

## Forest right act 2006

### Rights for the dwellers

What the Forest Rights Act, 2006, entails

- Tenurial security over the forestland under occupation prior to December 13, 2005
- Recognition of community right over forest and forest products
- Protection and conservation of community forest resources
- Conversion of all forest villages and habitation located inside the forestland into revenue villages
- In situ rehabilitation of displaced persons evicted without compensation prior to December 13, 2005
- Recognition of ancestral domain (habitat) right to



Residents of Gunduribadi village in Odisha's Nayagarh district get ready for mapping their land boundaries for the Forest Rights Act implementation. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
- Seasonal access to nomadic, pastoral and semi-nomadic communities over forestland
- Conversion of all leases granted by erstwhile governments, zamindars and king into permanent land records

- Finally, the Act lays down a democratic procedure for identifying whether and where wildlife conservation may require curtailing or extinguishing community rights.
- Simultaneously, having community rights over a forest translates ipso facto into the community having a say in, if not veto over, any diversion of that forest and a right to compensation if diverted.
- This right was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in the Niyamgiri case, and although the Forest Conservation Rules 2022 and FCA Amendment 2023 seek to bypass this right, States can still put in place such consent mechanisms.
- But the biggest lacuna in FRA implementation is the extremely slow and incomplete recognition of community rights to access and manage forests (loosely, community forest rights or CFRs).
- The (still colonially structured) forest bureaucracy is vehemently opposed to these rights, as it stands to lose its zamindari: our estimates show that 70%90% of the forests in central India should be under CFRs.
- The other departments and political representatives can only visualise forest dwellers as 'labharthis' (beneficiaries of state largesse), not
- The issue of so called 'encroachments' is addressed through recognizing individual forest rights (IFRs) to continue habitation and cultivation or other activities that existed before December 2005.
- Forest villages are to be converted into revenue villages after full rights recognition.
- The issue of access and control is addressed by recognizing the rights of village communities to access and use forests and to own and sell minor forest produce, and, most importantly, to manage forests within their customary boundaries, including in sanctuaries and national parks.
- This is the most far reaching provision in the FRA, as it ensures decentralised forest governance, linking management authority and responsibility to community rights.

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as autonomous users and managers of their own forests.

- Maharashtra, Odisha, and, more recently, Chhattisgarh, are the only States to recognise CFRs substantially.
- But only Maharashtra has enabled their activation by denationalizing minor forest produce, at least in Scheduled Areas, resulting in at least a thousand villages managing their own forests.
- Even here, illegal non-recognition of community rights in densely forested potential mining areas has led to protest and unrest.

### • The Hindu

#### Storm Red Sea

- Beyond the regional crisis points, depletion of security in the Red Sea will have a global impact, specifically for Asian economies such as India, Japan, South Korea, and China, drawing in their interests as well.
- In the Persian Gulf for example, India has operationalized military capacities under Operation Sankalp since 2019, where the Indian Navy began escorting India flagged ships, specifically oil tankers.
- Japan has worked its diplomatic channels directly with Tehran while

South Korea has also experienced tensions with Iran over its ships travelling through the region. A U.S. call for partners to mobilise is not irrational.

- Previously, the global community did rally to address the issue of piracy off coastal eastern Africa, specifically around the waters of Somalia.
- In 2012, India joined China, Japan, and South Korea for coordinated joint patrols in the Gulf of Aden. All states took point by rotation in leading these patrols
- Through the current churn in the global geopolitical order, there is one major trend that states must factor into their calculus: that non-state militant actors are strengthening in agency, both politically and militarily, and often as part of state promoted designs to secure short term gains for long term strategic victories.
- These are the fundamentals at play in an area such as the Red Sea which, in capitals such as New Delhi, do not enjoy the luxury of space in security debates.

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#### One person, one vote

- On December 12, the Rajya Sabha passed The Chief Election

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Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office and Terms of Office) Bill, 2023.

- It provides for the procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the other two Election Commissioners (ECs).

### What does the Constitution say?

- Article 324 provides for the composition of the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- It consists of the CEC and two other ECs.
- The Constitution provides that the appointment of the CEC and EC shall, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, be made by the President.
- While the existing parliamentary law provides for their conditions of service, it is silent with respect to appointments.
- The appointments till date are made by the President, that is the Central Government and there is no mechanism for ensuring independence during the appointment process
- The Supreme Court in this case, in March 2023, held that there has been a legislative vacuum due to the

absence of any law by Parliament in the last 73 years (since the adoption of the Constitution) with respect to the appointment of the CEC and EC.

- The independence of the ECI is essential for ensuring free and fair elections that is paramount for a vibrant democracy.
- The Supreme Court drew reference to various other institutions supporting constitutional democracy that have independent mechanisms for the appointment of its head/members like the National and State Human Rights Commission, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Information Commission, Lokpal etc.
- In the past, the Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990) and the Law Commission in its 255th report on Electoral Reforms (2015), had suggested that the CEC and ECs should be appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Leader of the Opposition or the largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha.
- Considering these recommendations, the Supreme Court, exercising its powers under Article 142 (to issue directions for doing 'complete justice' in any matter), laid down that the CEC and ECs shall be appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime

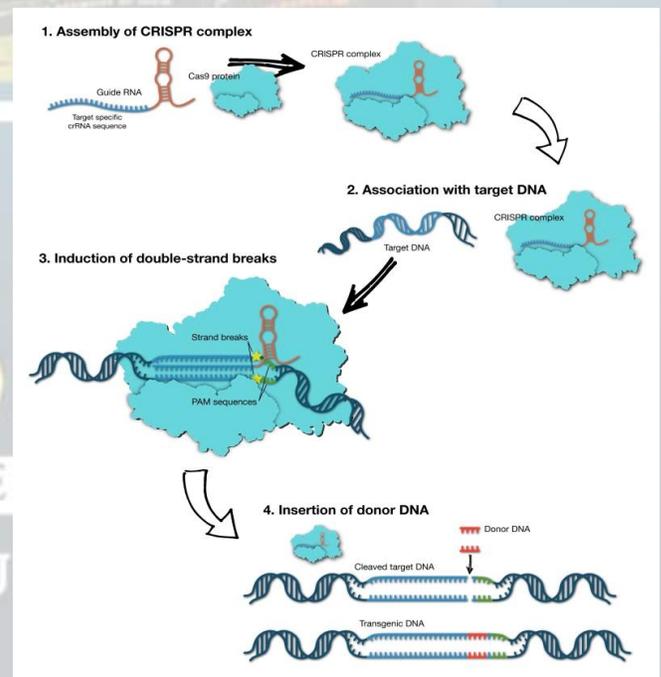
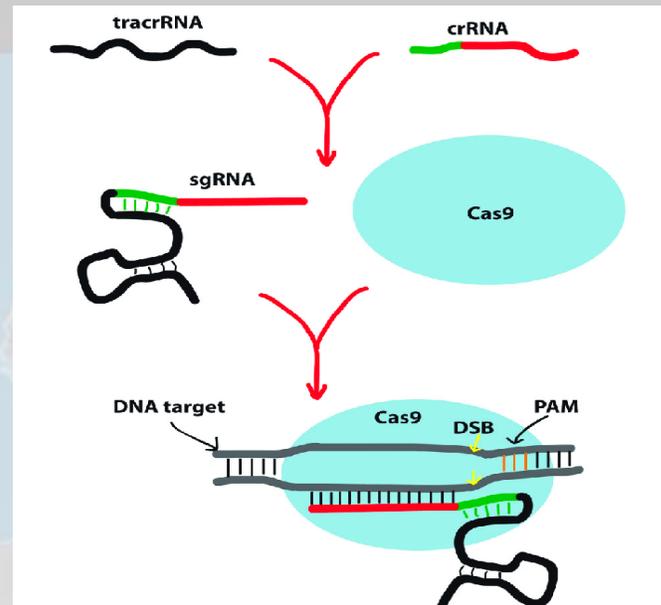
Minister, the **CJI and the Leader of the Opposition** or the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.

**What does the proposed law provide?**

- The **CEC and other ECs shall be appointed from persons who are holding or have held a post equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.**
- There shall be a **search committee headed by the Minister of Law and Justice**, who shall prepare a panel of five persons for consideration to the selection committee.
- The **CEC and EC shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of this selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.**
- It is for the **first time that the Parliament is proposing a structured mechanism** for identification of suitable persons for the post of CEC and EC.

The Hindu

### (CRISPR) and therapeutic



- The world of medicine is currently abuzz with news of regulatory agencies' approval for **two highly anticipated CRISPR based therapies** for sickle cell disease and  $\beta$ -thalassaemia in the U.K. and the U.S.

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### Long and short of CRISPR

- Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR) are DNA elements that Spanish researchers discovered in archaea in 1993, and named and described later in a number of bacterial genomes.
- These elements contain pieces of genetic material derived from viruses that infect bacteria (for example, bacteriophages) and a set of proteins called Cas, or CRISPR associated.
- the researchers demonstrated the utility of the CRISPR-Cas9 system as a programmable 'molecular scissor' that could cut in DNA at a chosen spot with unparalleled accuracy. The specific spot could be picked by modifying the crRNA accordingly.
- the national regulator in the U.K., the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), approved the use of a CRISPR based method called exagamglogene autotemcel sold under the brand 'Casgevy' to treat sickle cell.
- Disease and transfusion dependent  $\beta$ thalassemia.
- In Casgevy, a patient's blood stem cells are extracted, their genes modified to remove the defect that produces the sickling, and regrafted back.

- These cells then proliferate to produce normal red blood cells.
- One fascinating approach is called base editing, where scientists edit genomes at the resolution of a single nucleotide (DNA is a polymer consisting of multiple nucleotides chained together).
- Yet another emerging technique is prime editing, where researchers use a search and replace strategy to directly write or insert specific sequences into an existing genome with high accuracy.

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### Kraft process

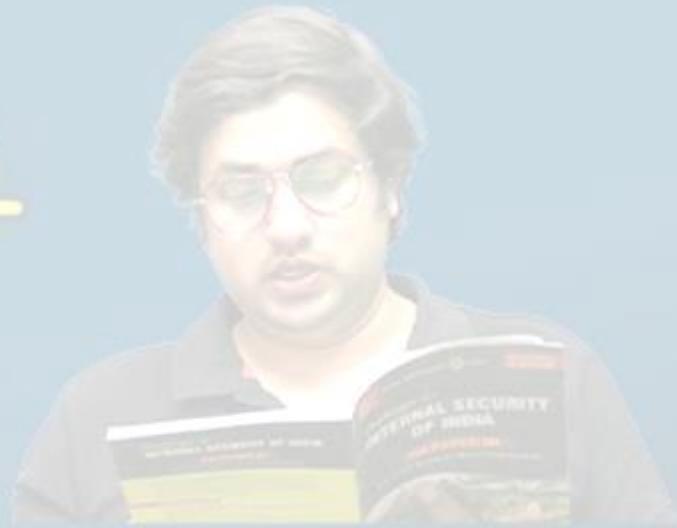
- The kraft process is a technique that accepts wood chips as input to produce cellulose fibres, which are then used to make paper and other materials used in everyday objects.
- Paper is most commonly produced by the kraft process today.
- The process is chemical in nature. The chips are treated with water, sodium hydroxide, and sodium sulphide the last two forming a highly alkaline mixture called white liquor at a relatively high temperature.
- This breaks the bonds between lignin (an organic polymer and important constituent of cell walls),

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hemicellulose (cellulose like fibres that are shorter), and cellulose.

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