

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

SC on Proposed amendment to Forest Act

The Supreme Court of India has put on pause an ambitious effort by the Centre to amend India's Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, that was brought in to check the wanton razing of forests for 'non-forestry uses'.

- According to the Centre, an estimated four million hectares of forest land had been diverted from 1951-75. Under the provisions of the Act, forests could no longer be diverted without adhering to a regulatory mechanism by the Centre.
- As a measure of its success, the Centre calculates that from 1981-2022, the average annual diversion of the forest had reduced to about 22,000 hectares or about a tenth of what it was from 1951-75.
- the provisions of this piece of legislation largely applied to forest

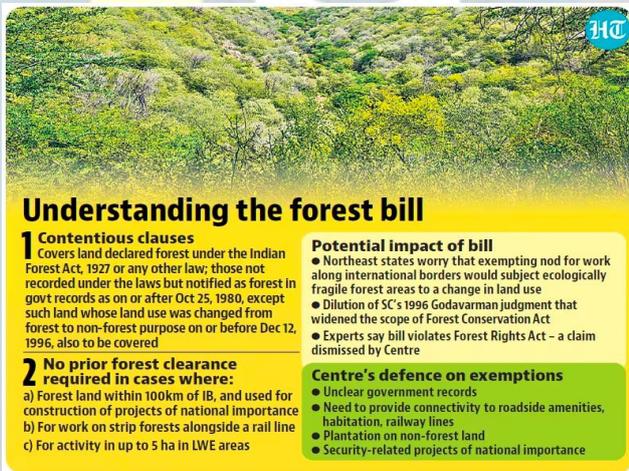
tracts recognized as such by the India Forest Act, or any other State legislation.

- Illegal timber felling in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu, triggered the landmark T.N. Godavarman
- Thirumulpad judgment that saw the Court take an expanded view of forest tracts worthy of protection.
- It also said that forests had to be protected irrespective of how they were classified and who owned them.
- This brought in the concept of 'deemed forests,' or tracts that were not usually classified as such in government or revenue records. States were asked to constitute expert committees to identify such 'deemed forests.'
- The Centre's attempt to amend the Forest (Conservation) Act was ostensibly to bring "clarity" as there were large tracts of recorded forest land that had already been

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

put to non-forestry uses, with the permission of State governments.

- There is apparently, the Centre says, a reluctance among private citizens to cultivate private plantations and orchards, despite their significant ecological benefits, for fear that they would be classified as ‘forest’ (and thus render their ownership void).



Understanding the forest bill

1 Contentious clauses
 Covers land declared forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or any other law; those not recorded under the laws but notified as forest in govt records as on or after Oct 25, 1980, except such land whose land use was changed from forest to non-forest purpose on or before Dec 12, 1996, also to be covered

2 No prior forest clearance required in cases where:
 a) Forest land within 100km of IB, and used for construction of projects of national importance
 b) For work on strip forests alongside a rail line
 c) For activity in up to 5 ha in LWE areas

Potential impact of bill
 • Northeast states worry that exempting nod for work along international borders would subject ecologically fragile forest areas to a change in land use
 • Dilution of SC's 1996 Godavarman judgment that widened the scope of Forest Conservation Act
 • Experts say bill violates Forest Rights Act – a claim dismissed by Centre

Centre's defence on exemptions
 • Unclear government records
 • Need to provide connectivity to roadside amenities, habitation, railway lines
 • Plantation on non-forest land
 • Security-related projects of national importance

- India’s ambitions to create a carbon sink of 2.5 billion-3 billion tonnes, to meet its net zero goals have required forest laws to be “dynamic” and, therefore, the rules have sought to remove ‘deemed forest,’ not already recorded as such, from the ambit of protection.

- This has triggered a slew of public interest petitions as, on the face of it, the amendments appear as an assault on the Act’s ambition of forest protection.

- While a final judgment is pending, the Court’s order to the Centre to compile and make public, by April, States’ efforts at recording the extent of deemed forests is welcome

(CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION)
 FROM BASICS TO UPSC BRILLIANCE

Panchayati Raj institutions

Three decades have passed since the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Acts came into effect, which envisaged that local bodies

in India would function as institutions of local self-government. As a follow-up, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was constituted in 2004 to strengthen rural local governments.

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

- When it comes to analyzing the status of devolution, it is evident that some States have forged ahead while many lag behind.
- The commitment of State governments towards decentralization has been vital in making Panchayati raj institutions an effective local governance mechanism at the grass-roots level.
- Participatory planning and budgeting were the end result of such interventions by the Ministry.
- Panchayats earn only 1% of the revenue through taxes'', with the rest being raised as grants from the State and Centre.

Generating own revenues

- The constitutional amendment has set forth specific details on scale devolution which includes the generation of own revenues.
- Emanating from the Central Act, various State's Panchayati Raj Acts have made provisions for taxation and collection.
- Based on the provisions of these Acts, panchayats have made efforts to generate their own resources to the maximum extent.
- Property tax, cess on land revenue, surcharge on additional stamp duty, tolls, tax on profession, advertisement, user charges for water and sanitation, and lighting are the major OSRs (own source of revenue) where panchayats can earn maximum income.
- Panchayats are expected to establish a conducive environment for taxation by implementing appropriate financial regulations.
- This includes making decisions regarding the tax and non-tax bases, determining their rates, establishing provisions for periodic revisions, defining exemption areas, and enacting effective tax

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

management and enforcement laws for collection.

- The huge potential for non-tax revenue includes fees, rent, and income from investment sales and hires charges and receipts.

The role of gram sabhas

- Gram sabhas have a significant role in fostering self-sufficiency and sustainable development at the grass-roots level by leveraging local resources for revenue generation.
- They can be engaged in planning, decision-making, and implementation of revenue-generating initiatives that range from agriculture and tourism to small-scale industries.
- They have the authority to impose taxes, fees, and levies, directing the funds towards local development projects, public services, and social welfare programs.

• Through transparent financial management and inclusive participation, gram sabhas ensure accountability and foster community trust, ultimately empowering villages to become economically independent and resilient.

- gram sabhas need to promote entrepreneurship, and foster partnerships with external stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of revenue generation efforts

- In several States, gram panchayats lack the authority to collect taxes, while in numerous others, intermediate and district panchayats are not delegated the responsibility of tax collection

Conclusion

- Despite every enabling factor to raise revenue, panchayats confront several impediments in resource mobilisation: the ‘freebie culture’

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

rampant in society is the cause for the antipathy in paying taxes.

- Elected representatives feel that imposing taxes would alter their popularity adversely. Here, the answer is clear.
- There is a need to educate elected representatives and the public on the significance of raising revenue to develop panchayats as self-governing institutions.
- Ultimately, the dependency syndrome for grants has to be minimized and in due course, panchayats will be able to survive on their resources.
- The Hindu
- **Nano plastics**
- Nano plastics are difficult to analyze due to their size and also due to the inability of different diagnostic techniques to identify them. Researchers used a SRS imaging platform along with an

automated algorithm to identify plastics.

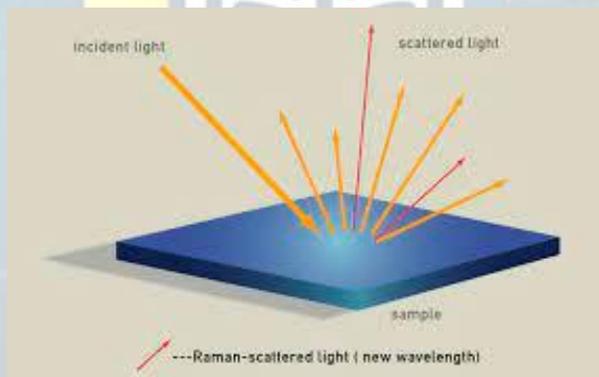
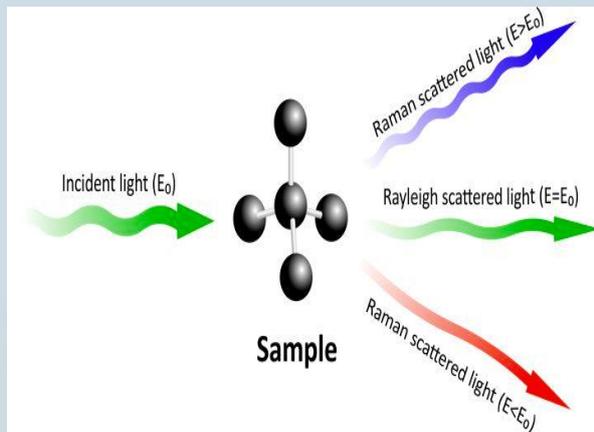
- The algorithm extracted detailed information about the chemical makeup from data produced by the SRS (Raman scattering imaging) platform
- Studies have found that plastic items can break down into sub-micrometre pieces, meaning they can breach biological barriers and enter different parts of the bodies of living beings.
- the presence of plastics in bottled water could spot following the types: polyamide 66, polypropylene (PP), polyethylene, polymethyl methacrylate, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polystyrene, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET).

What is Raman scattering imaging??

- Raman scattering is an optical process where incoming excitation

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

light interacting with a sample produces scattered light that is lessened in energy by the vibrational modes of the chemical bonds of the specimen.



confirmed population (fewer than 200 individuals) was in neighbouring China.

- But in a new study, researchers confirmed Myanmar has the largest known population of Skywalker gibbons in a single location.



- The Skywalker hoolock gibbon or Gaoligong hoolock gibbon

(*Hoolock tianxing*) is an arboreal primate in the gibbon family, Hylobatidae.

The Hindu

Skywalker hoolock gibbon

- Skywalker hoolock gibbon in Myanmar. When the Skywalker hoolock gibbon was first discovered in 2017 by a group of Star Wars-loving scientists, its only

- It is one of three species of hoolock gibbon and was first described in January 2017 in the *American Journal of Primatology*.

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

- The Skywalker hoolock gibbon can be found in the montane forests of eastern Myanmar and southwestern China in the Mt. Gaoligong region, located between the Salween River and the Nmai tributary of the Irrawaddy River.
- Hoolocks were first recorded in this region in 1917, and this is the easternmost habitat of any hoolock species

Q "Third tier of government without financial autonomy cannot bring democratic decentralisation" Discuss

"वित्तीय स्वायत्तता के बिना सरकार का तीसरा स्तर लोकतांत्रिक विकेंद्रीकरण नहीं ला सकता" चर्चा करें

SEND ANSWER- SAURABH PANDEY UPSC Telegram channel

For any query msg- 9057921649

- COURSE MUST FOR UPSC PRELIMS 2024 Comprehensive course on two Years Current

affairs for prelims 2024

Detailed course on 2yrs current affairs for prelims 2024

- Attappady Thuvara has seeds with white coat.
- These are bigger and have higher seed weight than the regular variety.
- Compared to the garlic produced in other areas, the garlic from the Kanthalloor Vattavada area of Devikulam block panchayat in Idukki contains higher amount of sulphides, flavonoids, and proteins.
- Onattukara Eilu and its oil are famous for its unique health benefits.
- Relatively higher antioxidant content in Onattukara Eilu helps in fighting the free radicals which destroy the body cells.
- Kodungalloor Pottuveilari cultivated in Kodungalloor and parts of Ernakulam is consumed as juice and in other forms.
- This snap melon, which is harvested in summer, is excellent for quenching thirst

The Tamakoshi River

- The Tamakoshi River is part of the Koshi or Sapta Koshi river system in Nepalese Himalayas.
- It originates from the Rongshar Chu and Lapchi Gang rivers close to the Nepal-Tibet border.
- It flows in a southern direction through Bagmati Province in Nepal, namely through Dolakha District and Ramechhap District.

sample class notes



By saurabh pandey sir

• HOW TO JOIN ALL COURSES??

- Prelims test series on advanced current affairs (total 50 tests) Saurabh Pandey UPSC: Home (Every Thursday and saturday)

The Hindu 21st February 2024 SP sir

CURRENT AFFAIRS PLUS
2 YRS COVERAGE
 50 TEST ₹ 1499 Target UPSC Prelims 2024
PRELIMS TEST SERIES ON ADVANCED CURRENT AFFAIRS
 BY Saurabh pandey sir
UPSC Prelims Test series on Advanced Current affairs
 Created by: You(Owner)
 1 year
₹599

1
 2
 3
 saurabhpandeyupsc.com
 How to join???

SAURABH PANDEY — CSE —

(CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION)
 FROM BASICS TO UPSC BRILLIANCE