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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



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WILDLIFE CONFLICTS CONTINUE: SC

TAG: GS Paper III- **Environment and Ecology, Conservations.**

Why in the News?

- ❖ The Supreme Court has emphasized the need for a balance between human rights and wildlife protection citing human-wildlife conflicts in Assam's Pobitora wildlife sanctuary.

Additional Information:

- ❖ The Supreme Court highlighted the danger human-wildlife conflicts pose to forests and wildlife.
- ❖ Justice B.R. Gavai emphasized the need to strike a balance between the rights of both stakeholders.
- ❖ The case concerned the demarcation of boundaries of Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and rights of villagers.
- ❖ The Assam government formed a special committee chaired by the Chief Secretary (Forests) to survey and suggest alterations in sanctuary boundaries.
- ❖ The committee includes representation from wildlife authorities.
- ❖ State proposals will be reviewed by the National Board of Wildlife and the Supreme Court.
- ❖ The court ordered the inclusion of wildlife representatives in the special committee.
- ❖ Proposed changes aim to address both human settlements and the growing rhinoceros population.
- ❖ Justice Gavai stressed considering the human aspect alongside environmental concerns.
- ❖ On March 13, the apex court upheld the Assam government's decision to denotify the Pobitora wildlife sanctuary.

Reasons behind increasing Human-wildlife conflict:

- ❖ **Habitat Loss:** The intrusion of human activities such as urbanization, agriculture, and infrastructure development into wildlife habitats diminishes available living space for animals, heightening the likelihood of encounters with humans.
- ❖ **Fragmentation:** The division of natural habitats by constructions like roads, fences, and other barriers disrupts the movement patterns of wildlife, compelling them to seek sustenance and refuge in human settlements.
- ❖ **Human Activities:** Actions such as deforestation, logging, hunting, and poaching carried out by humans disrupt ecosystems, modify the natural behaviors of wildlife, and escalate conflicts between humans and animals.
- ❖ **Crop Raiding:** Wildlife species may raid agricultural crops and livestock for sustenance, leading to conflicts between farmers and wildlife, resulting in economic losses and livelihood challenges.
- ❖ **Climate Change:** Alterations in climate patterns impact wildlife habitats, food sources, and migration routes, compelling animals to adapt to changing circumstances and increasing their interactions with humans.



- ❖ **Lack of Awareness:** Insufficient knowledge among communities about coexisting with wildlife, effective waste management practices, and strategies for mitigating conflicts contributes to the prevalence of human-wildlife conflicts.

How can the conflicts be avoided?

- ❖ **Habitat Conservation:** Preserve and safeguard wildlife habitats through initiatives like habitat restoration, creation of wildlife corridors, and establishment of protected areas, aiming to mitigate habitat loss and fragmentation.
- ❖ **Community Involvement:** Engage local communities in wildlife conservation endeavors, promote understanding of cohabitation with wildlife, and offer training on techniques for managing conflicts.
- ❖ **Early Alert Systems:** Develop and deploy early warning systems, such as alarms, illumination, and deterrents, to forestall wildlife intrusions into human settlements and agricultural lands.
- ❖ **Diversification of Livelihoods:** Provide support for diversifying livelihoods among communities residing near wildlife habitats, including initiatives like ecotourism, sustainable farming, and alternative income-generating activities.
- ❖ **Conflict Management:** Implement effective measures for resolving conflicts, such as compensation programs for crop damage, installation of predator-proof enclosures, and use of non-lethal deterrents, to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.
- ❖ **Policy and Regulation:** Enhance wildlife protection legislation, enforce regulations concerning habitat conservation and land usage, and advocate for sustainable development practices to alleviate human-wildlife conflicts.
- ❖ **Research and Surveillance:** Conduct studies on interactions between humans and wildlife, monitor wildlife populations, and evaluate the efficacy of mitigation strategies to guide evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management approaches.



NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME

TAG: GS Paper III- **Environment.**

Why in the news?

- ❖ The article discusses the obstacles encountered in implementing India's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which is designed to decrease the concentration of particulate matter in the atmosphere.

What is NCAP?

- ❖ The National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) was initiated by the Indian government in 2019 to decrease atmospheric particulate matter (PM) concentration.
- ❖ Initially aimed at reducing PM levels by 20-30% by 2024, the target was later revised to a 40% decrease by 2026.

Challenges in NCAP Implementation:

- ❖ Despite most cities proactively submitting Clean Air Action Plans (CAAPs), their implementation has been inconsistent.
- ❖ Only around 60% of allocated funds are being utilized, with notable underspending in cities like Visakhapatnam and Bengaluru.
- ❖ Implementation delays are due to bureaucratic hurdles, lack of standard operating procedures, and doubts regarding proposed measures' effectiveness.

Role of Scientific Tools:

- ❖ Emissions Inventory (EI) and Source Apportionment (SA) studies are crucial for identifying pollution sources and shaping targeted control strategies.
- ❖ Air Quality (AQ) modeling aids in understanding pollution dispersion, providing insights into pollution origins and impacts.

Utilization of Scientific Tools:

- ❖ Only 37% of cities have completed EI and SA studies, impacting the effectiveness of CAAPs.
- ❖ Insufficient data compromises cities' ability to set realistic targets and allocate funds appropriately.
- ❖ Sole focus on concentration data overlooks contributions from external sources and secondary pollutants, necessitating a comprehensive approach.

Requirements for NCAP Success:

- ❖ Swift and effective implementation requires streamlined bureaucratic processes and standardized technical evaluations.
- ❖ Prudent budgeting and time management are essential for achieving performance-based funding tied to PM concentration reduction targets.



A GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

TAG: GS Paper I- Society – Poverty and Development Issues.

Why in the news?

- ❖ The article highlights the deepening global food insecurity in 2023, with 282 million individuals experiencing acute hunger as a result of conflicts, severe weather events, and economic turbulence.

Additional information about the news:

- ❖ Global food insecurity worsened in 2023, impacting 282 million individuals with acute hunger.
- ❖ Causes included conflicts, notably in Gaza and Sudan, alongside extreme weather events and economic shocks.
- ❖ The Food Security Information Network (FSIN) released a report highlighting the bleak global outlook for the year.
- ❖ This marked the fifth consecutive year of increases in people facing acute food insecurity, attributed partly to expanded geographic coverage in the report and deteriorating conditions in 12 countries.
- ❖ New or intensified shocks were observed in various areas, with significant deterioration in Sudan and the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ Approximately 700,000 people, including 600,000 in Gaza, were on the brink of starvation, with the figure now reaching 1.1 million in Gaza.
- ❖ Since 2016, the number of food-insecure people has risen from 108 million to 282 million, doubling the population share affected.
- ❖ Protracted major food crises persist in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Syria, and Yemen.
- ❖ Improvements were noted in 17 countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ukraine.



SUPREME COURT GRAPPLES WITH INTERPRETATION OF ARTICLE 39(B) IN PROPERTY RIGHTS DISPUTE.

TAG: GS Paper II- **Polity, Judiciary.**

Why in the news?

- ❖ Amidst wealth distribution debates in India, the Supreme Court is now hearing a case on the government's authority to acquire and redistribute private properties, centered on interpreting Article 39(b) of the Constitution regarding resource ownership for the common welfare.

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)

- ❖ DPSP, encapsulated in Article 39(b) of Part IV of the Constitution, offers guidance for legislation but lacks direct enforceability in courts.
- ❖ Article 39(b) mandates the state to ensure equitable distribution of material resources for collective welfare.

Judicial Interpretations of Article 39(b)

- ❖ Past judicial interpretations, such as in *State of Karnataka v Shri Ranganatha Reddy* (1977), have considered Article 39(b).
- ❖ Justice Krishna Iyer's minority opinion advocated for the communal ownership of privately held resources.
- ❖ Justice Iyer's perspective gained traction in subsequent cases like *Sanjeev Coke Manufacturing Company v Bharat Coking Coal* (1983), influencing later rulings despite being in the minority.

Current Dispute: Challenge to MHADA Amendment

- ❖ A current dispute before the Supreme Court involves a challenge to the 1986 amendment to the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Act, 1976 (MHADA).
- ❖ The amendment allows for the acquisition and redistribution of cessed properties in Mumbai under Article 39(b).

Legal Proceedings and Controversy

- ❖ Legal proceedings over three decades have ensued, with the Bombay High Court upholding the legality of the MHADA amendment.
- ❖ The Property Owners' Association in Mumbai contested this decision, leading to an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Central Issue: Interpretation of Article 39(b)

- ❖ The core issue revolves around whether privately owned assets, including cessed buildings, fall within the purview of Article 39(b).

Current Status and Future Proceedings

- ❖ Presently, a nine-judge Bench is deliberating on the case after numerous hearings and referrals.
- ❖ The Supreme Court has shown reluctance to adopt a broad interpretation of Article 39(b) to include privately held resources, signaling the complexity of balancing property rights with the state's obligation to promote the common good.



What does Article 39(b) say:

- Article 39(b) and (c) of the Indian Constitution focus on establishing a welfare society and promoting egalitarian principles.
- In the landmark case of Kesavananda Bharati v. The State of Kerala (1973), the Supreme Court of India asserted that any development in social, economic, or political spheres must not violate an individual's right to dignity.
- The Court observed that the framers of the Indian Constitution aimed to create a society where every individual's dignity is respected.
- In State of Bihar v. Kameshwar Singh AIR (1952), the Supreme Court explicitly stated that legislation aimed at reducing wealth or land concentration and promoting an egalitarian approach benefits society as a whole, aligning with Article 39(b) and (c) objectives.
- Under the case Assam Sillimanite Ltd. v. Union of India (1992), the Supreme Court clarified the concept of "material resources of the community" mentioned in Article 39(b) of the Indian





ARTICLE 244(A) FOR REGIONAL AUTONOMY

TAG: GS Paper II- **Polity.**

Why in the news?

- ❖ In the Diphu Lok Sabha constituency, where tribal communities hold the majority, candidates from various political parties have pledged commitments concerning the enforcement of Article 244(A) of the Constitution.

Social Profile of Diphu: A Tribal Majority Area:

- ❖ Diphu is a place in Assam with about 8.9 lakh voters. It's not very crowded and is reserved for Scheduled Tribes (STs). It includes six smaller areas in three districts—Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, and Dima Hasao—that mostly have tribal people.

Government Structure:

- ❖ These areas are managed according to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, which means they have their own rules. Two autonomous councils look after them.

Understanding Article 244(A): A Proposal for Enhanced Autonomy

- ❖ Article 244(A) was added to the Constitution in 1969. It says that Parliament can create independent areas within Assam, like in Karbi Anglong. The idea is to give these places their own government, more than what the Sixth Schedule allows.

Historical Context and Demand for Autonomy:

- ❖ People in Karbi Anglong have wanted more control since the 1950s. They even thought about having their own state. Even after Meghalaya was made in 1972, Karbi Anglong stayed with Assam, hoping for Article 244(A) to make things better.
- ❖ Different groups, like the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), have pushed for more independence. This led to peace deals and agreements with rebel groups.

Current Political Dynamics and Electoral Promises:

- ❖ Even though there have been peace deals, talks about Article 244(A) are still happening during elections. Candidates, including former rebels like Horen Sing Bey from the BJP, talk a lot about getting more autonomy, showing that people still want it.

Concerns and Doubts:

- ❖ People aren't sure if the government will really make things better. They worry that promises made during elections won't be kept, and that the government won't really give more autonomy.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The election scene in Diphu shows that tribal communities there really want more independence and control. All parties talk about implementing Article 244(A). But there's still a gap between what's promised during elections and what actually happens. This shows that there's still a lot of work to do to meet the region's desire for more self-rule.