

India State of Forest Report (ISFR)-2021

❖ Context

- Recently, The **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** released the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021.

❖ About ISFR

- It's a **biennial publication** by the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** which is an assessment of the country's forest resources
- The first survey was published in 1987, and **ISFR 2021 is the 17th**.
- It compiles data computed through **wall-to-wall mapping of India's forest cover through remote sensing techniques**.
- It is used in **planning and formulation of policies in forest management** as well as **forestry and agroforestry sectors**.
- The Forest Survey of India has listed **four categories of forests**.
 - **Very Dense Forest** (with tree canopy density = >70%)
 - **Moderately Dense Forest** (tree canopy density = 40%-70%)
 - **Open Forest** (tree canopy density = 10%-40%)
 - **Scrub** (tree canopy density = <10%)

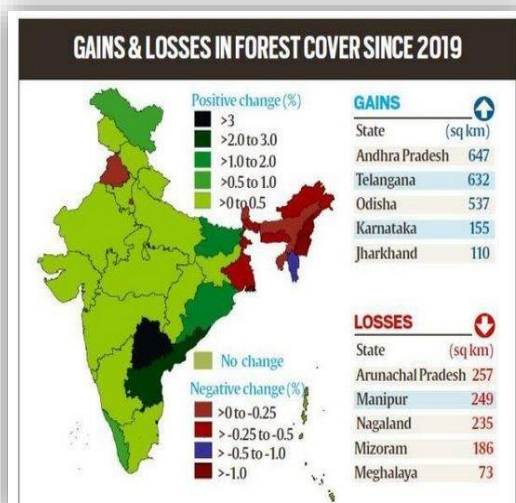
❖ New Addition to ISFR 2021

- First time estimated **forest cover in tiger reserves, tiger corridors and the Gir forest** which houses the Asiatic lion.
- New Chapter to estimate the **'Above Ground Biomass' (AGB)** has been added.
 - **FSI + Space Application Centre (SAC), ISRO, Ahmedabad**, conducting AGB using L-band of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data.
- **FSI + Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS) Pilani, Goa Campus** have studied on **'Mapping of Climate Change Hotspots in Indian Forests'**.
 - Aim was to **map the climatic hotspots over the forest cover in India**, using computer model-based projection of temperature and rainfall data, for the three future time periods i.e. year 2030, 2050 and 2085.
- **Special thematic information** on forest cover such as hill, tribal districts, and north eastern region has also been given separately in the report.

❖ Key Findings

• Forest Cover

- Forest and tree cover has risen by **2,261 sq. KM** (1,540 sq km of forest cover + 721 sq km of tree cover) in the last two years.
- **Highest increment -**
 - Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km) > Telangana (632 sq km) > Odisha (537 sq km) > Karnataka (155 sq km) > Jharkhand (110 sq km).
 - Five states in the Northeast – Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have all shown **loss in forest cover**.
- **Maximum Forest Cover (Area Wise)**
 - Madhya Pradesh > Arunachal Pradesh > Chhattisgarh > Odisha > Maharashtra.
- **Maximum Forest cover (Percentage Wise)**
 - Mizoram > Arunachal Pradesh > Meghalaya > Manipur > Nagaland.
- **Total forest and tree cover was 80.9 million hectares**, which accounted for **24.62%** of the geographical area of the country.
- Forest cover is now 7,13,789 sq. Km, 21.71% of the country's geographical area.



▪ Mangrove cover

- Increment- 17 Sq Km
- Total mangrove cover-4,992 sq km.
- **Highest increment-**
 - Odisha (8 sq km) > Maharashtra (4 sq km) > Karnataka (3 sq km).
- **Forest Cover Prone to Fire**
 - **35.46% of the forest cover is prone to forest fires**. Out of this, 2.81% is extremely prone, 7.85% is very highly prone and 11.51% is highly prone.
- **Total Carbon Stock**
 - The total carbon stock in the country's forest is **estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes** and there is an increase of 79.4 million tonnes
 - **The annual Increment-** 39.7 million tonnes.
- **Bamboo Forests**
 - Bamboo forests have grown from 13,882 million culms (stems) in 2019 to **53,336 million culms in 2021**.
- **Forest Cover in Tiger Reserves**
 - The forest cover in tiger corridors has increased by 37.15 sq km (0.32%) between 2011-2021, but decreased by 22.6 sq km (0.04%) in tiger reserves.
 - **Forest Cover Increment-** Buxa, Anamalai and Indravati reserves
 - **Highest Losses-** Kawal, Bhadra and the Sundarbans reserves.
 - **Pakke Tiger Reserve** in Arunachal Pradesh has the **highest forest cover**, at nearly 97%.

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Lok Adalat

❖ Context

- Emergence of Lok Adalat has **proved as the most efficacious tool of Alternative Dispute Resolution.**
- A total number of 1,27,87,329 cases were disposed off in 2021

❖ Key Highlight

- Due to technological advancement like **E-Lok Adalats**, Lok Adalats have reached the doorsteps of parties.

❖ About Lok Adalat

- Lok Adalat is one of the **alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.**
- It delivers **informal, cheap and expeditious justice** to the common people.
- It is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably.
- Given **statutory status under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.**
- Cases are disposed of in a **single day.**
- The speed is due to **procedural flexibility**, as there is no strict application of procedural laws such as the **Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.**
- **Award (decision)-** Deemed to be a **decree of a civil court** and is final and **binding on all parties.**
- **No appeal** against such an award lies before any court of law.
- If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat though there is no provision for an appeal against such an award.
- However, **they are free to initiate litigation by approaching the court** of appropriate jurisdiction by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their right to litigate.

❖ Significance Of Lok Adalat

- As per the **National Judicial Data Grid**, **16.9%** of all cases in district and taluka courts are **three to five years old.**
- For **High Courts**, **20.4%** of all cases are **5 to 10 years old**, and over **17% are 10-20 years old.**
- Furthermore, over **66,000 cases are pending before the Supreme Court**, over **57 lakh cases before various HCs**, and over **3 crore cases are pending before various district and subordinate courts.**
- Moreover, Lok Adalats are **economically affordable**, as there are **no court fees** for placing matters before the Lok Adalat; finality of awards, as no further appeal is allowed.
- As a result, litigants are forced to approach Lok Adalats mainly because **it is a party-driven process**, allowing them to reach an amicable settlement.

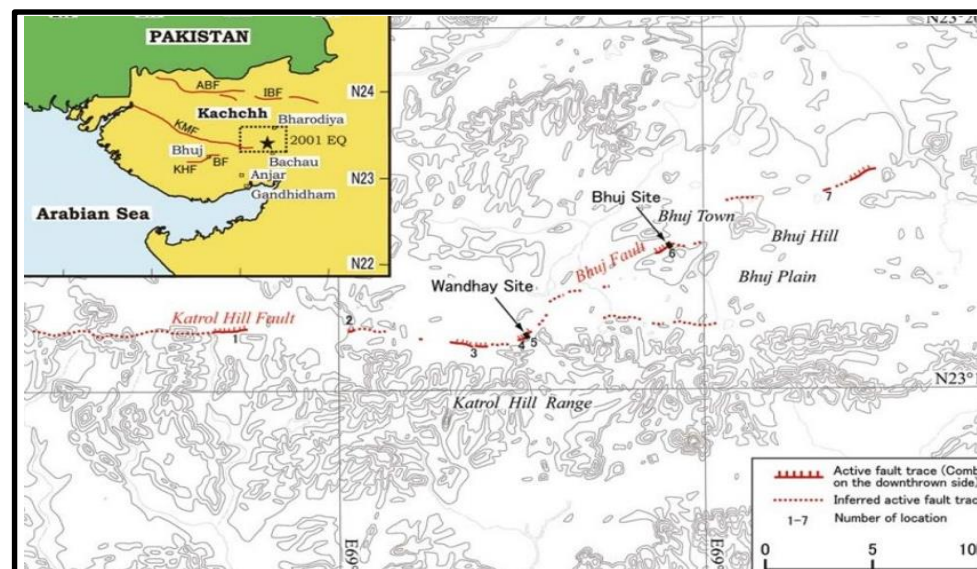
Katrol Hill Fault

❖ Context

- A study by Geologists conducted on sediment samples has revealed that the major earthquakes events in the last 30,000 years resulted in spectacular changes in Katrol Hill Fault of Kachchh region of Gujarat.

❖ Key Highlights

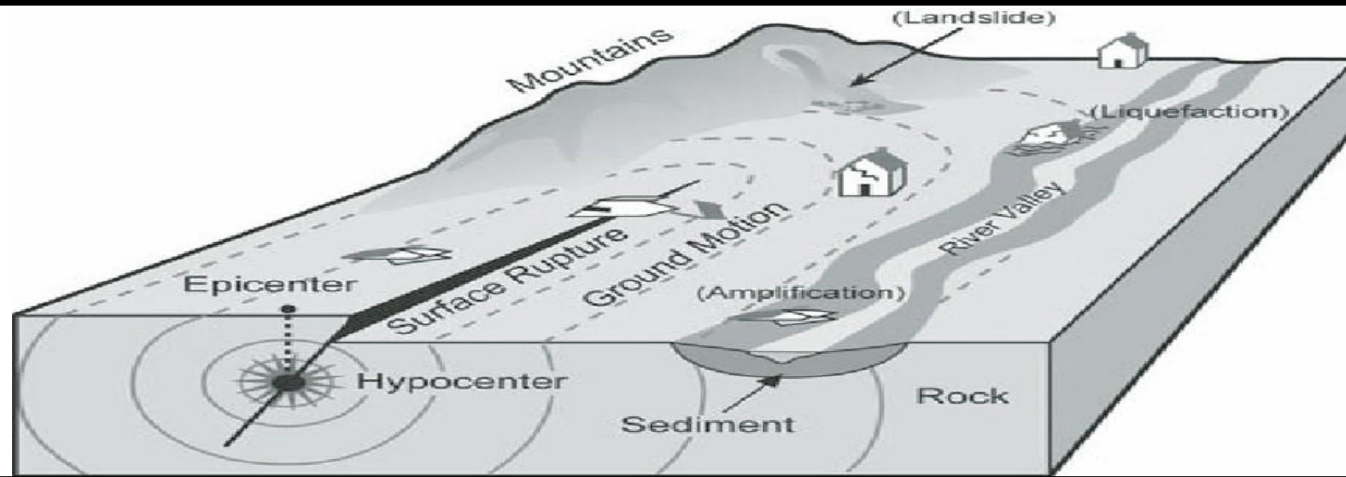
- Significance of the new study lies in the fact that the seismic activity of the **Katrol Hill Fault** was **not apparent** like other active faults of the region
- It's seismic activity was discovered by analyzing the **electron microscopic images of sediments**
- The fault has produced **high magnitude seismic events** during the past 30000 years probably because **paleo-earthquakes** originated at **relatively shallow depths**
- It is also a credible seismic source capable of generating **surface rupture hazard** in Kachchh basin
- Some of the important previous landscape change is the
 - **Disruption and reorganization of the channel of Gunawani River**
 - **Surface rupture of the length of 21 km**
- According to the geologists, these surprising geological facts **necessitate a revised seismic hazard assessment and mitigation strategies in Kachchh Basin**, owing to its close proximity to industrial corridors and major settlements, including Bhuj city. 2001 earthquake had caused wide scale destruction
- **Seismicity in the Kachchh region is highly complex** as it is characterized by **multiple seismic sources** in the form of several **East-West trending fault lines.**
- These lines release continuously **accumulating tectonic stresses** at intervals producing **earthquakes.**



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❖ About Surface rupture

- Surface rupture is a **visible offset of the ground surface** when fault rupture extends to the Earth's surface. Any structure built across the fault is at risk of being torn apart as the two sides of the fault slip past each other.



Currency Swap

❖ Context

- India confirmed a \$400 MN currency swap with Srilanka and deferred another \$500 MN due for settlement to the **Asian Clearing Union** to help the nation tide over unprecedented economic crisis

❖ Key Highlights

- In **currency swap**, two parties **agree to exchange an equivalent sum of money** at a pre-determined exchange rate. The **sum will be repaid (or swapped again)** at a later pre decided date. Essentially, it is **loaning each other money**.
- The agreement will help Srilanka to pay for its imports from India
- In **July 2020**, the **RBI extended a similar swap facility — of \$400 million** — to help Sri Lanka cope with the impact of the first wave of the pandemic

❖ Srilanka's economic crisis

- Srilanka is **heavily dependent on imports for meeting its basic food and medicinal requirements**. In 2020, it imported \$396 MN of cereals, \$335 MN of dairy products, \$276 MN of sugar & \$352 MN of vegetables
- The **foreign exchange reserves** of the nation have depleted to **dangerously low levels** due to which the banks are unable to pay for the imports. The state of emergency was declared in Sep-21
- The **nation's foreign income** is mainly **derived from Tourism and travel sector** which has severely affected due to COVID-19 related restrictions
- The crisis may worsen into **default on external debt and food shortages in the country**

❖ Asian Clearing Union

- It was established with its **headquarters at Tehran, Iran**, on December 9, **1974** at the initiative of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (**ESCAP**), for promoting regional cooperation.
- The main objective of the clearing union is to **facilitate payments among member countries** for eligible transactions on a multilateral basis, thereby **economizing on the use of foreign exchange reserves and transfer costs**, as well as **promoting trade** among the participating countries.
- The Central Banks and the Monetary Authorities of **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka** are currently the members of the ACU.

News in Between the Lines

BARC



❖ Context

- Ratings (TRP) by **Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)** for the news channels will resume, after the organization revised its procedures and protocols

❖ Key Highlights

- In India, the TRP is recorded by the BARC using **Bar-O-Meters** that are installed in televisions in selected households.
 - TRP is the tool to judge **which program are watched the most** and to Index the viewer choices.

❖ About BARC

- It is a **company created in 2010** and **jointly owned** by advertisers, ad agencies, and broadcasting companies, represented by the Indian Society of

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Advertisers, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation and the Advertising Agencies Association of India.

- Built upon a robust and future-ready technology backbone, BARC India owns and manages a **transparent, accurate, and inclusive TV audience measurement system.**

Africa50



❖ Context

- Recently, **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID)** has signed a Joint Development Agreement with **Africa50**, to develop the **Kenya Transmission Project on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis.**

❖ Key Highlights

- It is **first PPP mode transmission project in Kenya.**
- The project entails the **development, financing, construction, and operation of the 400kV Lessos- Loosuk and 220kV Kisumu- Musaga transmission lines under a PPP framework.**
- POWERGRID will provide **technical and operational know-how to the project.**

❖ About Africa50

- Africa50 is an **infrastructure investment platform** that contributes to **Africa's economic growth** by developing and investing in bankable infrastructure projects, catalyzing public sector capital, and mobilizing private sector funding, with differentiated financial returns and impact.
- Currently, **Africa50 has 31 shareholders comprising 28 African countries, the African Development Bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), and Bank Al-Maghrib.**

IGNITE Awards



❖ Context

- **Ms. Vinisha Umashankar**, of Tamil Nadu, has been selected by the Gol as a "changemaker" and **Batonbearer** for the ongoing **16th official Queen's Baton Relay (12-15 January 2022)** in India which is scheduled to conclude at the Opening ceremony of **2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham**
- She has received the **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam IGNITE Awards** for the **mobile ironing cart**, invented by her, which **uses solar panels** to power a steam iron box instead of coal.
- She has turned out to be an **inspiration for the world** after her **speech at the 26th CoP 2021 at Glasgow, Scotland.**

❖ Key Highlights

- In order to **promote creativity and originality in children**, NIF has been organizing **IGNITE - a national competition of original technological ideas and innovations** by children, **up to Standard XII or the age of 17 years, in or out of school.**
- Starting in **2008**, in the **past nine years, 201 awards** have been given to **277 children.**
- It was later rechristened to **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam IGNITE Awards**, so that **creative children continue to draw inspiration from his spirit.**
- They are announced every year on **October 15, Dr Kalam's birthday**, which is also celebrated as the **Children's Creativity and Innovation Day** by NIF.

❖ NIF

- **National Innovation Foundation (NIF)**, India, **set up in March 2000**, is an **autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology**
- Its mission is to help India become a creative and knowledge-based society by **expanding policy and institutional space for grassroots technological**



innovators by propagating, the **grassroots to global (G2G) model**.

- NIF has till date **recognised 1093 grassroots innovators and school students**
- NIF's **Micro Venture Innovation Fund (MVIF)** at NIF, with support from **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)**, has provided risk capital to 238 innovation based enterprise projects

Nine-dash line

❖ Context

- USA denounces China's maritime claims in South China sea as 'unlawful' and without any geographical and historical bases as asserted by China

❖ Key Highlights

- It is a **demarcation line used by China** for contesting their claims in major part of **South China Sea** that includes **Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands**
- A **tenth dash** was added by China in 2013 to include **East China Sea**
- **Taiwan**, who is contesting similarly for its claims in South China sea, **had originally published an eleven dash line map in 1947**
- The **two extra dash**, which corresponds to include the **Gulf of Tonkin** (which borders **China and Vietnam**) is not included by China according to an earlier agreement of it with Vietnam



❖ Context

- Tributes to **Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar** on his birth anniversary

❖ Key Highlight

- His ideals are **insightful and practical**, and stand out for their **diverse nature and intellectual depth**.
- **Thiruvalluvar Day** is observed **every year as part of Pongal celebrations** in Tamil Nadu to honour the great **Tamil poet and philosopher**, whose couplets on a variety of issues have been a **source of wisdom** to his readers.
- **Thiruvalluvar Statue and Vivekananda Rock Memorial** situated in **Kanyakumari**.
- He has **influenced a wide range of scholars** through the years in disciplines like **ethics, politics, economics, philosophy and spirituality**. He is a **venerated figure in Tamil culture**.
- The Tamil saint-poet **neither mentioned his religion and caste nor his place of birth and language** in any of the verses nor did he highlight his ideas about a particular religion or ritual. his famous compilation in Tamil is called **Tirukkural**
- In the recent past another statue of the saint was erected in **Haridwar**

✓ Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated by the Tamil community. It is a celebration to thank the Sun, Mother Nature and the various farm animals that help to contribute to a bountiful harvest. Celebrated over four days, Pongal also marks the beginning of the Tamil month called *Thai*, which is considered an auspicious month. It usually falls on the 14th or 15th of January each year.

Tamil Poet Thiruvalluvar

