

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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The Gussadi dance, performed by the Gond tribe, reflects the rich cultural heritage of Telangana's indigenous communities.

- It was performed during Celebrations of the 'Praja Palana Vijayotsava', to commemorate the completion of one year of the Congress government in Telangana.

Vibrant moves



Claiming success: Artistes from the Gond tribe perform the Gussadi dance during the 'Praja Palana Vijayotsava', to commemorate the completion of one year of the Congress government in Telangana on Tuesday. NAGARA GOPAL

Gussadi Dance: Key Information

- **Origin:** The Gussadi dance is a traditional tribal art form of the Gond tribe, primarily practiced in the regions of Telangana.
- **Performance:** It is performed during the Dandari festival, celebrated after the harvest season, as a tribute to deities and ancestors.
- **Attire:** Dancers wear elaborate costumes, including feathered headgear, ornaments, and body paint, symbolizing cultural identity and tribal heritage.
- **Music:** Accompanied by traditional instruments like drums, creating rhythmic beats that drive the dance.

Daily News Analysis

- **Occasions:** Often showcased during festivals, cultural events, and government programs to promote tribal art.
- **Recognition:** Efforts are underway to preserve and promote the Gussadi dance as part of India's intangible cultural heritage.



The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has proposed significant measures for Ladakh, including job reservations, women's empowerment, and constitutional safeguards for preserving local culture.

- These steps come in response to ongoing protests over the loss of constitutional protections after the revocation of Article 370.

Analysis of the news:

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed 95% reservation in government jobs for locals in Ladakh.
- One-third reservation for women in the hill councils of Ladakh has been suggested to promote gender equality.
- The Centre has agreed to work on drafting constitutional safeguards to preserve the land and culture of Ladakh, including declaring Urdu and Bhoti as official languages.
- A review of 22 pending laws is proposed to address local concerns, empowerment, and wildlife issues in Ladakh.
- The government has assured that recruitment for government posts will begin immediately, with gazetted posts to be filled through the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC).
- Ladakh's key demands include statehood, inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, tribal status, and a separate parliamentary seat for Leh and Kargil.

Centre proposes 95% govt. job reservation for locals in Ladakh

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed 95% reservation in government jobs for locals in Ladakh, one-third reservation for women in hill councils and has agreed to address concerns regarding land-related matters, according to leaders from the region who attended a high-powered committee (HPC) meeting on Tuesday.

The Centre has also proposed to work on a draft to ensure "constitutional safeguards" to preserve the land and culture of Ladakh and also agreed to declare Urdu and Bhoti the official languages of Ladakh. The Ministry proposed to review 22 pending laws to address local concerns, empowerment and wildlife areas.

Ladakh has been protesting for the past five years since it lost constitutional safeguards ensured under Article 370 of the Constitution.

Former BJP MP, Thupstan Chhewang, chairman of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) who attended the talks, said a separate public service commission was not constitutionally possible for Ladakh as the Union Territory did not have a legislature.

Recruitments soon

"The government has assured us that recruitments will start immediately. We said recruitments for gazetted posts should be done through the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission [JKPSC]," Mr. Chhewang said.

"The next meeting is on January 15 where sixth schedule will be discussed," he said.

For the past five years, people in Ladakh have been pressing for four demands – Statehood for Ladakh, inclusion of Ladakh in the sixth schedule of the Constitution, thus giving it a tribal status, job reservation for locals and a Parliamentary seat each for Leh and Kargil.

India, despite covering just 2.4% of the world's land area, is home to a significant portion of global biodiversity, making it a megadiverse country.

On World Wildlife Day, making a clarion call to protect India's critically endangered species

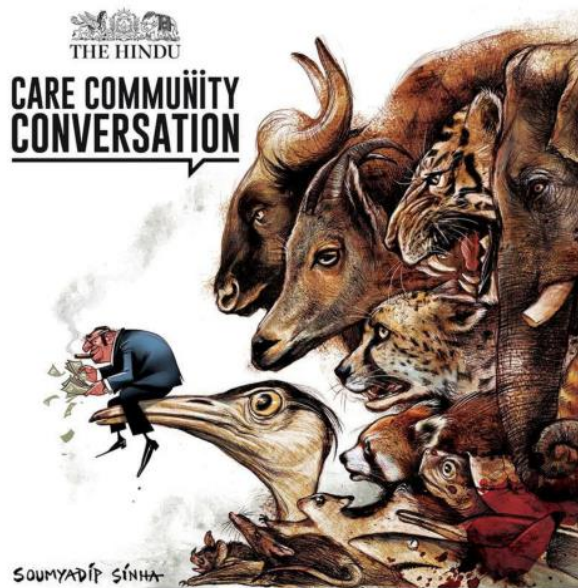
The Hindu Bureau

Despite possessing only 2.4% of the world's land area, India accounts for 7-8% of all recorded species, which includes 45,000 species of plants and 91,000 of animals. This rich biodiversity is one of the reasons that it has been historically identified as a megadiverse country.

World Wildlife Conservation Day (December 4) serves as an occasion to not only celebrate the country's rich biodiversity but also evaluate if enough is being done to protect the critically endangered species that find a home here.

India has 10 biogeographic zones and is home to 8.58% of the mammalian species documented so far, with the corresponding figures for avian species being 13.66%, for reptiles 7.91%, for amphibians 4.66%, for fish 11.72% and for plants 11.8%.

Four of the 34 globally identified biodiversity hotspots, namely the Hima-



layas, Indo-Burma, the Western Ghats-Sri Lanka and Sundaland, are located in India.

With only about 2.4% of the world's total land surface, India punches far above its weight in encompassing the breadth that evolution has to offer. However, the natural bounty is often at odds with India's economic trajectory.

As the most populous country in the world and with 65% of the population aged under 35, India's growth trajectory implies a hunger for natural resources: land, wood, timber, forest produce, precious metals, coal and more. This unfortunately conflicts with wildlife habitat, bringing several species – of the land and air – too close to

comfort with human settlements.

Indian civilisation has absorbed a tolerance, even reverence for several wild animals as is evidenced in its religious mythology. The wildlife reserves and sanctuaries in India, set up to conserve certain endangered species, are unfenced, unlike the big game reserves in Africa and neither is hunting permissible in India as a licensed, recreational sport.

Risk of extinction

However this doesn't imply that India is a haven for wildlife. There are 73 "critically endangered" species in India as of 2022 – the most updated estimates made available by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies species as critically endangered when they are at the highest risk of extinction in the wild. The number of critically endangered species has risen from 47 in

2011, though this also due to improvements in data availability and monitoring and not entirely due to animals of a species getting decimated.

Of the nine species of mammals considered critically endangered, eight are endemic, which means that their habitat is limited to a small geographic area within India. These include the Kashmir stag or Hangul, Malabar large-spotted civet, Andaman Shrew, Jenkin's shrew, Nicobar shrew, Namdapha flying squirrel, large rock rat and Leafletted leaf-nosed bat.

While the carnivores of the cat family – lions, tigers, cheetahs – garner considerable attention because of their appeal to tourism, they are only three on the list of critically endangered animals.

Birds such as the Great Indian Bustard face threats from sources such as powerlines in Rajasthan and often fail to garner the attention they deserve for their conservation.

- ➡ However, its growing population and economic demands threaten this biodiversity, leading to increased risks of species extinction.
- ➡ World Wildlife Conservation Day highlights these conservation challenges.

India's Rich Biodiversity

- ➡ India, with only 2.4% of the world's land area, is home to 7-8% of all recorded species.
- ➡ This includes 45,000 species of plants and 91,000 species of animals, making India one of the most biodiverse countries in the world.

World Wildlife Conservation Day

- Celebrated on December 4, World Wildlife Conservation Day highlights the importance of protecting India's biodiversity.
- The day serves to evaluate efforts made towards conserving critically endangered species that live in India.

Biogeographic Zones and Species Diversity

- India consists of 10 biogeographic zones, contributing significantly to global biodiversity. India is home to 8.58% of mammalian species, 13.66% of avian species, 7.91% of reptiles, 4.66% of amphibians, 11.72% of fish species, and 11.8% of plant species.
- The country also hosts four out of the 34 globally recognized biodiversity hotspots: the Himalayas, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats-Sri Lanka, and Sundaland.

Conflict with Economic Growth

- Despite its rich biodiversity, India's growth trajectory, driven by its large population and demand for natural resources, often conflicts with wildlife conservation.
- The increasing need for land, timber, coal, and other resources puts wildlife habitats at risk, leading to human-wildlife conflicts.

Critically Endangered Species in India

- As of 2022, there are 73 critically endangered species in India, up from 47 in 2011.
- This increase is partly due to better data availability and monitoring. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies these species as being at the highest risk of extinction.

Critically Endangered Species In India

Critically Endangered Mammals (Endemic to India)

- **Kashmir Stag (Hangul)**
 - **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
 - **Habitat:** Found only in the Kashmir Valley.
 - **Threats:** Habitat loss, poaching, and reduced prey availability.
 - **Population:** Estimated to be fewer than 200 individuals in the wild.
- **Malabar Large-spotted Civet**
 - **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
 - **Habitat:** Endemic to the Western Ghats in India.
 - **Threats:** Habitat destruction, hunting for its fur, and loss of prey.
 - **Population:** The population is believed to be very small and fragmented.
- **Andaman Shrew**
 - **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
 - **Habitat:** Endemic to the Andaman Islands.
 - **Threats:** Habitat loss due to deforestation, predation by invasive species.
 - **Population:** Not well documented, but likely to be very low.
- **Jenkin's Shrew**
 - **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)

Daily News Analysis

- **Habitat:** Endemic to the Indian subcontinent, found in isolated regions.
- **Threats:** Habitat degradation and limited range.
- **Population:** Very small, fragmented populations.

➡ **Nicobar Shrew**

- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- **Habitat:** Found in the Nicobar Islands.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss, human encroachment, and invasive species.
- **Population:** Critically low and limited to specific islands.

➡ **Namdapha Flying Squirrel**

- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- **Habitat:** Found in Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss due to deforestation and human activities.
- **Population:** Small and limited to a specific region.

➡ **Large Rock Rat**

- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- **Habitat:** Found in the rock-strewn regions of India.
- **Threats:** Habitat destruction and limited range.
- **Population:** Very low and restricted to specific rocky areas.

➡ **Leafletted Leaf-nosed Bat**

- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- **Habitat:** Found in specific caves and rocky areas in India.
- **Threats:** Habitat disturbance, particularly cave destruction, and roosting site loss.
- **Population:** Extremely limited and fragmented.

Critically Endangered Birds

➡ **Great Indian Bustard**

- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)
- **Habitat:** Found in Rajasthan and some other parts of India.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss due to agricultural expansion, power lines, and hunting.
- **Population:** Estimated to be fewer than 150 individuals, largely in Rajasthan.

Conclusion

- ➡ Despite India's historical reverence for wildlife, its biodiversity is under threat, with several species facing extinction due to human activities and habitat loss.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Examine the challenges faced by India in conserving its rich biodiversity amidst rapid economic growth and increasing human-wildlife conflict. Discuss the role of the government and society in addressing these issues. (250 Words /15 marks)

Landfall is a critical event in a tropical cyclone's lifecycle, occurring when its eye moves over land, weakening the storm as it loses moisture.

- ➡ This moment can cause significant damage due to storm surges and strong winds.

QUESTION CORNER

When a storm passes over land

Q

Q: What is landfall?

A: Once it's fully formed, a tropical cyclone (in the northern

hemisphere) has a complex 3D structure. Two important parts of it are the eye and the eyewall. The eye is the centre around which the cyclone rotates. It consists of cold air descending from the cyclone's top with warm air rising in a spiral around it. The eyewall consists of high thunderstorms that bring rain, lightning, and powerful winds.

As long as the cyclone moves over water, it can draw more moisture from below to produce new clouds and rain events around it. But when the storm crosses over onto land, its moisture supply declines drastically, and the cyclone weakens.

Landfall is the moment in a tropical cyclone's life when its eye moves over land. Stormy weather brought by a cyclone is stronger around the eye, and landfall events can be deadly because they expose human settlements on land to strong winds and heavy rain. Their effects can be compounded by storm



Tidal waves triggered by Cyclone Fengal lashed the R.K. Beach in Visakhapatnam on November 30. DEEPAK K.R.

surges that flood coastal areas and prevent inland areas from draining normally.

If the air over land is drier, among other factors, a cyclone weakens quickly after landfall. Depending on environmental conditions, it may dissipate completely, or it could pass over land and re-emerge on the other side. In 2021, Cyclone Gulab made landfall over coastal Andhra Pradesh, weakened as it moved across peninsular India, and re-emerged four days later as Cyclone Shaheen in the Arabian Sea.

- The Hindu Bureau

For feedback and suggestions

for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

What is a landfall of a cyclone?

- ➡ **Landfall Definition:** Landfall occurs when the eye of a tropical cyclone moves over land, marking a shift from the ocean to land for the storm.

Daily News Analysis

- **Cyclone Structure:** A tropical cyclone consists of the eye, which is a calm center, and the eyewall, which is made up of thunderstorms with heavy rain, strong winds, and lightning.
- **Moisture Supply Over Water:** While over the ocean, cyclones can draw moisture from the water's surface, which fuels the storm's growth, including new cloud formation and rainfall.
- **Weakened by Land:** When the cyclone crosses onto land, it loses its primary moisture supply and starts weakening due to reduced evaporation and cooling.
- **Storm Surges:** Cyclones can bring storm surges, which cause coastal flooding and disrupt drainage in inland areas.
- **Post-Landfall Behavior:** After landfall, depending on environmental conditions, a cyclone can weaken quickly, dissipate, or even re-emerge over the ocean. For example, Cyclone Gulab weakened after landfall in 2021 but re-emerged as Cyclone Shaheen.

The UNCCD COP16 summit in Riyadh focuses on combating desertification and addressing water scarcity, with global losses from droughts now estimated at \$307 billion annually.

- The summit aims to accelerate action on land restoration and drought resilience, emphasizing nature-based solutions and significant investments in vulnerable regions.

New UN figures reveal huge cost of drought, desertification

Reuters
LONDON

In a year when extreme heat triggered droughts from southern Africa to South America, world leaders are meeting in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia this month to thrash out ways of tackling desertification and water scarcity.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called the summit - the 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16) - a "moonshot moment" to accelerate action on land and drought resilience as some estimates predicted trillions of dollars would be needed to tackle the problem.

As the talks kicked off, a

new report showed global losses from drought cost \$307 billion a year.

The report, released Tuesday by UNCCD and the UN University Institute for Water, Environment, and Health UNU-INWEH, puts the cost much higher than previously believed because earlier calculations focused on agriculture, overlooking the wider consequences on health and energy sectors.

Up to 40% of the world's land is degraded, droughts are becoming more frequent and severe, increasing by 29% since 2000 due to climate change and unsustainable land management, the UN says.

This threatens agriculture, water security, and livelihoods of 1.8 billion people, with the poorest



Parched land: COP16 had the largest-ever attendance of any UN land, drought talks to date. REUTERS

nations bearing the brunt.

Scientists say drought worsens water and air quality and intensifies sand and dust storms, causing respiratory illnesses

and disrupting electricity grids. It can also harm food supplies when rivers dry up or food production becomes impossible because of water shortages.

Ibrahim Thiaw, the executive secretary of the UNCCD, said the summit should promote healthy lands and drought resilience to ensure food and

energy security, human development and peace.

He said this COP16 had the largest-ever attendance, including delegates from the private sector and civil society, of any UN land and drought talks to date.

"Achieving land and drought goals is essential to meet the global climate and biodiversity targets," Thiaw told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview via email.

The Riyadh summit comes after UN talks on biodiversity in Colombia in October and COP29 in Azerbaijan in November with the question of who pays to stem the worst effects of climate change taking centre-stage.

The Riyadh conference aims to accelerate investment and action in

drought resilience and land restoration, building on agreements negotiated during the last summit in Ivory Coast in 2022.

"Given the urgency of the challenge, the gravity of the impacts, and the unique opportunity before us, I call on all parties to rise their ambition and solidarity for our lands and our future," Thiaw said.

As talks began, host and oil producer Saudi Arabia announced the creation of the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership that will leverage public and private finance to support 80 of the most vulnerable and drought-hit countries around the world.

An initial \$2.15 billion has been pledged to the partnership by Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Develop-

ment Bank and the OPEC Fund for International Development.

Nature-based solutions
The new UNCCD report said nature-based solutions, including planting trees, managing livestock grazing and creating green spaces in cities, offered cost-effective ways to combat drought.

The research found investment in natural capital - the world's natural resources - offered returns of \$1.40 to \$27 for every dollar spent in two years.

Such investments could include restoring and improving the health of soil so it can hold more water by, for example, using organic fertilisers and preventing nutrient depletion by rotating crops.

Global Context and Urgency

- The 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16) is taking place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where world leaders are discussing solutions for desertification and water scarcity, triggered by extreme heat and droughts.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the summit as a "moonshot moment" aimed at accelerating efforts to enhance land and drought resilience.
- Experts suggest that trillions of dollars will be required to address the growing crisis.

Cost of Drought and Desertification

- A new report revealed that global losses due to droughts cost \$307 billion annually, which is significantly higher than previous estimates.
- Earlier calculations primarily focused on agricultural losses but ignored the broader impact on health and energy sectors, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the economic toll.

Impact of Desertification and Drought

- The UN states that 40% of the world's land is degraded, and droughts are becoming more frequent and severe, with an increase of 29% since 2000 due to climate change and unsustainable land management.
- These issues threaten agriculture, water security, and the livelihoods of 1.8 billion people, especially the poorest nations.
- Drought worsens air and water quality, intensifies sand and dust storms, and disrupts power grids.
- It also affects food production, causing shortages when rivers dry up and water becomes scarce.

Summit Goals and Investments

Daily News Analysis

- Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD executive secretary, emphasized that the summit should focus on promoting healthy lands and drought resilience to ensure food and energy security, human development, and peace.
- Saudi Arabia announced the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership to support 80 of the most drought-affected countries, with an initial pledge of \$2.15 billion from Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Development Bank, and the OPEC Fund for International Development.

Nature-Based Solutions

- The UNCCD report highlighted nature-based solutions, such as planting trees, managing grazing, and creating green spaces in urban areas, as cost-effective methods to combat drought.
- Investments in natural capital, such as soil restoration, have shown high returns, ranging from \$1.40 to \$27 for every dollar spent in two years.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

- **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):** Established in 1994, it aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.
- **Objective:** Focuses on land degradation, primarily in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas.
- **Mission:** To promote sustainable land management (SLM) practices, restore degraded lands, and reduce the impacts of desertification.
- **Membership:** 197 parties, including countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and others.
- **Key Focus Areas:** Promoting sustainable land use practices. Fostering partnerships and knowledge sharing. Strengthening community resilience.
- **Strategic Actions:** Implementation of national action programs (NAPs), financial support, and capacity-building for affected regions.
- **Global Target:** Achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Discuss the economic and environmental impacts of desertification and drought. How can nature-based solutions contribute to tackling these issues, and what role do international partnerships play in mitigating the challenges posed by desertification and water scarcity? (250 Words /15 marks)

—It's about quality—

PIB- In News : Maritime India Vision 2030

MIV 2030 is a comprehensive framework aimed at the holistic development of India's maritime sector.

- ➡ It outlines 150 initiatives to position India as a global maritime leader.
- ➡ The framework addresses 10 themes, including port infrastructure, logistics, shipbuilding, coastal traffic, innovation, sustainability, and global collaboration.

Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030: Overview



Progress in the Maritime Sector (2022-2024)

- ➡ **Port Capacity:** Increased from 1598 MMTPA (FY 2022) to 1630 MMTPA (FY 2024).
- ➡ **Vessel Turn Around Time (TAT):** Reduced from 53 hours (FY 2022) to 48 hours (FY 2024).

Daily News Analysis

- ➡ **Ship Berth Day Output:** Improved from 16,000 MT (FY 2022) to 18,900 MT (FY 2024).
- ➡ **Global Recognition:** Two Indian ports featured in the global top 30 ports.
- ➡ **Logistics Performance Index (LPI):** Improved ranking from 44 (2018) to 22 (2023).
- ➡ **National Waterways Cargo Volume:** Increased from 108 MMT (FY 2022) to 133 MMT (FY 2024).
- ➡ **Coastal Tonnage:** Increased from 260 MMT (FY 2022) to 324 MMT (FY 2024).

Financial Investments

- ➡ **Capital Expenditure:** Increased by 37% to ₹7571 crore (FY 2024) from ₹5527 crore (FY 2022).
- ➡ **Gross Budget Support (GBS):** Increased by 54% to ₹1687 crore (FY 2024) from ₹1099 crore (FY 2022).
- ➡ **Port Development Projects:** 75 projects awarded, enhancing cargo handling and operational efficiency.

Impact on Maritime Trade and Employment

- ➡ **Port Traffic:** Increased from 720 MMT (FY 2022) to 820 MMT (FY 2024).
- ➡ **Employment Generation:** Growth in cargo handling, infrastructure, and cruise tourism created significant job opportunities across related sectors.

Monitoring Mechanisms

- ➡ **Sagar Manthan Portal:** Tracks Key Performance Indicators, projects, and long-term strategies for monitoring progress.
- ➡ **ViBhaS and NAVIC Cells:** Facilitate tracking, ideation, and innovation to ensure alignment with MIV objectives.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : Discuss the significance of the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 in enhancing India's maritime infrastructure and trade competitiveness. How has it contributed to employment generation and sustainable development in the sector? (150 Words /10 marks).

Reflections on Baku's 'NCQG outcome'

The urgency of climate change has never been more evident. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has highlighted the need for significantly stronger commitments to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Current policies, if continued globally, are expected to lead to a temperature rise of up to 3.1°C. The increasingly visible impacts of climate change across geographies, apart from the growing body of scientific evidence, serve as a constant reminder of the need to accelerate climate action. Cleaner fuels and technological solutions are emerging across sectors and could be increasingly accessed and deployed with adequate focus on the means of implementation.

Against this backdrop with COP 29 (in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024) branded as the "Finance COP", the hope was to see an ambitious outcome (specifically related to the NCQG or New Collective Quantified Goal) which strongly supported this understanding.

Financing needs of the developing world

Finance is a critical component in accelerating the adoption of cleaner alternatives, especially in developing countries. While some of the renewable technologies pay off in the long run due to lower fuel and operational costs, the upfront costs of some of these technologies are much higher than the current options requiring government support to ensure affordability at the consumer end. Other green technologies may still be evolving and are associated with risks of failure that front-runners may need to bear. Given the pressure on government resources that need to be prioritised towards development activities, additional finance must be up-scaled urgently within this decade if transformational changes are to be expected in the adoption of clean and efficient alternatives in developing countries, as access to modern energy and infrastructure improves.

India's expenditure on green energy schemes encompass a wide range of initiatives aimed at expanding renewable energy infrastructure, promoting energy efficiency and clean fuel and technology innovations as part of its commitment to global climate goals. MNRE received its highest ever allocation of ₹19,100 crore in the Budget 2024-25, apart from about ₹40 crore being allocated for enhancing energy efficiency. In the transport sector, a subsidy of ₹5,790 crore has been provided to electric vehicle manufacturers under phase-II of Faster Adoption and



Ritu Mathur

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Sanchit Saran Agarwal

Associate Fellow, Energy Assessment and Modelling, TERI

It appears to have bypassed the principles of equitable burden sharing and climate justice, having failed to have recognised the financial needs of the global south

Manufacturing of (Hybrid) Electric vehicles (FAME) scheme.

Another aspect of finance required for the transition relates to the source and type of finance. There are growing concerns regarding fiscal debt, which forms the basis of the ask, for part of the financial support from developed countries to be in the form of public grants rather than loans.

The pace and the scale of transitions are also affected by the higher cost of capital in developing countries. Financial flows from developed countries must ideally aim to strengthen fiscal capacities and enable the unlocking of financial markets in developing countries to support and accelerate their climate action. The use of debt instruments to access finance does not work well for developing countries since their high debt burdens limit their ability to successfully incentivise domestic private capital for climate action. It is well recognised that developing countries attract much higher lending rates as compared to developed countries and much of the global financial flows are restricted within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Therefore, ensuring the flow of climate finance to developing countries at affordable lending rates is important.

Role of the NCQG

At Cancun, in 2010, developed countries had pledged to provide \$100 billion annually upto 2020. Further, at COP21 in Paris, the parties decided to establish an NCQG prior to 2025, with the Cancun commitment as the base point. The rationale for establishing the NCQG was pressing. The existing climate pledges have generally been criticised for their lack of specificity and accountability.

Therefore, the NCQG was intended to create a framework for shared climate goals, to establish clear and quantified objectives that nations could aim to achieve, with transparency and accountability at the forefront. At COP26 at Glasgow in 2021, an ad hoc work programme for NCQG discussions was established to run from 2022-24, culminating towards the discussions at COP29.

The Second Needs Determination Report by the Standing Committee on Finance under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) estimated that

between \$5 trillion to \$7 trillion would be needed by 2030 to meet half the needs of 98 countries. Developing countries had put forward a conservative ask of \$1.3 trillion annually at COP 29 (largely from public sources to enable leveraging the rest through private finance).

However, the developed world has in the NCQG agreed to provide an abysmal figure of \$300 billion annually till 2035. This quantum is not only miniscule but hardly represents any major change in real flows – probably a target that could be achieved even with current or minimally additional efforts, if we account for inflation. Further, the mobilisation of funds is expected through all sources of finance including private capital. Undoubtedly,

therefore, there is disappointment with the NCQG outcome, both on the quantum and structure of finance since it does not support the narrative of transformative action. While the decision to triple the flow of public resources through various operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Special Climate Change Fund from the 2023 level by 2035 is a positive aspect, it could also see rather slow progress in the next few years (and not aligned to the narrative of the urgency in climate action).

The road ahead

COP29 saw the finance commitment step up from the earlier commitment of \$100 billion a year to \$300 billion a year. While this is a step in the correct direction, it is clearly not as ambitious as expected given that climate change is clearly recognised as one of the greatest threats and challenges of our time. Overall, the NCQG outcome is rather disappointing and does not seem to have aligned well with the very core of why the goal was set up in the first place. It clearly bypasses the principles of equitable burden sharing and climate justice as it fails to recognise the financial needs of the global south.

The way forward is to keep the talks ongoing. Climate change has no geographical boundaries. Thus, it is imperative that the international community cooperates towards the global good, keeping climate justice at the core and respecting the principles of the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR and RC). Developing countries must stick together and ensure that any transition is just and fair in the real sense.



GS Paper 02 : International Relations – Agreements involving India or affecting India's interests.

PYQ: (UPSC CSE (M) GS-3 2021): Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference? (250 words/15m)

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Discuss the significance of equitable climate finance in addressing the challenges of global warming. Critically analyze the outcomes of COP29 in the context of climate justice and the needs of developing nations. (250 Words /15 marks)

Context :

- The article highlights the critical need for urgent climate action to limit global warming to 1.5°C, with a focus on equitable climate finance.
- COP29 discussions centered on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) but delivered inadequate commitments, falling short of developing nations' expectations.
- This underscores the persistent challenges in achieving climate justice.

Urgency of Climate Action and COP29

- The IPCC has called for stronger commitments to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- Current policies, if continued, could result in a temperature rise of up to 3.1°C, intensifying climate impacts worldwide.
- COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan (November 2024), branded as the "Finance COP," focused on climate finance discussions, particularly the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG).

Importance of Climate Finance for Developing Nations

- **High Upfront Costs:** Transitioning to renewable energy often requires significant initial investments despite long-term benefits like reduced fuel and operational costs.
- **Technological Risks:** Many green technologies are still evolving, creating risks that need to be borne by early adopters.
- **Limited Government Resources:** Developing countries face financial constraints, with priorities directed toward developmental activities, necessitating external financial support.

India's Green Energy Initiatives

- India allocated ₹19,100 crore to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in the 2024-25 Budget, the highest ever for the ministry.
- A subsidy of ₹5,790 crore under phase-II of the FAME scheme supports electric vehicle manufacturers.
- Additionally, ₹40 crore has been earmarked for energy efficiency initiatives to promote clean fuel and technology innovation.

Challenges in Climate Finance Access

- **Debt Burdens:** Developing nations prefer grants over loans to avoid exacerbating fiscal debt challenges.
- **High Lending Costs:** Developing countries face disproportionately higher borrowing costs, limiting their ability to mobilize private capital for climate action.
- **OECD Bias:** Financial flows are predominantly directed toward developed countries, restricting affordable financing for developing nations.

Role and Goals of NCQG

- The NCQG was established as part of the Cancun commitment (2010) to provide \$100 billion annually by 2020 and was later reinforced at COP21 in Paris.
- Its purpose is to provide clear, quantified climate finance objectives with transparency and accountability.
- A UNFCCC report estimates that \$5-7 trillion is required globally by 2030, with developing nations requesting \$1.3 trillion annually to meet their climate finance needs.

Disappointing Outcome of NCQG at COP29

- Developed countries pledged \$300 billion annually until 2035, far short of the \$1.3 trillion requested by developing nations.
- The commitment primarily relies on mobilizing funds from all financial sources, including private capital.
- While the decision to triple public resource flows through mechanisms like the Adaptation Fund by 2035 is positive, progress may be too slow to address the urgency of climate action.

Finance as a Barrier to Climate Justice

- The NCQG outcome reflects inadequate ambition and undermines the principles of equitable burden-sharing and climate justice.
- It fails to address the financial needs of the Global South, essential for achieving transformative climate action.

The Way Forward

Daily News Analysis

- The international community must continue climate finance discussions, emphasizing cooperation for global good.
- Principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) must guide equitable transitions.
- Developing nations must unite to demand just and fair financial support to ensure a sustainable future for all.

