

1st July, 2024

1. Court on Climate Rights and How India Can Enforce It GS 3 (Environment)

- **Why in News:** The recent judgment in *M.K. Ranjitsinh and Ors. vs Union of India & Ors.* by the Supreme Court of India has introduced a significant development in India's climate change jurisprudence. The court recognized a constitutional right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change, linking it to the right to life and the right to equality. This judgment has significant implications for climate governance in India.

- **A New Right Around Climate:**

- **Introduction to the Issue:** The Supreme Court identified a constitutional right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change, linking it to Article 21 (right to life) and Article 14 (right to equality). This opens up possibilities for climate litigation.

- **Debate over Climate Adaptation and Mitigation:** While the judgment prioritizes renewable energy development, it raises questions about balancing large-scale clean energy projects with local environmental resilience and climate adaptation.

- **Potential for Climate Litigation:** Empowering citizens to demand protection of this newly recognized right could lead to an increase in climate-related litigation, requiring systematic governance around climate change.

- **Global Climate Governance and Policy Implications:**

- **Learning from International Experience:** The judgment underscores the need for overarching climate legislation in India, drawing on international examples of framework laws that guide climate action.
- **Importance of Tailoring to Indian Context:** Climate legislation in India should not merely replicate international models but be adapted to address India's unique vulnerabilities and development needs, focusing on both low-carbon and climate-resilient development.
- **Sectoral Integration:** Effective climate legislation should integrate climate considerations across various sectors, including urban planning, agriculture, water management, and energy, ensuring a comprehensive approach to climate resilience.

- **Challenges of Implementation and Ensuring Inclusivity:**

- **Procedural Orientation:** An enabling climate law would establish institutions, processes, and standards for mainstreaming climate change across diverse ministries and society, supporting transparency, public participation, and expert consultation.
- **Federalism and Decentralization:** Climate legislation must balance national coherence with sufficient decentralization to empower state and local governments, providing them with the necessary resources and authority to implement climate action.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Engaging business, civil society, and frontline communities in decision-making processes ensures that diverse knowledge and perspectives are incorporated, enhancing the effectiveness of climate policies.

Court on climate right and how India can enforce it

Through its recent judgment in *M.K. Ranjitsinh and Ors. vs Union of India & Ors.*, the Supreme Court of India has dropped a large rock into the relatively placid waters of India's nascent climate change jurisprudence. It has read into the Constitution of India the right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change, identifying both the right to life and the right to equality as its sources. As a new government considers its imperatives and agenda, Ranjitsinh provides an intriguing opportunity to think through and possibly enact much more systematic governance around climate change.

A new right around climate
Scholars and legal practitioners are still unpacking the judgment. The issue before the Court was whether and how electricity transmission lines can be built through the habitat of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard. The government claimed that a previous court order protecting the bird's habitat had affected the country's renewable energy potential. Modifying this order, the Court provided transmission infrastructure to enable accelerated development of renewable energy to address climate change. But the more recent aspect of the judgment was the newly minted 'climate right' rooted in the constitutionally guaranteed right to life (Article 21) and right to equality (Article 14). Reading this right into the Constitution potentially opens the door to climate litigation, empowering citizens to demand from the government that this right be protected.

But the judgment also leaves unresolved questions. Does the Court overstate the large-scale clean energy agenda as the main pathway to avoiding climate harm and, correspondingly, understate climate adaptation and local environmental resilience? Just how will this right against the adverse effects of climate change be protected? And what might it mean for the agenda of the newly formed government? One way forward is the slow accretion of judicial decisions around this right. But another is new legislation to actively realize a right against the adverse effects of climate change.

The former approach, the proliferation of court-based action through rehearsed litigation around climate claims, will likely lead, slowly and over time, to an incomplete patchwork of (judiciary-led) precedents. As with many other well-meaning judicial orders directing the protection of fundamental rights, realising climate rights could become contingent on the passage of several subsequent policy actions. Moreover, a patchwork approach is likely to lack an overarching framework to guide future development.

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Indian context is important
There are important advantages, and good reasons for India to consider climate legislation. But at the same time, it is essential that Indian climate legislation not blindly copy other countries, and is tailored to the Indian context. Undoubtedly, India needs to transition to a low-carbon energy future, an imperative that is highlighted in the Ranjitsinh judgment. But this, by itself, is not nearly enough to enforce a right against the adverse effects of climate change. Climate legislation should also create a supportive regulatory environment for more sustainable cities, buildings, and transport networks. It should enable adaptation measures such as heat action plans sensitive to local context. It should provide mechanisms for shifting to more climate-resilient crops. It should protect key ecosystems such as mangroves that act as a buffer against extreme weather events. And, it should actively consider questions of social equity in how it achieves these tasks. In brief, it should provide a way of mainstreaming and internalising climate change considerations into how India develops. Nothing less is required to make progress toward avoiding the adverse effects of climate change.

Because India is still developing, what the country needs is a law that enables progress toward low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

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The factor of federalism
There is another dimension essential for a climate law tailored to India: ensuring that the law works effectively within Indian federalism. Many areas relevant to climate action, from urban policy to agriculture and water fall under the authority of sub-national government – States or local levels, and electricity also is a concurrent subject. An Indian climate law must simultaneously set a framework for coherent national action while decentralising sufficiently to empower States and local governments, and enable them with information and finance to take effective action.

Finally, the enabling role should ideally also extend beyond government. Business, civil society and communities, particularly those on the frontlines of climate impacts, have essential knowledge to bring to energy transition and resilience. Finding ways of enabling participation in decision-making would enable all these sections of society to bring their knowledge to the table in addressing climate change. An effective Indian climate law based on enabling procedures would also provide opportunities for voice to diverse segments of society.

These broad ideas provide a set of principles for a climate law tailored to India, one that provides a basis for taking forward and fulfilling the promise of the Ranjitsinh judgment.

2. The New Criminal Laws

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** Three new criminal laws came into effect from July 1, 2024. The **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**, the **Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, and the **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)**, passed in Parliament will replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860, the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 respectively.
- **About the New Law**
 - The new law seeks to **replace the colonial-era sedition law** which was mainly used against Indian political leaders seeking independence from British rule.
 - Also, the **state-of-the-art technologies** have been incorporated in these laws.
 - The objective of these laws is **not to punish anyone but give justice** and in this process punishment will be given where it is required to create a sense of prevention of crime.



Previous Act/Code	New Law
Indian Penal Code, 1860	Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)
Criminal Procedure Code, 1898	Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)
Indian Evidence Act, 1872	Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)

- **Why there is a need for reforms?**
 - **Colonial Legacy:** The laws we currently use for justice are leftovers from British rule, designed to control the nation. Their relevance in today's world is questionable.
 - **Ineffective Justice System:** Instead of protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty, the justice system often harasses ordinary people.
 - **Backlog of Cases:** There are about 35 million pending cases in India's courts, especially in local and district courts. This delay denies justice to many.
 - **High Number of Undertrials:** India has one of the highest numbers of undertrial prisoners globally. Over two-thirds of our prison population are awaiting trial.
 - **Police Challenges:** The police, crucial in the justice system, face issues like corruption, heavy workloads, and lack of accountability. These hinder fair and timely justice delivery.

3. Santhal Tribal Community

GS 1 (Art and Culture)

- **Why in News:** The Prime Minister recently paid tribute to the sacrifices and bravery of the Santhal tribal community.
- **About Santhal Tribal Community:**
 - Santhals are the **third largest scheduled tribe** community in India **after Gonds and Bhils**.
 - Their greatest concentration is in the states of **Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal**, and **Orissa**, in the eastern part of the country.

- **Language:**
 - ◆ Their language is **Santhali**, a dialect of Kherwari, a Munda (Austroasiatic) language.
 - ◆ Santhali, written in Ol-Chiki script, is recognised as **one of the scheduled languages in the Eighth Schedule** to the Constitution.
- The Santhals **were a nomadic stock before** they chose to **settle on the Chotanagpur plateau**.
- By the end of the 18th century, they had concentrated in the **Santhal Parganas of Jharkhand** (earlier Bihar). From there, they **migrated to Odisha and West Bengal**.
- **Religion:** They are **nature worshippers** and could be seen paying obeisance at Jaher (sacred groves) in their villages.
- Their traditional dress includes dhoti and gamuchha for men and a short-check saree, usually blue and green, for women, who generally put on tattoos.
- **Various forms of marriage are accepted in Santhal society**, including elopement, widow remarriage, levirate, forced (rare), and the one in which a man is made to marry the woman he has impregnated.
- Divorce is not a taboo in Santhal society. Either of the couple could divorce the other.
- **Occupation:**
 - ◆ Most Santhals are **agriculturists**, depending on their farmlands or forests.
 - ◆ **Seasonal forest collection** is one of the important sources of their subsidiary income.
- Dance (enej) and music (sereng) are integral parts of the Santal life.
- Their homes, called **Olah**, have a particular **three-colour pattern** on the outer walls. The bottom portion is painted with black soil, the middle with white, and the upper with red.
- **Santhal Rebellion (1855-56):**
 - ◆ The Santhal uprising, one of the most noted events of revolt **against the British Raj**, took place in **1855 and 1857**.
 - ◆ This was **India's first major peasant uprising fueled by** the implementation of the **Permanent Land Settlement in 1793**.
 - ◆ It was **led by Sido and Kanhu** and covered the regions of Bihar.

4. Minami-Torishima Island

GS 1 (Geography)

- **Why in News:** Researchers recently found a motherlode of around 230 million metric tons of minerals crucial to making electric car batteries on the seabed off Minami-Torishima Island.
- **About Minami-Torishima Island:**
 - Minami-Torishima Island, also known as **Marcus Island**, is an isolated **Japanese coral atoll** in the **northwestern Pacific Ocean**.
 - It is the **easternmost territory belonging to Japan** and the **only Japanese territory on the Pacific Plate**, past the Japan Trench. It lies 1,950 km southeast of central Tokyo.
 - The **shape** of the island is close to an **equilateral triangle**.
 - It's **formed by a raised coral reef**, which is about 2 km on each side and 6 km around.
 - The **terrain is flat**, with a maximum altitude of 9 m, but outside of the reef is a steep cliff that's about 1,000 m deep, and the surrounding waters go down to about 6,000 m at their deepest.
 - **Climate:** Located in the **transitional zone between tropical and subtropical** climates, the Island has an **oceanic climate** with an average annual temperature of around 25.6 °C.
 - The **exclusive economic zone based on** the baseline of the **Minamitorishima Island** is some 430,000 km², **larger than Japan's land area**.

5. Snowblind malware

GS 3 (Science and Tech)

- **Why in News:** A new banking malware called 'Snowblind' is targeting Android users to steal banking credentials.
- **About Snowblind malware:**
 - It is a new **Android malware** that uses a built-in Android security feature to bypass anti-tamper mechanisms and steal banking credentials.
 - This malware **exploits a built-in security feature** to bypass anti-tamper protection in apps handling sensitive information.

- It works by **repacking an app** so it is unable to detect the use of accessibility features that can be used to extract sensitive information like login credentials and get remote access to the app.
- It exploits a **feature called 'seccomp'**, which stands for '**secure computing**'.
- It is part of the underlying Linux kernel and the Android operating system and is used to check applications for signs of tampering.
- The security firm discovered that **Snowblind injects a piece of code** that loads before seccomp initialises the anti-tampering measures. This enables the malware to bypass security mechanisms and utilize accessibility services to remotely view the victim's screen.
- Snowblind can also **disable biometric and two-factor authentication**, two security features commonly used by banking apps to thwart unauthorized access. Like typical Android malware, Snowblind infects users who install apps from untrusted sources.
- While the security firm was unable to identify how many devices are affected by the new malware, it says that Snowblind is mostly **active in Southeast Asia**.

6. INS Ranvir

GS 2 (Security)

- **Why in News:** Recently, the Indian Naval Ship INS Ranvir, of the Eastern Fleet under the aegis of the Eastern Naval Command arrived at Chattogram, Bangladesh as part of an Operational Deployment.
- **About INS Ranvir:**
 - It is a **Rajput Class Guided Missile Destroyer** which has undergone upgrade with state of art weapons and sensors, majority being indigenous.
 - It is the **fourth of the five** Rajput-class destroyers built for the Indian Navy which was commissioned **on 28 October 1986**.
 - During this visit, personnel from the Indian and Bangladesh navies will engage in a wide range of professional interactions including **Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE)**, cross-deck visits, community outreach and friendly sports fixtures.
 - On completion of harbour phase, INS Ranvir will participate in a **Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)/ PASSEX with ships** of the Bangladesh Navy.
 - **Significance of the visit:** It will further strengthen the longstanding friendship, cooperation as also the robust interoperability between both nations through a series of engagements and activities aligned with Government of India's focus on **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**.
- **What is the SAGAR Initiative?**
 - It is an Indian foreign policy doctrine that was **introduced in 2015**.
 - The aim of SAGAR is to **enhance cooperation and mutual trust** between India and its neighbouring countries, particularly in the **Indian Ocean region**.
 - The SAGAR policy has several components, including ensuring maritime security and safety, promoting sustainable development and economic growth, and strengthening cultural and people-to-people ties between nations.

7. eSankhyiki Portal

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has developed an eSankhyiki portal.
- **About eSankhyiki Portal:**
 - It provides **real-time inputs for planners**, policy-makers, researchers and the public at large.
 - The objective of this portal is to establish a **comprehensive data management** and sharing system for ease of dissemination of official statistics in the country.
 - It has two modules namely:
 - ◆ **Data Catalogue Module:** This module catalogues the major data assets of the Ministry at one place for ease of access.
 - ◆ It allows users to search within datasets, including within tables, and download data of interest to increase its value and re-usability.

- ◆ The module has **seven data products**, namely **National Accounts Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Index of Industrial Production, Annual Survey of Industries, Periodic Labour Force Survey, Household Consumption Expenditure Survey and Multiple Indicator Survey.**
- ◆ The Data Catalogue section already includes over **2291 datasets** along with specific metadata and visualization for each dataset for user convenience.
- ◆ **Macro Indicators Module:** This module offers time series data of **key macro indicators** with features for filtering and visualizing data enabling ease of access for the users.
- ◆ The module also allows users to download custom datasets, visualizations and share them through APIs, thereby increasing the re-usability of data.
- ◆ The first phase of the module includes four major products of MoSPI: National Accounts Statistics, **Consumer Price Index**, Index of Industrial Production, and Annual Survey of Industries, encompassing the data of the last ten years. The portal currently hosts more than 1.7 million records.
- It has officially been launched on Statistics Day.
- The initiative is in sync with the theme of the Statistics Day- '**Use of data for Decision making**' as ease of access of data is the prerequisite for evidence based decision making.
- It is a **user centric data portal** which facilitates use and reuse of information for creating impact through value addition and analysis by the users.

8. Nova Explosion

GS 3 (Science and Tech)

- **Why in News:** Global professionals and amateur astronomers are waiting for an once-in-a-lifetime nova explosion which will occur in September, 3,000 light-years from the Earth.
- **About Nova Explosion:**
 - It is the dramatic **instance of a star exploding** as it interacts with another, nearby star.
 - It's a one of many, repeated moments during the long, **slow, death of two neighboring stars** in the same system.
 - Astronomers are waiting for the fiery explosion of **T Coronae Borealis**, also dubbed the "Blaze Star" and known to astronomers as "**T CrB**".
 - ◆ For T CrB, this nova event happens roughly **every 80 years** — it's like Halley's Comet event every 76 years — so, astronomers call T CrB a "**recurrent**" nova.
 - ◆ They believe T CrB's prior eruptions were observed as long ago as December 1787 and even in October 1217 AD.
 - ◆ When T CrB erupts, its luminosity will increase dramatically, making it **visible to the naked eye for several days.**
 - **Process**
 - ◆ The system contains two stars — a **white dwarf and a red giant.**
 - ◆ The **white dwarf** is an incredibly dense remnant of a once larger star. It's about the size of planet Earth but with the same mass as our sun.
 - ◆ Its neighbor, the red giant, is in its **final years of existence** and is slowly being stripped of hydrogen by the gravitational pull of the denser white dwarf.
 - ◆ This star "cannibalism" causes a **tremendous buildup of pressure** and heat, which eventually triggers a huge thermonuclear explosion.
 - ◆ The explosion doesn't completely destroy the stars, however, and so this event repeats over time. It can **carry on for hundreds of thousands of years.**
 - ◆ Different nova events have **different cycles**, ranging from a few years to hundreds of thousands of years.

MCQ Current Affairs
1st July, 2024

1. Consider the following statements regarding Project 76:

- A. It aims to succeed the renowned Sindhughosh (Kilo) class.
B. Under Project 76, Indian Navy is developing the country's first indigenously conventional diesel-electric submarine.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
b) B only
c) A and B
d) Neither of two

2. Minami-Torishima Island, recently in news, is located in:

- a) Atlantic Ocean
b) Arctic Ocean
c) Andaman Ocean
d) Pacific Ocean

3. With reference to Santhal Tribes, consider the following statements:

- A. They are the third largest scheduled tribe community in India after Gonds and Bhils.
B. They are nature worshippers, especially sacred groves in their villages.
C. Their language is a dialect of Kherwari, a Munda (Austroasiatic) language.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) One only
b) Two only
c) All three
d) None

4. INS Ranvir, recently in news, belongs to which one of the following classes?

- a) Delhi Class
b) Kolavari Class
c) Sindhughosh Class
d) Rajput Class

5. Consider the following statements with reference to eSankhyiki Portal:

- A. It provides real-time inputs for planners and policy-makers in India.
B. It consists of data catalogue module in which Index of Industrial Production information can be accessed.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
b) B only
c) A and B
d) Neither of two

Answers Current Affairs
1st July, 2024

1. c
2. d
3. c
4. d
5. c

