



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

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Plea to revive NJAC

CONTEXT: Chief Justice of India orally said that the Supreme Court would consider a plea seeking to revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) and bring an end to the Collegium system of judicial appointments to the constitutional courts.

What is collegium System

First Judges case (1982)
Consultation does not mean Concurrence

Second Judges case (1993)
Consultation = Concurrence
CJI + 2 Senior most Judges

Second Judges case (1998)
'Consultation of plurality judges'
CJI + 4 Senior most Judges

Current Structure

- Supreme Court – CJI + 4 senior most Judges
- High Court – CJI + 2 Senior most Judges

CHAPTER IV.—THE UNION JUDICIARY

124. (1) There shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of a Chief Justice of India and, until Parliament by law prescribes a larger number, of not more than seven² other Judges.

(2) Every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose and shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-five years:

Provided that in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of India

shall always be consulted:

217. (1) Every Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the State, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court, and ¹[shall hold office, in the case of an additional or acting Judge, as provided in article 224, and in any other case, until he attains the age of ²[sixty-two years]]:

Concerns with collegium system

1. Lack of Transparency

2. Lack of Accountability

3. Subjectivity & Favouritism

4. Delays in Appointments

5. Executive–Judiciary Friction

6. Low Diversity & Representation

7. No Performance Evaluation Mechanism

8. Frequent Change in Collegium Composition

9. Lack of Institutional Support

10. Arbitrary Transfers of Judges

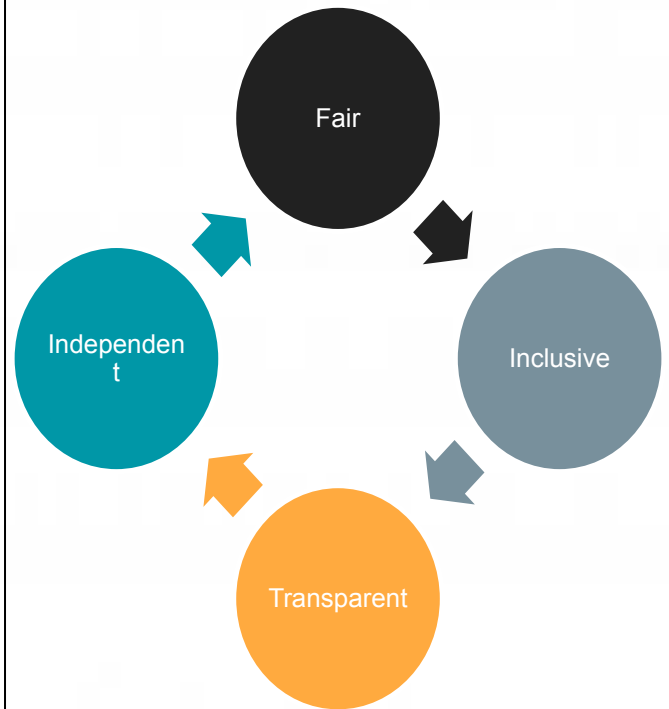


Plea to revive NJAC

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Way Ahead

- ❑ **Judicial Appointments Commission 2.0 (With Safeguards)**
 - Majority judicial representation
 - Independent experts (constitutional scholars, retired judges)
 - Minimal but accountable executive participation
 - Clear statutory criteria for: Merit, Diversity, Integrity, Work record, Regional representation
- ❑ **Transparent Procedures**
 - Publish shortlists, eligibility criteria, reasons for selection and rejection (as in UK).
- ❑ **Fixed Timelines**
 - Government must process Collegium recommendations within **30–60 days**, (*Madan Lokur Committee*)
- ❑ **Ensuring Social Diversity**
 - Affirmative steps to promote: Women, SC/ST/OBC representation, First-generation lawyers
- ❑ **Independent Secretariat**
 - A permanent, professional secretariat for data gathering, background checks, and evaluation



Mains Practice Question

Q. Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India. (150 word / 10 marks) - **CSE 2017**

Q. "Critically examine the shortcomings of the Collegium system and the constitutional concerns that led to the invalidation of the NJAC. Suggest a viable reform model for judicial appointments in India." (250 words / 15 marks)



CONTEXT: The capitals response to air pollution is without an understanding about the sources of the air pollution. Further, CJI has given his concurrence to demand of virtual hearing due to rising air pollution.

Air Pollution – severity & Impact

Global Burden of Disease (GBD), 2020

- Air pollution caused **1.67 million deaths** in India—largest for any country.
- GBD 2023 – 15% of deaths in Delhi due to air pollution

WHO Air Quality Database (2023)

- 39 of the world's 50 most polluted cities are in India.
- Delhi remains the **most polluted capital globally**.

IQAir World Air Quality Report (2024)

- India ranked **5th most polluted country**

Economic Cost (World Bank, 2022)

- Air pollution costs India nearly **8.5% of GDP** annually due to lost labour productivity and healthcare burden.

Health Impacts

- Respiratory diseases: asthma, COPD, bronchitis. Cardiovascular issues: stroke, heart attacks.
- Reduces average life expectancy by **5–9 years** (EPIC Air Quality Life Index, 2023).

Economic Impacts

- High healthcare expenditure.
- Productivity loss due to sick workforce.
- Disruptions in tourism and outdoor economic activities.

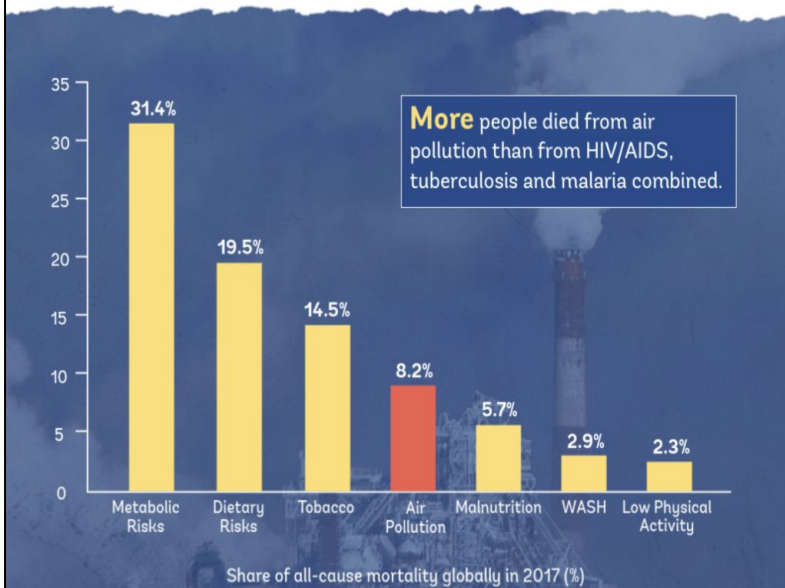
Environmental Impacts

- Soil contamination and water acidification.
- Crop yield reduction
- Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane exacerbate global warming and climate change

Air Pollution A Major Health Risk

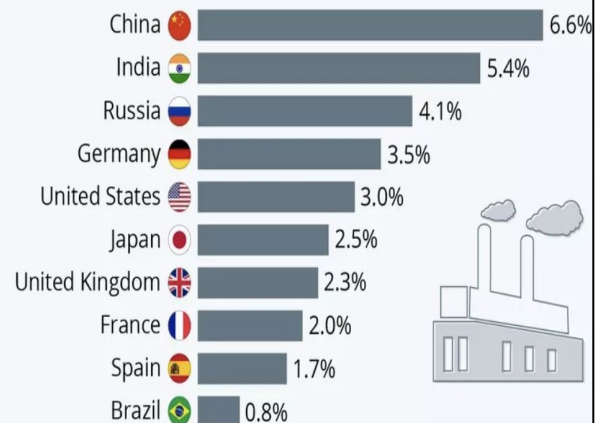


In 2017 as many as **5.39 million** people died prematurely from exposure to air pollution globally.



The Economic Burden Of Air Pollution

Economic costs of air pollution from fossil fuels as a share of GDP in 2018



Sources: Greenpeace, Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air



Death by Breath – Air pollution

CONTEXT: The capitals response to air pollution is without an understanding about the sources of the air pollution. Further, CJI has given his concurrence to demand of virtual hearing due to rising air pollution.

Factors Behind Air Pollution

General Reasons for Air Pollution in India

- 1) Vehicular Emissions
- 2) Industrial Pollution
- 3) Biomass and Household Fuel Burning
- 4) Construction & Demolition Activities
- 5) Agricultural Burning
- 6) Natural Factors

Specific Reasons for Air Pollution in Delhi

- 1) Geographic location
- 2) Reduced Wind speed
- 3) Dip in temperature
- 4) Vehicular Emissions
- 5) Crop Burning in Punjab–Haryana
- 6) Dust from Construction
- 7) Industrial & Waste Burning
- 8) Developmental strategy – concrete Jungle

AQI	Remark	Color Code	Possible Health Impacts
0-50	Good		Minimal impact
51-100	Satisfactory		Minor breathing discomfort to sensitive people
101-200	Moderate		Breathing discomfort to the people with lungs, asthma and heart diseases
201-300	Poor		Breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure
301-400	Very Poor		Respiratory illness on prolonged exposure
401-500	Severe		Affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases

Government Initiatives

Initiative / Scheme	Key Features / Actions
National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)	Target 40% reduction in PM2.5/PM10 by 2026; city-specific clean air plans
National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)	Specifies limits for 12 pollutants including PM2.5, PM10, SO ₂ , NO ₂ , O ₃
Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)	Coordinates actions across Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, UP; issues binding directions
Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)	Trigger-based measures (ban construction, halt DG sets, traffic curbs) based on AQI
FAME Scheme	Subsidies for EVs, charging stations; shift away from fossil-fuel transport
Bharat Stage-VI Emission Norms	Ultra-low sulphur fuel; advanced emission controls for vehicles
Ujjwala Yojana	Free LPG connections; reduces biomass burning
National Air Quality Index (AQI)	Categorises air quality into six bands; alerts public
Smog Towers Initiative	Large-scale water guns installed in polluted hotspots
Crop Residue Management Scheme	Subsidies for Happy Seeder , PUSA decomposer



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ISSUES

• ENVIRONMENT

How Delhi's air quality monitors work, and why their readings can falter

Sophiya Mathew

New Delhi, November 26

LAST WEEK, the Supreme Court asked authorities to explain whether the equipment used in Delhi air-quality monitoring stations is suited to the city's conditions. The timing of the question is significant, given Delhi's heavy reliance on AQI readings to gauge daily exposure to pollution.

The city's network comprises 40 Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS), which are compact, temperature-controlled cabins functioning as automated laboratories. Spread across the city for representative measurement, each station must track eight pollutants: PM2.5, PM10, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, ammonia and lead.

They operate under Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) guidelines issued in 2012, which specify the principles, calibration steps and quality-control procedures all instruments must follow.

Each air-conditioned, dust-proof station contains racks of analysers, pumps and data loggers, with sampling inlets mounted on a mast above the roof.



Air Quality Monitoring Station in Vivek Vihar. SOPHIYA MATHEW

What affects the accuracy of these readings

AQI quality depends on both equipment performance and the amount of validated data recorded. CPCB requires at least 16 hours of reliable daily data for at least three pollutants, one of which must be PM2.5 or PM10. If instruments shut down due to calibration, power issues or extreme weather, a station may miss this threshold.

A CAG report tabled this year showed that many DPCC stations

failed to generate adequate, valid data each month, and several did not measure pollutants such as lead, limiting how complete the AQI picture is on any day.

Technical and operational issues can also affect accuracy. High humidity can interfere with particulate monitors, causing particles to absorb water and appear heavier. Instruments may drift if not calibrated frequently enough. Station location matters too: if installed too close to buildings, trees or exhaust vents, distorted airflow can skew readings. Power fluctuations or data-transmission failures can interrupt real-time updates.

How monitors measure each pollutant

Particulate matter is measured using Beta Attenuation Monitors (BAM), which rely on the beta ray attenuation principle, which measures the concentration of dust by passing a beam of beta rays through a filter and calculating how much the signal is weakened or attenuated by the collected particulate matter. Optical methods are used for gaseous pollutants, considering gases absorb or emit specific wavelengths of light.

These methods are approved under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 2009, which list "gravimetric, wet-chemical (for manual stations) and automatic instrument-based techniques" to ensure comparable data across India.



Death by Breath – Air pollution

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Case study

Behind Shivraj's Moga village visit today: No stubble burning

Divya Goyal Gopal

Ransih Kalan (Moga), Nov 26

WALKING PURPOSEFULLY in a park at Ransih Kalan village in Punjab's Moga district, sarpanch Preetinder Pal Singh, 36, makes multiple calls on a warm Wednesday afternoon.

Each call by the Canada-returned Singh starts and ends with the same message: "Modi saab de mantri aare kal apna pind vekhan. Tussi pahunch jaiyo time tey (PM Narendra Modi's minister is visiting our village on Thursday. Please reach on time)."

Singh is busy preparing for the "big day" when Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will interact with farmers on how they stopped burning stubble.

In reality, the burning of stubble, among other changes took place in Ransih Kalan after its 3,000-odd residents did something that most villages didn't—they solved their own problem, that too, by largely raising their own funds. Thanks to the several cash incentives floated by the panchayat, life in Ransih Kalan runs differently: farmers here don't burn stubble anymore, residents recycle their plastic waste, and locals earn cash incentives for reading books and nurturing fruit-bearing trees.

These changes caught Chouhan's attention, who planned a visit to the village on Thursday.

Ransih Kalan has sarpanch Singh to thank for this honour. Having returned from Canada in 2011, he was just 23 when he was first elected sarpanch in 2013.

"My only takeaway from Canada was 'the bande da nahi, kamoon da raaj hai' (the law and not a person rules there). I often wondered why Punjab couldn't be as clean and organised as Canada. When I returned in 2011, I decided to start from my village," says the three-time sarpanch.

Singh, a graduate, said the first project that ushered in the wave of "change" in Ransih Kalan was the elimination of open drains in 2013-14, soon after he was elected sarpanch for first time.

Ransih Kalan village also has a "natural" sewage treatment plant



Sarpanch Preetinder Pal Singh (right) along with farmers at Ransih Kalan village in Moga. GURMEET SINGH

"The estimated budget to install an underground drainage system was Rs 7-8 crore but we did not even have Rs 8. The village got together, roped in donors, including NRIs, and constituted a 51-member village-level Vikas Committee. The project was completed for Rs 5 crore," says Singh.

After that, there was a challenge: "If a resident spots a single open drain in the village, we will give a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh," he adds. Explaining how the panchayat's schemes are funded, Singh says, "Of the total, 80% is our own funding, arranged via donors and NRIs. The rest is from government."

Then there is the village's success story related to ending the practise of stubble burning, often blamed for near-hazardous levels of air pollution in the national capital region around Diwali each year. In 2019, the panchayat launched a direct bank transfer (DBT) scheme offering Rs 500 per acre to farmers who didn't burn stubble.

As an added incentive, it constituted the Uttam Kisan Sewa Society in 2018, which created a bank of stubble management machines such as Happy Seeders, rotavators, mulchers, ploughers, etc., to sow wheat without burning stubble. Six years on, the village hasn't witnessed zero cases of stubble burning. Starting that he stopped burning stubble in 2018, Jagr

Singh, who owns a 20-acre farm, says "After the panchayat's 2019 scheme, I encouraged other farmers to stop burning stubble too. Now, I sow wheat using the Happy Seeder."

Balinder Singh, who owns a 2.5-acre farm, stopped burning stubble after the 2019 scheme. "I realised later that we were killing crop-friendly insects while burning stubble."

Farmers have also cut down their use of fertilisers, including urea and DAP, by nearly 30%. They said they had noticed an improvement in the village's soil health, besides better yields. Gopal Singh and his brothers Sukdeep Singh and Kartar Singh, who own a 45-acre farm, said they have cut their DAP use significantly. "Earlier, we used at least four sacks of fertilizer. We are down to half of that now," says Gopal.

To break away from the wheat-paddy cycle, the panchayat started another scheme last year under which farmers are given cotton and maize seeds free of cost.

Then there is the "natural" sewage treatment plant (STP), set up for Rs 50 lakh in 2014. The treated water, said sarpanch Singh, irrigates at least 100 acres in the village at present.

"We have dug three pits in which the sewage water is treated naturally with the help of bacteria and the fish released in them. That water is then supplied for irrigation," he adds.

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Way Forward

Strategy	Key Actions
1. Strengthening Public Transport & Electrification	- Expand metro & bus fleets (especially electric buses). - Build EV charging infrastructure. - Incentivise EV adoption.
2. Curb Agricultural Burning	- Promote Happy Seeder, Super Seeder, PUSA bio-decomposer. - MSP-linked incentives for non-burning farmers. - Strengthen biomass collection & supply chain.
3. Industrial Clean-up	- Strict enforcement of emission norms. - Shift industries to PNG, clean fuels, hydrogen/blended fuels. - Install & audit pollution control devices (scrubbers, filters).



Death by Breath – Air pollution



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4. Urban Planning & Dust Management	- Mechanical road sweeping & dust suppression. - Mandatory covering of construction sites. - Green buffers and plantation on vacant/open areas.
5. Strengthen Monitoring	- Expand CAAQMS network & low-cost sensor grids. - Use satellite-based PM tracking and data integration. - Improve calibration & maintenance standards.
6. Behavioural Change	- Campaigns against waste burning, firecrackers, solid fuel use. - Promote LPG, induction cooking; community sensitisation.
7. Long-Term Structural Measures	- Reduce coal dependence; accelerate renewable energy. - Decentralised waste management: composting, recycling, segregation. - Strengthen and enforce city-level Clean Air Action Plans (CAAPs).

PYQs – Assess your Prep

CSE – 2022

Q. Consider the following;

1. Carbon monoxide
2. Nitrogen oxide
3. Ozone
4. Sulphur dioxide

Excess of which of the above in the environment is/are cause(s) of acid rain?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 4 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4

CSE – 2016

Q. In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index?

1. Carbon dioxide
2. Carbon monoxide
3. Nitrogen dioxide
4. Sulphur dioxide
5. Methane

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 4 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Mains Practice Question

Q. “Air pollution remains one of India’s most persistent environmental challenges. Discuss the major causes and impacts, also suggest some measures to control it.” (250 words/ 15 Marks)



SYLLABUS : Prelims: GS :

Newspaper The Hindu Page Number : 17

Decoding News

Abhinaya Harigovind
New Delhi, November 26

THE CENTRE will table the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill, 2025, which seeks to constitute a single regulatory authority for higher education, in the winter session of Parliament next month. The Bill aims to merge the functions of three statutory bodies — the University Grants Commission (UGC), the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The move comes five years after the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommended the formation of such a regulatory authority. In 2018, the Centre drafted a similar Bill, which sought to replace the UGC with the HECI. However, it faced pushback and got stalled.

The proposed HECI

According to officials, the latest Bill is likely to follow the recommendations of NEP 2020. The NEP proposed a single overarching regulator that would subsume the functions of the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE.

While the UGC regulates higher education, the AICTE oversees technical education in engineering and management, and the NCTE sets standards for teacher education.

The NEP proposed four verticals under HECI: the National Higher Education Regulatory Council to regulate all fields except medical and legal education; the National Accreditation Council as an accrediting body; the General Education Council to frame learning outcomes; and the Higher Education Grants Council for funding.

“Each vertical in HECI will be an independent body consisting of persons having high expertise in the relevant areas... HECI itself will be a small, independent body of eminent public-spirited experts in higher education,” said the NEP 2020. However, officials say funding decisions are likely to remain with the government.

The HECI aims to reduce red tape and help higher education institutions become independent, self-governing institutions. Pointing to the “heavy-handed” nature of the current system, NEP 2020 said, “The mechanistic and disempowering nature of the regulatory system has been rife with very basic problems, such as heavy concen-

Objective of the Bill

- Creates a **single regulatory authority** for higher education.
- **Merges functions** of three statutory bodies:

- 1) **UGC** (University Grants Commission)
- 2) **AICTE** (All India Council for Technical Education)
- 3) **NCTE** (National Council for Teacher Education)

Four Vertical Bodies

- 1) **National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)** – Regulates all fields except medical & legal education.
- 2) **National Accreditation Council (NAC)** – Accrediting body.
- 3) **General Education Council (GEC)** – Frames learning outcomes & academic standards.
- 4) **Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC)** – Handles funding (though the article notes some funding decisions may stay with government).

Composition

- Each vertical → **independent body of experts.**
- HECI → small group of eminent, public-spirited experts.

Problems in Current System (as per NEP)

- Heavy-handed, mechanical regulatory system.
- Overlapping regulators → inconsistency in standards.
- Excessive red tape, weak autonomy for institutions.
- Concentration of power and conflicting mandates among UGC, AICTE, NCTE.

2018 Bill

- Replaced UGC but NOT AICTE/NCTE.
- Funding remained with MHRD.
- Included:
 - Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, 12 members (all appointed by Centre).
 - Advisory council chaired by HRD Minister.

Concerns Raised (2018)

- Centralisation of power with Centre.
- Limited state representation.
- Weak representation of disadvantaged groups (women, SC/ST, minorities, disabled).
- Fear of over-regulation.

Parliamentary Committee Observations (2018)

- Multiple regulators → inconsistent standards.
- Need to avoid Centre-heavy structure.
- Ensure sufficient state representation.
- Simplify regulatory ecosystem for effective functioning of universities.



Forest survey red flag – Aravalli Hills

SYLLABUS : Prelims: Environment GS : Paper 3 : Conservation
Newspaper The Indian Express Page Number :1

Decoding the News

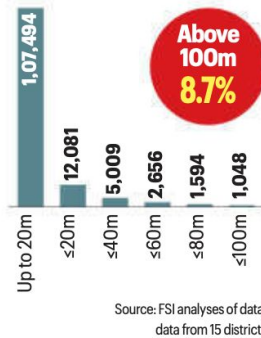
EXPRESS
exclusive

Jay Mazoomdaar
New Delhi, November 26

ON NOVEMBER 20, the Supreme Court accepted the recommendations of a Union Environment Ministry panel on the definition of Aravalli Hills ostensibly to restrict mining; any landform that is at an elevation of 100 m or more above the local relief will be considered as part of Aravalli Hills along with its slopes and adjacent land.

What the panel did not mention is that by this definition, more than 90% of the Aravalli Hills will not be counted as Aravalli anymore and be potentially open to mining and construction with severe environmental ramifications, including the quality of air in the National Capital Region.

• ARAVALLI HILLS IN RAJASTHAN



For, as per an internal assessment by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), reviewed by *The Indian Express*, barely 1,048, or just 8.7%, of 12,081 Aravalli Hills 20 m or higher, spread across 15 districts in Rajasthan, are 100 m or more in height. The 20m

tain range. For decades, the hills have been under severe pressure from mining, both legal and illegal, and other development activities such as construction.

Last year, the SC had asked the government to come up with a uniform definition of the Aravalli. While the FSI has been using a 3-degree slope yardstick to define Aravalli Hills since 2010, a technical committee formed for the purpose in 2024 modified the benchmark and proposed to identify as Aravalli Hills any landform with a slope of at least 4.57 degrees and a height of at least 30m. These yardsticks would effectively cover up to 40% of the Aravallis.

Yet, the ministry prescribed the 100-m definition to the SC in an unsigned report as part of its affidavit. It also conflated slope and height parameters to justify the new definition, proposed subjective height

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Aravalli

references that, experts red-flag, may lead to the exclusion even of many hills 100-m or higher.

"The FSI cautioned that the 100-m cut-off would protect only a few guard posts while surrendering the fences below. Loss of lower hills is likely to expose vast areas to sand and dust particles blowing from the Thar desert to the Indo-Gangetic plains and endanger the livelihood of farmers and health of people, including those living in Delhi-NCR," said an Environment ministry official on condition of anonymity.

Consider the telling submissions by the ministry in the affidavit:

SLOPE DILUTION: The ministry told the SC that the average slope in 12 of 34 Aravalli districts (across four states) on its list was under 3 degrees implying that these districts would not be categorised as Aravalli Hills if the FSI's 3-degree slope formula was accepted. It glossed over the fact that most parts of these districts are plains and, taken as a whole, the average slope of such a district would naturally be far lower than the slope of its hilly areas.

HEIGHT DISTORTION: The ministry justified its 100-m cut-off by arguing that the "average ground elevation" of not a single Aravalli district was below 100m. But the average elevation of the district is measured in terms of height above mean sea level, while the hills are measured over and above their immediate sur-

roundings, making the two sets of numbers incomparable. In other words, if a hill is 190 m above sea level, under the new definition, it will not be counted as Aravalli since the surrounding areas themselves are more than 100 m above sea level—making the hill effectively 90 m high.

AREA EXCLUDED: The ministry's list of 34 Aravalli districts across four states left out many districts with an established presence of Aravalli. For example, Rajasthan's Chhitorgarh district, famous for the fort built on a high outcrop of Aravalli and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is not in the list. Also missing is the district of Sawai Madhopur famous for Ranthambhore tiger reserve nestled at the convergence of the Aravalli and the Vindhya hill ranges.

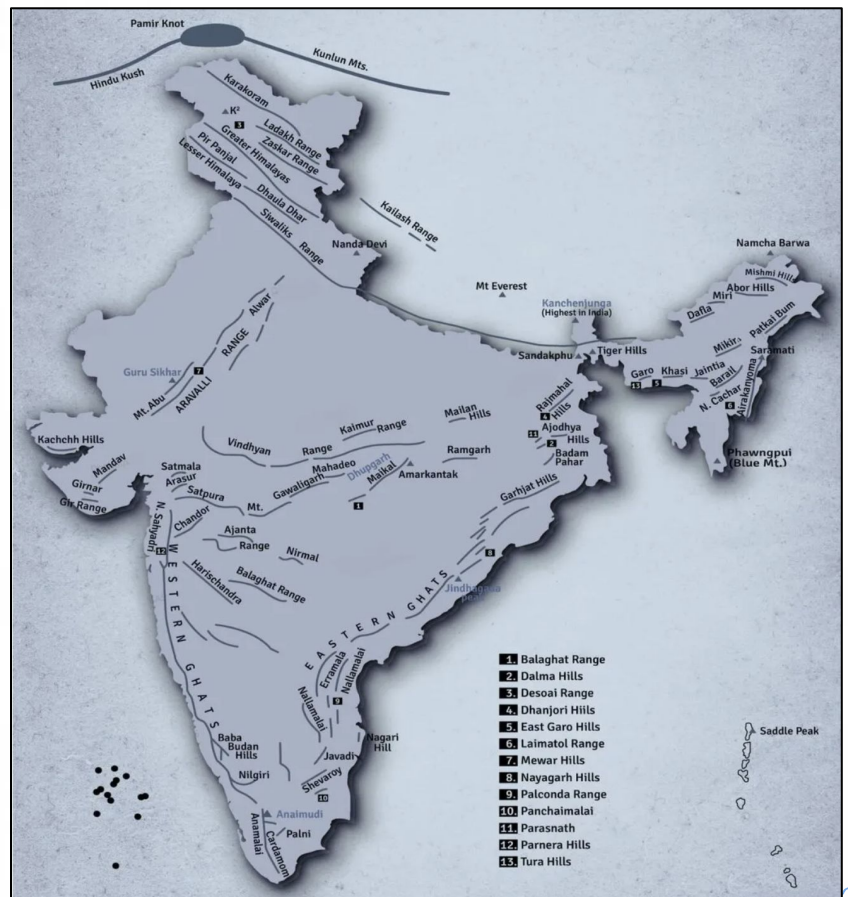
The ministry's affidavit noted considerable variation and heterogeneity in both elevation and slope within the Aravalli as well as the occurrence of similar topographic features in adjoining non-Aravalli regions, cautioning that using only these two parameters may lead to inclusion errors.

"There can be variation in elevation and slope in many areas so the Government should have erred on the side of caution, instead it has leaned in favour of exclusion from protection," said environmental lawyer Ritwick Dutta.

Asked about these, Environment Secretary Tanmay Kumar said in a written reply: "In its final judgment on November 20, the Supreme Court, while commending the work of the com-

Aravalli Range

- It is one of the oldest fold mountains of the world.
- It runs approximately 670 km (430 mi) in a south-west direction, starting near Delhi, passing through southern Haryana and Rajasthan, and ending in Gujarat.
- The highest peak is Guru Shikhar at 1,722 metres (5,650 ft).
- Guru is a peak in the Arbuda Mountains of Rajasthan.
- Major Rivers:** Three major rivers and their tributaries flow from the Aravalli, namely **Banas and Sahibi** rivers which are tributaries of Yamuna, as well as **Luni River** which flows into the Rann of Kutch.
- Economic significance:** The range is rich in mineral resources like copper, zinc, lead, and marble



Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Science and Tech **GS : 2 Government Interventions**
Newspaper The Hindu **Page Number : 13**

Decoding the News – Prelims Pointers

In yet another push to secure India's supplies of rare earth magnets, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a new "first-of-its-kind" scheme, with a financial outlay of ₹7,280 crore, to manufacture Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM) in India.

The approval of this scheme, named the 'Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets', comes two days after Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal specifically noted that one of the areas in which India and Canada have "tremendous potential" to cooperate on was in critical minerals.

This was in the context of the two countries restarting talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

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This was in the context of the two countries restarting talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

"This first-of-its-kind initiative aims to establish 6,000 metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of integrated Rare Earth Permanent Magnet (REPM) manufacturing in India, thereby enhancing self-reliance and positioning India as a key player in the global REPM market," the government said in a release.

REPMs are vital components that have applications in EVs, renewable energy, electronics, aers-

pace, and defence sectors. According to the government, the scheme will support the creation of integrated REPM manufacturing facilities, involving the conversion of rare earth oxides to metals, metals to alloys, and alloys to finished REPMs.

The total financial outlay of the scheme of ₹7,280 crore, will comprise a sales-linked incentives of ₹6,450 crore on REPMs for five years and a capital subsidy of ₹750 crore for the setting up of an aggregate of 6,000 MTPA of REPM manufacturing facilities.

The plan is to allocate the total capacity of 6,000 MTPA to five beneficiaries through a global competitive bidding process with each beneficiary being allotted up to 1,200 MTPA.

The total duration of the scheme is to be seven years from the date of award, including a 2-year gestation period for setting up an integrated REPM manufac-

turing facility, and 5 years for incentive disbursement on the sale of REPM.

The auto industry, in particular, has welcomed the decision, saying it is a pivotal step towards self reliance.

"This initiative is a significant step toward building a resilient and stable supply chain, particularly for components and sub-assemblies essential for the production of electrified vehicles," Shailesh Chandra, President of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said.

"This initiative will not only reduce import dependence but also provide long-term resilience to the automotive supply chain, encourage investments in advanced materials, and position India strongly in global value chains for EVs and clean energy," Vikrampati Singhania, President of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) said.

What are REPMs? (Definition)

- They are **high-performance magnets** made using rare earth elements (such as Neodymium, Samarium, Dysprosium).
- Known for **strong magnetic properties, high coercivity, and thermal stability**.
- Widely used in **electric vehicles (EVs), wind turbines, electronics, robotics, defence systems, and aerospace**.

Name of the Scheme

- Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM).
- **Financial Outlay - Total: ₹7,280 crore.**

Objective

- Establish **6,000 MTPA integrated REPM manufacturing capacity** in India.
- Reduce import dependence and develop a **secure, resilient domestic supply chain** for clean-energy technologies.

Structure of Manufacturing

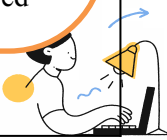
- Scheme supports **end-to-end, integrated production**, including:
- Rare earth oxides → metals → alloys → finished REPMs.

Timeline of the Scheme

- **Total duration: 7 years.**
- **2-year gestation period** → setting up facilities.
- **5-year incentive disbursement period.**

Strategic Importance

- REPMs essential for: **EV motors, wind energy, electronics, aerospace, defence.**
- Supports: **Clean mobility, renewable energy goals, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Reduced oil import dependence and improved energy security.**



SC panel suggests creation of a Goa tiger reserve in phases

SYLLABUS : Prelims: Environment GS : 3 Conservation
Newspaper The Hindu Page Number : 12

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court-appointed committee has recommended the creation of a tiger reserve in Goa, but in a phased manner, so as to first incorporate areas with a lower human presence.

The top court is expected to consider the report of its Central Empowered Committee (CEC) in the next hearing of the case that involves the Goa government and the Goa Foundation, a non-government organisation.

The CEC came into the picture after the Goa government challenged a Bombay High Court order of July 2023, which directed the State to notify five protected areas – the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, collectively referred to as the “Mhadei WLS and Other Areas” – as a tiger reserve, within a period of three months.

The Goa government was reluctant to have the



The Goa government has adopted contradictory positions regarding the “resident” status of tigers in the State. FILE PHOTO

areas be declared as a tiger reserve on the grounds that nearly “one lakh people” would be affected, though it later conceded in its own affidavit that there were only about 1,274 households in the 33 villages within the five protected areas, translating to approximately 5,000 to 6,000 individuals. It also claimed that there were no “resident” tigers in Goa, arguing that the handful that pass through Goan forests were a “transient” population. *The Hindu* reported earlier this week that the Goa government had adopted contradictory positions regarding the “resident” status of tigers in the State.

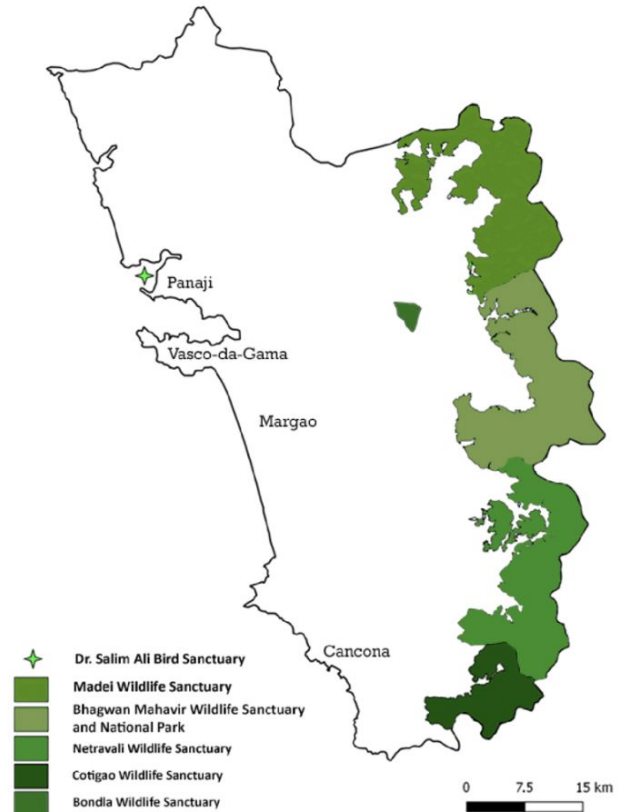
The committee recommended that Goan parks and sanctuaries “directly contiguous” to the Kali Tiger

Reserve in adjoining Karnataka, which is known to host a permanent tiger presence, form the “core” part of the Goa reserve. Those areas adjoining the buffer zone of the Kali Tiger Reserve can be considered for designation as the “buffer zone” of the proposed Goa reserve, it added.

“Such a phased approach is likely to minimise disturbance to local communities, while ensuring that the most ecologically sensitive and least inhabited areas are brought under enhanced protection at the earliest stage,” it said.

This means that the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary (50 households) and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary (41 households), adding up to a 296.7 sq. km. area, will be incorporated into the core

PROTECTED AREAS OF GOA



Prelims Pointers

Protected Area	State	Major Rivers / Water Bodies	Key Species
Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary	Goa	Mhadei River , Valvanti & Viridi tributaries	Bengal tiger, Black panther, Gaur, Sambar, Slender loris
Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary	Goa	Dudhsagar River	Leopard, Sloth bear, Gaur, Malabar giant squirrel, King cobra
Bhagwan Mahavir National Park	Goa	Dudhsagar River	Leopard, Civets, Pangolin, Hornbills
Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary	Goa	Netravali River , tributary of River Zuari	Malayan giant squirrel, Mouse deer, Indian gaur
Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary	Goa	Talpona River	Flying squirrel, Mouse deer, Pangolin, Slender loris
Kali Tiger Reserve (formerly Dandeli–Anshi Tiger Reserve)	Karnataka	Kali River (also known as River Kalinadi)	Tiger, Black panther, Elephant, Great hornbill, Gaur

SYLLABUS : Prelims: Indian Polity **GS : 2** Polity
Newspaper The Hindu **Page Number : 17**

Prelims Pointers

How November 26 came to be celebrated as India's 'Constitution Day'

ON NOVEMBER 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India, which came into effect on January 26, 1950. While January 26 is celebrated as Republic Day, since 2015, November 26 has been observed as the Constitution Day of India, or Samvidhan Divas.

In May 2015, the Union Cabinet an-

nounced that November 26 would be observed as Constitution Day to promote "constitutional values amongst

{ HISTORY }

citizens". That year also marked the 125th birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting

Committee of the Constitution.

"This year, the country is celebrating 125th birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The 'Constitution Day' will be a part of these year-long nationwide celebrations. This will be a tribute to Dr. Ambedkar, who played a seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of Constituent Assembly," a Press Information Bureau release said in 2015.

The move was formally notified on November 19, 2015. Before that, November 26 was observed as National Law Day. Ambedkar was also the first Law Minister of India.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE



The Constitution Day celebration at Samvidhan Sadan in New Delhi on Wednesday. ANI

Date of Celebration

- **26 November** every year.
- Marks the day when the **Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution** (26 November 1949).
- Constitution came into force on **26 January 1950** (celebrated as **Republic Day**).

First Celebration

- Formally celebrated as **Constitution Day** from **2015** onwards.
- Declared by the **Government of India** to honour Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions.

Significance

- Promote **constitutional values**.
- Spread awareness of **citizens' rights and duties**.

****26 November** also observed as National Law Day



Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the proposed Higher Education Commission of India (HECI):

1. It aims to establish a single regulatory authority by merging the functions of UGC, AICTE, and NCTE.
2. The National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) will regulate all disciplines except medical and legal education.
3. The General Education Council (GEC) is responsible for framing learning outcomes and academic standards.
4. The Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) will handle funding-related functions.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer : d

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Aravalli Range:

1. It is one of the oldest Fold mountain ranges in the world.
2. Its highest peak, Guru Shikhar, is located in the Arbuda Mountains of Rajasthan.
3. The Luni River, originating in the Aravallis, flows eastward and drains into the Yamuna.
4. The Aravallis are rich in mineral resources such as copper, zinc, lead, and marble.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPMs), consider the following statements:

1. They are made using rare earth elements such as Neodymium, Samarium, and Dysprosium.
2. They are known for high magnetic strength, thermal stability, and high coercivity.
3. They are primarily used only in defence applications.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding protected areas in India:

1. Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary in Goa is associated with the Mhadei River and its tributaries like Valvanti and Virdi.
2. Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary is situated along the Netravali River, a tributary of the Zuari.
3. Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary is drained by the Dudhsagar River.
4. Kali Tiger Reserve in Karnataka derives its name from the Kali (Kalinadi) River flowing through it.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

Answer: c

Q5. Regarding the observance of Constitution Day in India, consider the following statements:

1. Constitution Day honours the contribution of Dr B.R. Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee.
2. The day marks the enforcement of the Constitution of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a





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