their fears of displacement. All of this requires both political and administrative will.

According to the NTCA report, 373 of Karnataka's 563 tigers are in five reserves – Bandipur, Nagarahole, Bhadra, BRT, and Kali, which together account for 66% of the State's tiger population. Nearly 78% of tigers in tiger reserves are concentrated in Bandipur and Nagarahole. The remaining are dispersed across 17 non-tiger reserves. Securing their future amidst developmental pressure and dilution of forest conservation laws is the challenge ahead.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[wildlife](#) / [nature and wildlife](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

EXPLAINED

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 01, 2023 07:01 pm | Updated August 02, 2023 08:27 am IST - Bengaluru

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

The amendment Bill is expected to significantly affect around 95% of the Niyamgiri hill range, which is home to the Dongria Kondh, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. | Photo Credit: K.R. Deepak/The Hindu

The highly controversial [Forest \(Conservation\) Amendment Bill 2023](#) is awaiting debate in the Rajya Sabha after having been passed by the Lok Sabha with almost no debate in June. Broadly, the Bill seeks to restrict the conservation scope of the Act to only certain forest lands. It also exempts border lands from the obligation to seek permissions to clear forests in order to construct “strategic linear projects of national importance”. Finally, it also allows some non-forest activities on forest lands, like running zoos and ‘eco-tourism’ facilities.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in March. Thereafter, it was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) comprising 32 members from both Houses of Parliament and across party lines. Rajendra Agrawal, the Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Meerut, was the Chairperson of the JPC.

The Bill’s principal thrust is that it redefines what a ‘forest’ is in Indian law. It stipulates that only those lands that were notified as ‘forest’ under the Indian Forest Act 1927, any other relevant law or were recorded as ‘forests’ in government records will be acknowledged as ‘forests’ under the Act as well.

This revision stands in stark contrast to the wide applicability of the extant Act at present – i.e. it applies to “any forest land”. A Supreme Court judgement in 1996 had reiterated such a broad application. It said, *inter alia*, that a ‘forest’ includes all land recorded as such in government records regardless of ownership as well as “deemed forests”, which are not officially classified as ‘forests’ but satisfy the dictionary meaning of the word: any large area with significant tree cover and undergrowth.

The Supreme Court had also asked States to undertake an exercise to identify and notify their own deemed forests. But even after almost 30 years, many states are yet to complete this exercise. In cases where they have, we don’t know how scientific the process of identification was.

As such, the amendment opens up all land that hasn’t been officially classified as ‘forests’ to commercial activity. It also removes the checks and balances the Act currently includes, in the form of forest clearance permissions and the informed consent of the local community.

The areas that stand to be affected in a significant way include about [40% of the Aravalli range](#) and [95% of the Niyamgiri hill range](#); the latter is home to the Dongria Kondh, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. Many experts are also uncertain, and thus apprehensive, about the actual extent of land that will fall outside the purview of the amended Act considering the State-wise data of deemed forests is not publicly available.

The Bill seeks to exempt linear infrastructure projects – like roads and highways – from seeking forest clearance permissions if they are located within 100 km of the national border. Experts have raised concerns because “strategic linear projects of national importance” is an undefined term and can thus be misused to push through infrastructure projects that are devastating for the local ecology.

This is of particular concern in the Northeastern States, where the exemption would apply *de facto* almost across the region. Many BJP-ruled states in the region disputed the 100-km exemption during the JPC’s consultation process. On the one hand, Nagaland asked for a variable distance for exemption, given its small size and location within the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, and Tripura wanted it to be reduced to 10 km. On the other, Arunachal Pradesh asked for the range to be increased to 150 km.

First: this Bill was not referred to the relevant Parliamentary Standing Committee, which in this case would have been the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, headed by Congress MP Jairam Ramesh. Per the [Pre-legislative Consultation Policy](#), it is considered good practice – though not mandatory – to refer Bills to Standing Committees for review. But the government bypassed this oversight function in the case of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill 2023.

Second: The JPC did not propose a single change to the Bill in its report despite receiving around 1,200 representations – including objections from tribal groups, conservationists, environmental lawyers, activists, and citizen groups.

Six members of the JPC itself wrote dissent notes. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs also raised concerns with the JPC about the amendment’s implications on community rights enshrined in the Forest Rights Act 2006, according to the [final JPC report](#).

A [document accessed by this writer](#) showed that, during consultations, the JPC accepted the Union Environment Ministry’s inadequate justifications for the proposed amendments and even responses that were not related to the question that had been asked, raising concerns about the integrity of the parliamentary process.

The Bill got a free pass in the Lok Sabha as most Opposition MPs were focused on highlighting the violence in Manipur. It was set to be debated in the upper house at the time this article went to press. Debate or no, the Bill’s drastic break from the longstanding legal definition of ‘forests’, its focus on creating carbon sinks (instead of the Act’s aim to conserve existing forests) , and the uncertainty over its coverage don’t bode well.

Rishika Pardikar is a freelance environment reporter based in Bangalore.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[The Hindu Explains](#) / [forests](#) / [Rajya Sabha](#) / [Lok Sabha](#) / [conservation](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com

MASSIVE EXTINCT WHALE 'MAY BE HEAVIEST ANIMAL THAT EVER LIVED'

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 03, 2023 08:30 am | Updated 08:31 am IST - NEW YORK

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Perucetus colossus, an early whale from Peru that lived about 38-40 million years ago, a marine mammal built somewhat like a manatee that may have exceeded the mass of the blue whale, long considered the heaviest animal on record, is seen in an undated artist's rendition. Also pictured are two penguins. | Photo Credit: Reuters

There could be a new contender for heaviest animal to ever live. While today's blue whale has long held the title, scientists have dug up fossils from an ancient giant that could tip the scales.

Researchers described the species — named *Perucetus colossus*, or “the colossal whale from Peru” — in the journal *Nature* on Wednesday. Each vertebra weighs over 220 pounds (100 kilograms) and its ribs measure nearly 5 feet (1.4 metres) long.

“It's just exciting to see such a giant animal that's so different from anything we know,” said Hans Thewissen, a palaeontologist at Northeast Ohio Medical University who had no role in the research.

The bones were discovered more than a decade ago by Mario Urbina from the University of San Marcos' Natural History Museum in Lima. An international team spent years digging them out from the side of a steep, rocky slope in the Ica desert, a region in Peru that was once underwater and is known for its rich marine fossils. The results: 13 vertebrae from the whale's backbone, four ribs and a hip bone.

The massive fossils, which are 39 million years old, “are unlike anything I've ever seen,” said study author Alberto Collareta, a palaeontologist at Italy's University of Pisa.

Scientists excavate a vertebra fossil of *Perucetus colossus*, a huge early whale that lived about 38-40 million years ago, in a remote coastal desert in southern Peru, as seen in this undated photograph. File | Photo Credit: Reuters

After the excavations, the researchers used 3D scanners to study the surface of the bones and drilled into them to peek inside. They used the huge — but incomplete — skeleton to estimate the whale's size and weight, using modern marine mammals for comparison, said study author Eli Amson, a paleontologist at the State Museum of Natural History in Stuttgart, Germany.

They calculated that the ancient giant weighed somewhere between 94 and 375 tons (85 and 340 metric tons). The biggest blue whales found have been within that range — at around 200 tons (180 metric tons).

Its body stretched to around 66 feet (20 metres) long. Blue whales can be longer — with some growing to more than 100 feet (30 metres) in length.

This means the newly discovered whale was "possibly the heaviest animal ever," Collareta said, but "it was most likely not the longest animal ever."

It weighs more in part because its bones are much denser and heavier than a blue whale's, Mr. Amson explained.

Those super-dense bones suggest that the whale may have spent its time in shallow, coastal waters, the authors said. Other coastal dwellers, like manatees, have heavy bones to help them stay close to the seafloor.

Without the skull, it's hard to know what the whale was eating to sustain such a huge body, Mr. Amson said.

It's possible that *P. colossus* was scavenging for food along the seafloor, researchers said, or eating up tons of krill and other tiny sea creatures in the water.

But "I wouldn't be surprised if this thing actually fed in a totally different way that we would never imagine," Mr. Thewissen added.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[wildlife](#) / [wildlife](#) / [Peru](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by [crackIAS.com](#)

EXPLAINED

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 04, 2023 08:30 am | Updated 08:53 am IST

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Representative photo. | Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

The story so far: On 1st August, the Rajya Sabha passed the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 amid a walk-out by the opposition parties, about a week after it was cleared by the Lok Sabha. The Act aims to conserve biodiversity, promote its sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits that arise therein. Amendments proposed in the Bill however are at odds with this aim. During discussions in Rajya Sabha, the Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, explicitly spoke of “ease of doing business” and promotion of the AYUSH industry (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) as reasons why the government is bringing forth the amendments.

The Bill exempts “codified traditional knowledge” and the AYUSH industry from benefit sharing, denying local communities’ benefits from accessing biological resources. The term “codified traditional knowledge” It lacks a clear definition, leading to potential exploitation. Experts regard this exemption as regressive because a reason why the legislation was enacted in the first place was to ensure “fair and equitable sharing of benefits”, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. It decriminalises offences and proposes monetary penalties instead, raising concerns over resource exploitation.

It is important to bear in mind that the proposed relaxations come at a time when the Act hasn’t even been implemented in full. A 2022 investigation by the Centre for Science and Environment showed that in many States, there was no data available on money received from companies and traders for access and benefit sharing and in cases where money was collected, the same wasn’t shared with local communities.

A 2016 study by legal researchers showed that many difficulties have cropped up in many States when it comes to implementing provisions of the Act, especially those related to access and benefit sharing. Some of these issues were also challenged in high courts and the National Green Tribunal.

The industry has been unhappy with the regulations and has run to courts and sought relaxations. Consider the 2016 case where the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board sent a notice to Divya Pharmacy, part of Baba Ramdev’s Patanjali Yog Peeth Trust, stating that the company was in violation of the Act for using biological resources without prior intimation to the Board. The company challenged the notice in the Uttarakhand high court, although it ultimately lost the

case.

And in 2015, representatives from Gujarat's Ayurveda industry urged the central government to provide some relief to the sector by postponing the implementation of access and benefit sharing provisions. In response, the then Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said the industry has to deposit an amount towards these provisions and that no exemption can be granted.

These are the precedents to the amendments which have been proposed now for "ease of doing business."

In fact, in the 'Statement of Objects and Reasons' section, the Bill clearly states that "concerns were raised by the stakeholders representing Indian system of medicine sector, seed sector, industry sector and research sector urging to simplify, streamline and reduce compliance burden in order to encourage conducive environment for collaborative research and investments, simplify patent application process...".

On 2nd August, the Rajya Sabha also cleared the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill which severely limits the conservation scope of the Act. Read together, the two Bills are part of a larger trend of dilution of environmental regulations that are underway in the country, especially since the COVID pandemic. That the Environment Ministry has given precedence to "ease of doing business" rather than its mandate to protect the environment is cause for concern

COMMENTS

SHARE

[Text and Context / The Hindu Explains](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

EXPERTS GO BACK ON LETTER RAISING CONCERN OVER CHEETAH DEATHS

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 03, 2023 10:33 pm | Updated August 04, 2023 01:09 am IST - NEW DELHI

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Image used for representative purpose only. | Photo Credit: ANI

Following a letter sent by four South African wildlife veterinarians and cheetah experts to the Supreme Court expressing “serious concerns” over the management of Project Cheetah, two of them have asked that their names to be withdrawn on the grounds that it could impede future exports of the animal from Africa.

On Wednesday, [the Environment Ministry confirmed yet another death](#) — the sixth since February — of an adult cheetah. Though the cause of death was not official, it is suspected to be from infection by parasites that lodged into open wounds on the cheetah’s back. There are suggestions that the wounds may have been from the collars chafing against the cheetah’s skin. Following similar deaths among two cheetahs in the past month, all of the remaining cheetahs — most of which were released into the wild—have been brought back into enclosures, their collars removed and are undergoing a physical examination.

On July 15, a letter by Professor Adrian Tordiffe, Veterinary Wildlife Specialist, University of Pretoria, to the Supreme Court expressed “serious concerns” on how Project Cheetah was being managed and “(their) expert opinion was being ignored” by the Project Steering Committee.

The letter, viewed by *The Hindu*, included among its signatories Vincent van der Merwe, cheetah specialist, Metapopulation Initiative, South Africa; Andy Frazer, and Mike Toft, both wildlife veterinarians. It said that some deaths could have been prevented with better monitoring and more appropriate veterinary care.

They said that despite being listed as ‘international experts’ in the Cheetah Project Steering Committee, they were rarely consulted and provided with information on the health of the cheetahs. They were informed too late that two cheetahs which had died had dermatitis from the persistent wet weather and this triggered a “bacterial invasion” that caused septicemia. More importantly, this posed a risk to the other animals.

Indian officials have so far not acknowledged the role of bacterial infections from dermatitis as a possible cause of death. The letter also mentions that the role of international experts had been minimised following the “forced retirement” of Y.V. Jhala, formerly of the Wildlife Institute of India

(WII) and who played a prominent role in bringing the cheetahs to India from Africa.

However, on July 20, Mr. Merwe said in a letter, viewed by *The Hindu*, to M.K. Ranjitsinh, who was part of a Supreme Court committee to advise on the translocation of the cheetah, that he was “surprised” to see his and Dr. Frazer’s name and that they “weren’t supportive” of the letter being sent to the Supreme Court.

“The recent losses (of cheetahs) are unfortunate, but we feel this letter will feed into the media frenzy... The negative press is turning out to be the greatest threat to prospects for successful cheetah reintroduction in India... impacting the moral of Kuno staff on the ground ...and will also make further genetic and demographic supplementation of cheetahs from Africa difficult.”

OPINION | [Snap judgement: On India’s Project Cheetah](#)

The Hindu reached out to Mr. Merwe, Professor Tordiffe and Mr. Ranjitsinh for comment but did not receive any response till the time of publication.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[Madhya Pradesh](#) / [wildlife](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT MAY SEE 9.64 LAKH TREES AXED, SAYS MINISTER

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 03, 2023 08:53 pm | Updated 10:16 pm IST - NEW DELHI

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

The Great Nicobar Project, which envisages construction of a trans-shipment port, an international airport, a township and a gas and solar-based power plant, is to come up on over 130 square km of pristine forest with rich biological diversity. | Photo Credit: Getty Images

The Union government's ambitious [72,000-crore Great Nicobar Project](#) may see 9.64 lakh, and not 8.5 lakh, trees felled to enable the construction of a trans-shipment port, an international airport, township development, and a 450 MVA gas and solar-based power plant in the Great Nicobar island, according to a response by Minister of State (Environment) Ashwini Kumar Choubey in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. However, there is also a possibility that fewer trees may be axed, he indicated.

Also read | [Great Nicobar project will not evict tribes, says Centre](#)

The Great Nicobar Project, which is likely to come up over 130 square km of pristine forest, [has been accorded environmental clearance](#) by an expert committee. However, this was challenged by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), following which the [NGT constituted an expert committee](#) in April to investigate aspects of the clearance.

Though details of a project being appraised for environmental clearance are usually made available on a public portal, maintained by the Environment Ministry, details on the Great Nicobar Project have not been put up, it is learnt, following instructions from the Ministry of Home Affairs which has classified the project as one of "strategic importance".

However, as [The Hindu had reported in November 2022](#), based on documents then available, the Environment Ministry on its own had estimated that close to 8.5 lakh trees were expected to be cut for the project. These are evergreen tropical forests with high biological diversity and the island itself is home to nearly 650 species of flora and 330 species of fauna, including endemic species such as the Nicobar shrew, the Nicobar long-tailed macaque, the Great Nicobar crested serpent eagle, the Nicobar paradise flycatcher and the Nicobar megapode, among many others.

"The estimated number of trees to be felled in forest area earmarked for development in Great Nicobar Project is 9.64 lakh. Further, it is expected that about 15% of development area will remain as green and open spaces. Thus, potential tree felling would be less than 9.64 lakh. Moreover, this tree felling will be done in a phased manner," said Mr. Choubey.

In lieu of the trees being chopped, compensatory afforestation would be carried out in Haryana as “the scope of plantation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is very limited,” the Minister noted. Planting trees in an “arid landscape” and in “the vicinity of the urban areas” would provide greater ecological value, he added. The government of Haryana has agreed to provide an area of 261.5 square km for compensatory afforestation.

Also read | [National Commission for Scheduled Tribes flags alleged discrepancies in Forest Rights Act compliance for Great Nicobar Project](#)

COMMENTS

SHARE

[environmental issues](#) / [Andaman and Nicobar Islands](#) / [Parliament proceedings](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

Crack

LULA TO HOST SOUTH AMERICAN SUMMIT ON SAVING THE AMAZON

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 05, 2023 03:03 pm | Updated 11:37 pm IST - Belém, Brazil

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Smoke from a fire rises into the air as trees burn amongst vegetation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest near Humaita, Amazonas state, Brazil, August 3, 2023. | Photo Credit: Reuters

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will host a regional summit next week with planetary stakes, as leaders of the countries that share the Amazon seek a roadmap to save the world's biggest rainforest.

The meeting of the eight-nation Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization on Tuesday and Wednesday in Belem, capital of the Amazon state of Para, will serve as something of a dress rehearsal for the COP30 UN climate talks, which the city will also host in 2025.

It is the 28-year-old organization's first summit since 2009, as Lula seeks to deliver on his pledge that "Brazil is back" in the fight against climate change after a period of surging destruction in the Amazon under his far-right predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro.

With its hundreds of billions of carbon-absorbing trees, the Amazon is a key buffer against global warming.

But scientists warn deforestation is pushing it dangerously close to a "tipping point," beyond which trees would die off and release their carbon stores back into the atmosphere, with catastrophic consequences for the climate.

Already, carbon emissions from the Amazon increased by 117 percent in 2020 compared to the annual average for 2010 to 2018, according to the latest figures from researchers at Brazil's national space agency, INPE.

Veteran leftist Lula, who returned to office in January, said he planned to work together with the group's other members -- Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela -- to develop the Amazon basin "without destroying" it.

Leaders are due to discuss strategies to fight deforestation and organized crime, and seek sustainable development for the region, home to 50 million people -- including hundreds of Indigenous groups seen as crucial to protecting the forest.

The summit will conclude with a joint declaration, expected to be “ambitious” and set out “an agenda to guide countries in the coming years,” said Brazilian foreign ministry official Gisela Padovan.

[Also Read | Amazon loses 10% of its vegetation in nearly four decades](#)

Brazil, which holds around 60 percent of the Amazon, has pledged to eradicate illegal deforestation by 2030, and is pushing other countries to follow suit.

Deforestation is driven mainly by cattle ranching, though it is fueled by a murky mix of corruption, land-grabbing and organized crime whose tentacles extend to the illegal traffic in drugs, arms, timber and gold.

In Brazil, the world’s top exporter of beef and soy, the destruction has already wiped out around one-fifth of the rainforest.

But after a 75-percent jump in average annual deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon under Bolsonaro (2019-2022) versus the previous decade, there are signs of progress.

From January to July, deforestation fell by 42.5 percent from the same period last year.

Ahead of the summit, more than 50 environmental groups called on the region’s governments to adopt a plan “to stop the Amazon from reaching a point of no return.”

The petition, published by the Climate Observatory, calls on countries to join Brazil’s pledge for zero illegal deforestation by 2030, strengthen Indigenous rights and adopt “effective measures to fight environmental crimes.”

Lula said Thursday he was confident that “for the first time, jointly and cohesively,” the region would “accept its responsibility” to fight rampant crime in the rainforest.

Lula insists responsibility for saving the Amazon extends worldwide.

“The world needs to help us preserve and develop the Amazon,” he said Wednesday.

“Investing is cheap if it’s a matter of saving the rainforest.”

Paola Arias, a climate scientist at the University of Antioquia in Colombia, underlined that the cattle and crops produced in the Amazon are often exported abroad.

Deforestation “is not just the Amazon countries’ fault,” she said.

“It’s leveraged by a world agro-industry that generates profits for the global north. Those connections to Europe, North America and Australia have to be part of the debate.”

Six presidents are due to attend the summit, with Ecuador and Suriname represented by cabinet ministers.

Norway and Germany, key contributors to Brazil’s Amazon Fund to protect the rainforest, are also invited, along with France, which has a share of the Amazon via the territory of French Guiana.

Brazil also invited tropical rainforest nations Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[environmental politics](#) / [forests](#) / [environmental issues](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS

THE ENIGMATIC INDIAN EAGLE-OWL

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 05, 2023 09:05 pm | Updated 09:05 pm IST

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

The Indian eagle-owls do not have a dependency on forests; they nest near agricultural lands and scrublands | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Indian eagle-owl was classified as a species only in recent years, thus distinguishing it from the Eurasian eagle-owl. The Indian species is an imposing bird. The slightly larger female can reach a total length of two and a half feet, with a wingspan of six feet. Prominent ear tufts that look like horns are seen to project from its head. One theory holds that these have evolved to impart a threatening look that keeps away predators. If so, the horns are indeed successful at imparting an aura of menace.

Its nocturnal habits have meant that very little is known about this bird. The widespread range — the entire Indian peninsula — would seem to indicate that it is a stable population. But nobody knows for sure, as it is not a very common bird. Their total numbers have never been estimated. Many bird species face decline today as the total forested area in our country has suffered a decline. But the Indian eagle-owl does not have a dependency on forests. The regular items on their menu, such as rats, bandicoots, and even bats and doves are best hunted over open scrubland and agricultural tracts. Nearby rocky perches and crags provide ideal settings for its nests.

Near human settlements, they prefer mango trees. In rural India, many superstitions surround this bird and its loud double-hoot calls. They are considered bearers of ill omens. The noted ornithologist Salim Ali documented folklore in which an eagle-owl, when trapped and starved, would speak in a human voice and portend the future of its listeners.

This is in line with myths in many cultures, ranging from the Greeks to the Aztecs, of the presaging powers of owls in general. In some they foretold victories in battles, in others they warned of approaching dangers. But then we also identify them with wisdom. The Goddess Lakshmi's Uluka is an emblem of knowledge and prosperity.

The negative superstitions associated with the Indian eagle-owl make us reflect on its ferocious defensive tactics in nesting areas. The nest, with up to four eggs, is often no more than a scratched out hollow, easily approached by a mongoose or a human. These owls show heckling behaviour, and will swoop down on the intruding person, striking the head from behind with its talons.

Farmers definitely profit from the presence of this owl. Research done by the Ela Foundation

and the Zoological Survey of India has shown that Indian eagle-owls nesting near agricultural lands had more, and healthier, owlets than scrubland nesters. The former benefited from the abundant populations of rodents near farms.

What lies ahead for these owls? India has seen growing interest in our birds. Birding, as the hobby is called, attracts more and more enthusiastic volunteers, who add data to bird counts, surveys and migration maps. But these are mostly daytime activities in which owls are always under-represented. It is hoped that nocturnal birds such as the Indian eagle-owl will have their day too.

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling.)

COMMENTS

SHARE

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS

PRESIDENT OF INDIA VISITS THEPPAKADU ELEPHANT CAMP AT THE MUDUMALAI TIGER RESERVE AND INTERACTS WITH MAHOUTS AND CAVADIES

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu visited Theppakadu Elephant Camp, one of Asia's oldest Elephant camps, at the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve today (August 5, 2023) and interacted with Mahouts and Cavadies.

During the interaction, the President said that it must be a matter of pride that the activities of Tamil Nadu Forest Department got global recognition for its elephant care management through the Oscar winning documentary "The elephant whisperers". She stated that as a part of preserving our national heritage, it is our national responsibility to protect elephants. She was happy to note that the Government is setting up a "State-of-the-art Elephant Conservation Center and Eco Complex" at Theppakadu Elephant Camp to make it a pioneer in Asian elephant conservation.

The President said that tribal communities are playing an important role in preserving India's cultural heritage. Therefore, it is very important to ensure them their constitutional rights and provide them basic amenities. She was happy to note that the traditional knowledge and experience of the people belonging to Bettakurumbar, Kattunayakar and Malasar tribal communities is being utilized to manage the Theppakadu Elephant Camp.

DS/AK

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu visited Theppakadu Elephant Camp, one of Asia's oldest Elephant camps, at the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve today (August 5, 2023) and interacted with Mahouts and Cavadies.

During the interaction, the President said that it must be a matter of pride that the activities of Tamil Nadu Forest Department got global recognition for its elephant care management through the Oscar winning documentary "The elephant whisperers". She stated that as a part of preserving our national heritage, it is our national responsibility to protect elephants. She was happy to note that the Government is setting up a "State-of-the-art Elephant Conservation Center and Eco Complex" at Theppakadu Elephant Camp to make it a pioneer in Asian elephant conservation.

The President said that tribal communities are playing an important role in preserving India's cultural heritage. Therefore, it is very important to ensure them their constitutional rights and provide them basic amenities. She was happy to note that the traditional knowledge and experience of the people belonging to Bettakurumbar, Kattunayakar and Malasar tribal communities is being utilized to manage the Theppakadu Elephant Camp.

DS/AK

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com

MIYAWAKI METHOD OF GREENING LOSING FAVOUR IN CHENNAI

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 06, 2023 10:15 pm | Updated August 07, 2023 01:05 am IST - CHENNAI

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

The badly maintained Miyawaki forest behind Kotturpuram MRTS in Chennai. | Photo Credit: RAGHUNATHAN SR

Along Canal Bank Road at Kotturpuram is a dense forest set up by the Greater Chennai Corporation using the Miyawaki method. The green of the grove in which java plum, neem, false ashoka, and mahua trees stand is a pleasant sight, albeit from a distance. The gate of the Corporation's first Miyawaki forest remains locked to prevent trespassers from causing damage to the ecosystem. However, one can see strewn litter and alcohol bottles from outside the gate.

The Miyawaki method, named after its creator Akira Miyawaki, a Japanese botanist, helps forests grow quickly. It involves planting different types of native trees in close proximity. Typically, the vegetation is grouped as shrub, sub-tree, tree and canopy. The expected result is that plants grow 10 times faster and the forest becomes 30 times denser than usual. The method is known for regulating surface temperature, sequestering carbon, increasing green cover, and offering a zero-maintenance mechanism after three years.

In December 2020, the then Corporation Commissioner, G. Prakash, had said Miyawaki urban forests would be developed at 1,000 locations across the city. For the local body, the more number of trees that can be planted in a small space and the 'no maintenance' aspects may seem like a win-win. However, conservationists have pointed to the drawbacks of the method: the trees, which are not allowed to grow to their full capacity, are not ecologically beneficial. The Corporation, too, seems to have slammed on the brakes on Miyawakis as there are fewer than 40 such forests in the city now.

Simply put, T.D. Babu of Nizhal, an environmental non-profit, says a Miyawaki forest is actually tree abuse. "The execution is incorrect. Trees such as Vaagai [*Albizia lebeck*] whose crowns can grow up to 40 metres are packed together in pigeon holes. The trees might grow faster, but they aren't normal as they don't support associated fauna," he explains.

The method has raised questions about the trees' ecological efficiency as it brings down their sequestering capacity to insignificant levels because of the reduced surface area. Instead, 'micro forests', wherein native trees are planted not too close and are allowed to grow wider along with other creepers, are being recommended.

According to official data, 38 Miyawaki forests have been set up by the Corporation. R. Vijayalakshmi, Superintending Engineer, Greater Chennai Corporation, says there are no plans to set up new Miyawaki forests as of now. Despite the hum around the inadequacies of the Miyawaki method, it has not yet been completely avoided. The Water Resources Department recently announced a Miyawaki forest around the Red Hills reservoir where 55 native species are said to have been planted.

COMMENTS

SHARE

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS

5% OF BIRDS IN INDIA ARE ENDEMIC, REVEALS ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA PUBLICATION

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 06, 2023 09:50 pm | Updated 09:56 pm IST - Kolkata

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

A white-bellied minivet

A recent publication by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) points out that about 5% of birds found in the country are endemic and are not reported in other parts of the world. The publication, titled *75 Endemic Birds of India*, was recently released on the 108th foundation day of the ZSI.

India is home to 1,353 bird species, which represents approximately 12.40% of global bird diversity. Of these 1,353 bird species, 78 (5%) are endemic to the country.

Amitava Majumder, one of the authors of the publication, said that of the 78 species, three species have not been recorded in the last few decades. They are the Manipur Bush Quail (*Perdica manipurensis*), listed as 'Endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species with its last recorded sighting in 1907; the Himalayan Quail (*Ophrysia superciliosa*), listed as 'Critically Endangered' with its last recorded sighting in 1876; and the Jerdon's Courser (*Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*), listed as 'Critically Endangered' with its last confirmed sighting in 2009.

Nicobar Megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis* | Photo Credit: Amitava Majumder

ZSI Director Dhriti Banerjee pointed out that the publication highlights the importance of endemic bird species in the country. "Since endemic species are restrictive in nature, it is important that their habitats are conserved so that they don't dwindle out. Ornithologists are aware of the facts related to endemic birds but our effort has been so that common people, particularly students, are aware about these endemic species found in restricted spaces," Dr. Banerjee said.

The ZSI Director, who is also one of the authors of the publication, pointed out that *75 Endemic Birds of India* comes at a time when the country is celebrating 75 years of Independence with the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.

The publication points out that the 75 bird species belong to 11 different orders, 31 families, and 55 genera, and exhibit remarkable distribution patterns across various regions in India.

White Bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygus* | Photo Credit: Amitava Majumder

The highest number of endemic species have been recorded in the Western Ghats, with 28 bird species. Some of the interesting species recorded in the country's bio-geographic hotspot are the Malabar Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros griseus*); Malabar Parakeet (*Psittacula columboides*); Ashambu Laughing Thrush (*Montecincla meridionalis*); and the White-bellied Sholakili (*Sholicola albiventris*).

"25 bird species are endemic to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Endemism in the Andaman group of islands must have developed because of the geographical isolation of the region," Dr. Majumder said.

Some interesting bird species which are only found in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are Nicobar Megapode (*Megapodius nicobariensis*); Nicobar Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis klossi*); Andaman Crake (*Rallina canningi*); and Andaman Barn Owl (*Tyto deroepstorffi*). Four species of birds are endemic to the Eastern Himalayas, and one each to the Southern Deccan plateau and central Indian forest.

The publication also throws light on the conservation status of these endemic species

Of the 78 endemic species, 25 are classified as 'Threatened' by the IUCN. Three species (Bugun Liocichla or *Liocichla bugunorum*; Himalayan Quail or *Ophrysia superciliosa*; Jerdon's Courser or *Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*) are listed as 'Critically Endangered'. Five of the endemic birds in India are categorised as 'Endangered', and 17 as 'Vulnerable', while 11 are categorised as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List.

Along with the ZSI Director and Dr. Majumder, Anindya Naskar, a research scholar of the ZSI, has compiled the publication which, along with photographs of the birds, offers vital insights on each species

"The details of endemic bird species contained in the publication include etymology (meanings of scientific names) and their historical relevance along with vital facts such as subspecies' differences, distinguishing traits, preferred habitats, breeding habits, and food preferences," Dr. Majumder said.

The ZSI Director said that the publication is aimed at making information about endemic birds of the country available to everyone, and highlighting the efforts to conserve species that are found only in restricted areas.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[nature and wildlife](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com

M.P. STRATEGY FOR TIGERS CAN HELP CHEETAHS TOO

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 06, 2023 09:11 pm | Updated August 07, 2023 01:35 am IST - NEW DELHI

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Balancing the population of both predators and prey was a key factor enabling a 50% surge in Madhya Pradesh's tiger population, helping the State snag the top spot in the 2022 census, according to tiger experts. File | Photo Credit: A.M. Faruqui

Balancing the population of both predators and prey was a key factor enabling a 50% surge in Madhya Pradesh's tiger population, helping the State snag the top spot in the 2022 census, according to tiger experts. A senior Environment Ministry official told *The Hindu* that a similar strategy could help form a viable cheetah population, even as the project to translocate African cheetahs to M.P. has [suffered six deaths](#).

An update to the 2022 tiger census publicised last week reported a total of 3,682 beasts, with M.P., for the second time in the last three censuses, [reporting the maximum number of tigers](#) at 785. The State has reported a 50% rise in the number of tigers since the last census, a jump exceeded only by Bihar, which has a much lower 54 tigers. While many factors contribute to a state's tiger population, experts told *The Hindu* that the M.P. forest department's strategy of actively moving tigers as well as their prey within the State, to balance predator and prey population, was a key indicator of success.

"The forest department of Madhya Pradesh has demonstrated remarkable commitment and success in active management practices. They have effectively restored low-density areas through incentivised voluntary village relocations, prey supplementation, reintroduction of species such as Barasingha (swamp deer) to new habitats like Satpuda and Bandhavgarh, and the reintroduction of Gaur to Bandhavgarh and Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserves. Prey species like chital (spotted deer) have been successfully supplemented in Satpuda, Sanjay Tiger Reserves, Nauradehi, Kuno, and Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuaries through translocation from high-density areas such as Pench and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserves," notes the 2022 tiger census report, prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun and the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

India has 53 tiger reserves, with M.P. accounting for six of them. While the State has the most tigers, the most populous reserves are the Corbett National Park (CNP), Uttarakhand, followed by the Bandipur and Nagarhole reserves in Karnataka. The CNP, with an estimated 260 tigers, has nearly twice the number of tigers as Bandhavgarh (135), M.P.'s most populous tiger reserve.

However, five out of the six tiger reserves in M.P. have over 50 tigers. This is not counting the 563 tigers that have been reported outside the reserves, but within the State's forest divisions. Tiger reserves are regions within national parks, specifically demarcated for tiger conservation. M.P., like many other States, has more tigers outside the reserves than within them.

“While M.P. historically has a commitment to wildlife conservation and well-trained officers, active prey management is unique to it among other States. This means, for instance, identifying regions that have, say, a large number of chital, and moving some to a region where there are fewer. Once populations of these reach critical numbers in the new area, tigers – if there are too many in one part – are safely translocated here. This is a hard, labour-intensive exercise,” said Rajesh Gopal, secretary general of the Global Tiger Forum and a former forest officer who served in M.P.

The prevalence of tigers outside the reserves is very large in both M.P. and Maharashtra. Along with the build-up in prey, the protection accorded to the animals, particularly from poaching, has contributed to a consistent rise in numbers, said Qamar Qureshi, a WII wildlife biologist who is closely involved with the quadrennial tiger census.

“The Sanjay Dubri tiger reserve used to be empty, but over 8 to 10 years, chital and gaur (Indian bison) have been moved into the reserves and once they reach a critical point, tigers are moved there,” he said. Currently, there are 16 tigers reported in the Sanjay reserve. “You have to keep pushing. Once a region reaches its saturation point in the number of available prey and tigers, you have to develop new areas,” he added. Several of India's tiger reserves in Karnataka, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, which are traditionally rich in tigers, have reached their saturation points, and central India, with its growing numbers, was absorbing much of the growth, he noted.

While nature usually corrects imbalances between predator and prey, the process can take a long time. Given the myriad pressures on the natural wild habitat — such as diminishing protected areas in forests, and human-wildlife conflict — active prey management was a necessary conservation tool, said Y.V. Jhala, a former dean of WII who is closely involved with lion, tiger and cheetah conservation projects.

M.P.'s Kuno National Park is currently host to African cheetahs, with six of the 20 already dead since the first animals were translocated in September 2022. “Many of the practices being applied to the cheetah project, of keeping them in enclosures till they adapt, draw from experiences with the tiger and other ungulates,” a senior Environment Ministry official, who declined to be identified, told *The Hindu*. “To form a viable cheetah population, we need to follow similar principles of active prey management,” the official said.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[nature and wildlife](#) / [wildlife](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an

account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com

THE COASTAL AQUACULTURE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

Highlights of the Bill

- The Bill amends the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005. The Act defines coastal aquaculture as farming, under controlled conditions, of: (i) shrimp, (ii) prawn, (iii) fish or (iv) any other aquatic life in saline or brackish water. The Bill expands the scope of coastal aquaculture to include allied activities such as hatcheries and nucleus breeding centres.

Key Issues and Analysis

- The mandate of the Fisheries Ministry to promote coastal aquaculture may lead it to prioritise industry growth over environmental protection.
- The CAG noted that the Coastal Aquaculture Authority lacks capacity to carry out existing functions under the Act. The Bill adds more functions.

PART A: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL

Context

Coastal aquaculture includes the farming of marine life such as shrimp, prawn or fish in controlled conditions. It is carried out in saline and brackish water. The Supreme Court (1996) had highlighted several risks and adverse environmental impacts of unregulated shrimp farming and semi-intensive coastal aquaculture.^[1] It held that: (i) shrimp farming is a prohibited activity in the coastal regulation zone (CRZ) and (ii) an authority must be established under the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986 to protect coastal environment from the adverse effects of shrimp farming. Following such orders, the central government had established the Aquaculture Authority under the EPA.^[2] However, in 2005, Parliament passed the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005 which retrospectively amended the CRZ Notification, 1991 to exclude coastal aquaculture from the list of prohibited activities. It also constituted the Coastal Aquaculture Authority.^[3]

As of 2022, 42,975 coastal aquaculture farms are registered across 12 states/UTs.^[4] In 2021-22, India exported 13.7 lakh tonne of marine products such as shrimp and cuttlefish worth USD 7.8 billion.^[5] Frozen shrimp accounts for 53% of marine product exports in terms of quantity and 75% in terms of value. The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was introduced in Lok Sabha on April 5, 2023. The Bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Key Features

- **Regulation of allied activities:** The Act regulates coastal aquaculture farms. This includes culturing shrimp, prawn fish or other aquatic life in a controlled environment along coastal areas in saline or brackish water. The Bill allows regulation of allied activities such as nucleus breeding centres and hatcheries. The Act prohibits coastal aquaculture in certain areas, such as 200 metres within the High Tide Line and in creeks/backwaters within the CRZ. The Bill amends this to

allow some allied activities in protected areas. For instance: (i) activities like nucleus breeding centres will be permitted to operate in no development zones, and (ii) activities like sea weed culture will be permitted in creeks/backwaters within the CRZ. Nucleus breeding centres are those where fish/shrimp are cultivated at the larvae stage of their life cycle.

■ **Coastal Aquaculture Authority:** Under the Act, functions of the Authority include: (i) regulating construction and operation of aquaculture farms, (ii) registering coastal aquaculture farms, and (iii) demolishing polluting farms. The Bill adds that the Authority shall: (i) fix standards for inputs and discharge of effluents from aquaculture units, (ii) prohibit the use of certain inputs to prevent harm to the environment, and (iii) monitor and regulate units, inputs, and emissions.

■ **Penalties:** The Act penalises unregistered farms or farms in prohibited areas, with imprisonment up to three years and/or a fine of one lakh rupees. The Bill replaces this and specifies that if coastal aquaculture is carried out illegally: (i) the activity may be suspended, (ii) structure may be removed, (iii) crop may be destroyed, (iv) the registration may be cancelled, and/or (v) a penalty may be imposed.

PART B: KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

Regulating environmental impact of coastal aquaculture

The Act regulates the environmental impact of coastal aquaculture. It allows various aquaculture activities to be undertaken in Coastal Regulation Zones, which are regulated under the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986. These activities help increase production of marine products leading to value generation through exports. However, intensive coastal aquaculture activities may have adverse impacts on the environment such as salinisation of land/wells and obstruction of natural flood water drainage.^{1,[6],[7]} Hence, there may be a need to find a balance between promoting aquaculture activities and minimising the environmental damage from such activities. In light of this, the question is whether the Ministry of Fisheries is the most appropriate Ministry to administer the law regulating the environmental aspects of coastal aquaculture. The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is responsible for promoting and developing inland and marine fisheries. Such objectives may lead the Ministry to prioritise the aquaculture industry over protecting the coastal environment.

Note that the Supreme Court (1996) had held that an authority must be established under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 to protect the coastal environment from adverse effects of shrimp farming. Following such orders, the central government had established the Aquaculture Authority under the EPA.² However, the Coastal Aquaculture Authority set up later under the 2005 Act comes under the Fisheries Ministry.³

A similar issue arose when the Food Safety and Standards Bill, 2005 was introduced to constitute the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.^[8] The Standing Committee examining the Bill observed that the Food Processing Ministry is a promotional Ministry, and that the Ministry of Health would be more appropriate to regulate food standards.^[9] Later, the administration of FSSAI was changed from the Food Processing Ministry to the Ministry of Health.

Implementation issues

Under the Act and Rules, the Coastal Aquaculture Authority is required to carry out several functions such as: (i) registering and inspecting farms, (ii) testing water samples, (iii) fixing input standards, and (iv) surveying coastal areas. The Bill adds functions such as fixing emission

standards, and monitoring/regulating such standards. In 2020, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) noted that since 2016, the Authority has not carried out most of its functions adequately. It could not carry out these functions due to a deficiency in skilled manpower and infrastructure facilities.^[10] This raises the question whether the Authority has the capacity to carry out the additional functions. Key findings of the CAG include:

Inspection: Only four technical posts have been sanctioned to inspect all farms across the Indian coastline. The Authority has no regional/branch offices for this purpose.

Between April 2013 and March 2018, the Authority inspected 246 of the 35,395 registered farms, and 213 of the 298 registered hatcheries.^[11] The Rules also do not provide for a periodic inspection plan, nor set any annual inspection targets.¹¹

Waste water testing: Waste water from shrimp farms contains solid and dissolved materials, which must be treated. In 2011, the Authority established its own laboratory to test waste water samples collected from farms. CAG noted that as of 2019, the Authority had not drawn plans for collecting and testing the number of samples. Between March 2011 and April 2016, 275 samples were tested, of which 30% had particulate matter beyond permissible limits. Between May 2016 and July 2019, no samples were tested.

Input standards: As of July 2018, no input standards were fixed. In 2008, the Authority formed a sub-committee to fix standards, however it has not published its report yet.

[1]. [S. Jagannath vs The Union of India, Supreme Court of India, December 11, 1996.](#)

[2]. [S.O. 88 \(E\), Ministry of Environment and Forests, eGazette, February 6, 1996.](#)

[3]. [The Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005.](#)

[4]. [Annual Report 2021-22, Coastal Aquaculture Authority, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.](#)

[5]. [Annual Report 2021-22, Marine Products Export Development Authority, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.](#)

[6]. [Reducing Environmental Impacts of Coastal Aquaculture, Food & Agriculture Organization United Nations, June 4, 2002.](#)

[7]. 'The Environmental Impact of Aquaculture and the Effects of Pollution on Coastal Aquaculture Development in Southeast Asia', Science Direct, Marine Pollution Bulletin, Volume 20, Issue 7, July 1989.

[8]. [The Food Safety and Standards Bill, 2005.](#)

[9]. [Report No. 17, 'The Food Safety and Standards Bill, 2005', Standing Committee on Agriculture, February 21, 2006.](#)

[10]. [Union Government Compliance Audit Observations, Comptroller & Auditor General of India, September 23, 2020.](#)

[11]. [Annual Report 2017-18, Coastal Aquaculture Authority Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.](#)

represent that the contents of the report are accurate or complete. PRS is an independent, not-for-profit group. This document has been prepared without regard to the objectives or opinions of those who may receive it.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com

LEADERS FROM SOUTH AMERICAN NATIONS CHALLENGE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO STOP AMAZON DESTRUCTION AT BELEM SUMMIT

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 09, 2023 07:00 am | Updated 07:00 am IST - BELEM

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

View of the forest cut by the Combu Creek, on Combu Island on the banks of the Guama River, near the city of Belem, Para state, Brazil. Belem is playing host to the Amazon Summit - IV Meeting of the Presidents of the States party to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, with the participation of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Guyana, French Guiana, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. | Photo Credit: AP

Leaders from South American nations that are home to the Amazon challenged developed countries on August 8 to do more to stop the massive destruction of the world's largest rainforest, a task they said can't fall to just a few when the crisis has been caused by so many.

Assembling in the Brazilian city of Belem, the members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, or ACTO, also sought to chart a common course on how to combat climate change, hoping a united front would give them a major voice in global talks.

The calls from the Presidents of nations including Brazil, Colombia and Bolivia came as leaders aim to fuel much-needed economic development in their regions while preventing the Amazon's ongoing demise "from reaching a point of no return," according to a joint declaration issued at the end of the day. Some scientists say that when 20% to 25% of the forest is destroyed, rainfall will dramatically decline, transforming more than half of the rainforest to tropical savannah, with immense biodiversity loss.

"The forest unites us. It is time to look at the heart of our continent and consolidate, once and for all, our Amazon identity," said Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. "In an international system that was not built by us, we were historically relegated to a subordinate place as a supplier of raw materials. A just ecological transition will allow us to change this."

The two-day summit ending on August 9 reinforces Mr. Lula's strategy to leverage global concern for Amazon's preservation. Emboldened by a 42% drop in deforestation during his first seven months in office, he has sought international financial support for forest protection.

The Amazon stretches across an area twice the size of India. Two-thirds of it lie in Brazil, with seven other countries and one territory share the remaining third. Governments have historically

viewed it as an area to be colonized and exploited, with little regard for sustainability or the rights of its Indigenous peoples.

All the countries at the summit have ratified the Paris Climate Accord, which requires signatories to set targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. But cross-border cooperation has historically been scant, undermined by low trust, ideological differences and the lack of government presence.

Aside from a general consensus on the need for shared global responsibility, members of ACTO— convening for only the fourth time in the organization’s existence— demonstrated on August 8 that they aren’t fully aligned on key issues. This week marks the first meeting of the 45-year-old organization in 14 years.

Forest protection commitments have been uneven previously and appeared to remain so at the summit. The “Belem Declaration,” the gathering’s official proclamation issued on August 8, didn’t include shared commitments to zero deforestation by 2030. Brazil and Colombia have already made those commitments. Mr. Lula has said he hopes the document will be a shared call to arms at the COP 28 climate conference in November.

A key topic dividing the nations on August 8 was oil. Notably, leftist Colombian President Gustavo Petro called for an end to oil exploration in the Amazon— an allusion to the ambivalent approach of Brazil and other oil-producing nations in the region— and said that governments must forge a path toward “decarbonized prosperity.”

“A jungle that extracts oil — is it possible to maintain a political line at that level? Bet on death and destroying life?” Mr. Petro said. He also spoke about finding ways to reforest pastures and plantations, which cover much of Brazil’s heartland for cattle ranching and growing soy.

Mr. Lula, who has presented himself as an environmental leader on the international stage, has refrained from taking a definitive stance on oil, citing the decision as a technical matter. Meanwhile, Brazil’s state-run Petrobras company has been seeking to explore for oil near the mouth of the Amazon River.

Despite disagreements among nations, there have been encouraging signs of increased regional cooperation amid growing global recognition of the Amazon’s importance in arresting climate change. Sharing a united voice— along with funnelling more money into ACTO— could help it serve as the region’s representative on the global stage ahead of the COP climate conference, leaders said.

“The Amazon is our passport to a new relationship with the world, a more symmetric relationship, in which our resources are not exploited to benefit few, but rather valued and put in the service of everyone,” Mr. Lula said.

Bolivian President Luis Arce said the Amazon has been the victim of capitalism, reflected by the runaway expansion of agricultural borders and natural resource exploitation. And he noted that industrialized nations are responsible for most historic greenhouse gas emissions.

“The fact that the Amazon is such an important territory doesn’t imply that all of the responsibilities, consequences and effects of the climate crisis should fall to us, to our towns and to our economies,” Mr. Arce said.

Mr. Petro argued that affluent nations should swap foreign debt owed by Amazon countries for climate action, saying that would create enough investment to power the Amazon region’s

economy.

Colombia's Petro also called for the formation of a military alliance akin to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, saying such a group could be tasked not only with protecting the Amazon but tackling another major problem for the region: organized crime.

Few border areas are policed seriously and there has been scant international cooperation as rival organized crime groups compete for drug-trafficking routes. Drug seizures have increased in Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia and Peru over the past decade, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported in June. Mr. Lula previously announced a plan to create an international police center in Manaus.

Also attending the summit on August 8 were Guyana's Prime Minister, Venezuela's Vice President and the Foreign Ministers of Suriname and Ecuador.

On August 9, the summit will welcome representatives of Norway and Germany, the largest contributors to Brazil's Amazon Fund for sustainable development, along with counterparts from other crucial rainforest regions: Indonesia, the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. France's ambassador to Brazil will also attend, representing the Amazonian territory of French Guiana.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[World](#) / [climate change \(politics\)](#) / [climate change](#) / [environmental issues](#) / [Brazil](#) / [Paris Climate Summit COP21](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

INDIA SUCCEEDS IN REDUCING EMISSIONS RATE BY 33% OVER 14 YEARS: SOURCES

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Energy incl. Renewable & Non-renewable

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

August 09, 2023 06:06 pm | Updated 06:32 pm IST - NEW DELHI

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Emissions from a chemical factory fill the skyline on a cloudy day in Mumbai, on July 5, 2023. | Photo Credit: AP

India's greenhouse emissions rate dropped by a faster-than-expected 33% in 14 years as renewable energy generation rose and forest cover increased, according to two officials privy to latest assessment made for submission to the United Nations.

The report's findings showed India well on the way to meeting a commitment to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to reduce emissions intensity by 45% from the 2005 level by 2030.

India's rate of emissions intensity - the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions emitted for every unit increase of gross domestic product (GDP) - fell by 33% from 2005 to 2019, officials privy to the preparations of the Third National Communication (TNC) report said.

Many countries are preparing their TNC reports to update the UNFCCC on their efforts to mitigate emissions.

India's average rate of reduction in emissions increased to 3% annually in the period 2016-2019, from just about 1.5% in the period 2014-2016.

It was the fastest reduction so far, and was largely attributable to the government's push towards renewables, even as fossil fuel continues to dominate the energy mix.

"There is continuous reduction in the emission intensity of the Indian economy, which shows the country has been able to completely decouple its economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions," one official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

The progress made on reducing emissions intensity should help India avert pressure by developed nations to stop using coal, the second official said.

This official said a substantial increase in forest cover and schemes promoting non-fossil generation and targeting emissions in industrial, automotive and energy sectors has led to the sharp reduction in India's emissions intensity.

As of 2019, forests and trees covered 24.56%, or 80.73 million hectares, of India.

Recently, India has also been trying to promote green hydrogen, manufactured by splitting water molecules using renewable energy.

A third official said the report is yet to be ratified by the federal cabinet.

India's environment ministry did not respond to queries sent on Monday by Reuters.

Central Electricity Authority data shows that non-fossil fuel-based power - including hydro, nuclear and renewable energy - accounted for 25.3% of India's total power generation in the fiscal year that ended in March, up from 24.6% three years earlier.

Thermal power stations still provide 73% of the electricity consumed, down from about 75% in 2019.

The Group of 20 (G20) major economies failed twice last month to agree on phasing out the use of fossil fuels and on setting concrete targets to cut emissions.

Developing countries including India are resisting higher emission reduction targets, arguing that industrialised nations unfettered use of fossil fuels have depleted resources.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[carbon emissions](#) / [renewable energy](#) / [energy and resource](#) / [climate change](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com