

13th June, 2024

1. The far-right swing in European Parliament Elections

GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** The recent European Parliament elections witnessed significant gains for right-wing and far-right parties across key member states, challenging the dominance of centrist and liberal groups. This shift in political landscape has implications for EU policy-making and alliances.
- **Far-Right Gains in Key Member States:**
 - **France:** Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National emerged as the largest party, reflecting a surge in nationalist sentiment.
 - **Germany:** The Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) made historic gains, questioning the legitimacy of the ruling coalition led by Chancellor Olaf Schulz.
 - **Italy:** Prime Minister Georgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy Party solidified its position, alongside far-right successes in Austria, Hungary, and Spain.
- **Implications for European Parliament Dynamics:**
 - **Shifting Political Blocs:** While centre-right parties retained strength, liberal and Green groups faced setbacks, altering the balance of power in the European Parliament.
 - **Potential Collaborations:** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen may need to seek support from right-wing blocs for policy initiatives, signaling a departure from the previous "Grand Coalition" dynamics.
 - **Policy Shifts:** There are concerns about a gradual rightward pivot in EU policy, with implications for climate action, immigration, and asylum policies.

A far-right swing in European Parliament



2. Rising Nitrous Oxide Emissions

GS 3 (Environment)

- **Why in News:** A recent report highlights the **sharp increase in nitrous oxide emissions** from agricultural activities. Nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas, is being emitted at alarming rates due to the use of chemical fertilizers and animal waste on croplands.
- **Key Findings:**
 - **Surging Emissions:** Between 1980 and 2020, nitrous oxide emissions soared by 40%, primarily driven by the intensified use of chemical fertilizers and animal waste in agriculture.
 - **Top Emitters:** Countries like China, India, and the US are among the top 10 emitters of nitrous oxide. Brazil, Russia, Pakistan, Australia, Indonesia, Turkey, and Canada also contribute significantly to these emissions.
 - **Rapid Increase in Nitrogen Fertilizers:** The use of commercial nitrogen fertilizers has seen a dramatic rise, from 60 million metric tonnes in 1980 to 107 million metric tonnes in 2020.
 - Additionally, animal manure contributed 101 million metric tonnes in 2020, resulting in a combined usage of 208 million metric tonnes.
- **About Nitrous Oxide (N2O)**
 - Nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas or happy gas, is a colorless, non-flammable gas.
 - Nitrous oxide is a highly potent greenhouse gas with a global warming potential approximately 300 times greater than CO2.
 - It poses severe consequences for the environment and human health.
 - **Environmental Impact:** Soil, water, and air pollution. It also contributes to ozone layer depletion and exacerbates climate change. One pound of N2O warms the atmosphere about 300 times the amount that one pound of carbon dioxide does over a 100 year timescale.

Study ranks India second in nitrous oxide emissions

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

India is the world's second largest source of nitrous oxide (N2O), a greenhouse gas that heats up the atmosphere far more than carbon dioxide. Nearly 11% of such global man-made emissions in 2020 were from India, topped only by China at 16%.

The major source of these emissions comes from fertilizer usage, according to a global assessment of N2O emissions published in the journal *Earth System Science Data* on Wednesday.

In 2022, the concentration of atmospheric N2O reached about 25% above the levels seen before the industrial age. In comparison, the concentration of carbon dioxide was 417 parts per million in 2022.

This means that the current level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is a thousand times more than that of nitrous oxide, making carbon dioxide reduction the bigger priority among countries trying to

contain climate change. However, because nitrous oxide stays longer in the atmosphere and is rising rapidly, scientists in recent years have been warning that it must also be tackled with a greater sense of urgency.

N2O emissions from human activities have increased by 40% (three million metric tonnes of N2O per year) in the past four decades, with growth rates between 2020 and 2022 higher than in any previous period since 1880, when reliable measurements began.

Agricultural production using nitrogen fertilizers,

such as ammonia, and animal manure contributed 74% of the total anthropogenic N2O emissions in the last decade. N2O emissions from human activities, responsible for 6.4% of the effective radiative forcing of greenhouse gases, have added about 0.1 degrees Celsius to current global warming.

"This report on the nitrous oxide budget is timely and alarming. It is time India took this wake-up call seriously and changed cropping systems and production practices," said G.V. Ramanjaneyulu, director of the Centre of Sustainable Agriculture.



Monumental changes: The Taj Mahal on a clear day after rain washed away pollution in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. SOURCE: SATELITE

- **Health Risks:** Paralysis and even death.

3. Protecting the Western Ghats

GS 3 (Environment)

- **Why in News:** The Centre has proposed **eco-sensitive areas (ESAs)** in six states, including **Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Goa**, to safeguard the Western Ghats. However, these states are seeking a reduction in the extent of ESAs to facilitate development projects.
- **Key Demand: Rationalizing ESAs**
 - The states are advocating for a rationalization of ESAs, which currently cover **56,825 sq km** in the Ghats.
 - They argue that reducing the ESAs would allow for essential development activities in the region.
 - **State's demands:**
 - ◆ **Karnataka's Opposition:** Karnataka opposes the original draft based on the **K Kasturirangan panel report**, citing potential impacts on livelihoods.
 - ◆ **Goa's Demands:** Goa seeks a reduction in ESAs in specific talukas to accommodate development projects.
- **What are ESAs?**
 - ESAs are **designated areas** surrounding **national parks and wildlife sanctuaries** aimed at preserving the **ecological balance and biodiversity of sensitive regions** like the **Western Ghats**.
 - They act as buffer zones between highly protected areas and places with less protection.
 - These areas restrict certain activities to prevent environmental degradation and maintain the natural habitat.
 - **Purpose:** to lessen human impact on these special places.
 - **Extent:** Usually within 10 km of park or sanctuary boundaries. If there are important natural pathways beyond 10 km, they might stretch further.
 - They're similar to ecotones, those transition zones between different ecosystems.
 - **Notified by:** They are notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- **Categories of Activities in ESAs**
 - **Prohibited:** Commercial Mining, Setting of Saw Mills, Setting of industries causing pollution, the establishment of major hydroelectric projects etc.
 - **Regulated:** Felling of Trees, Establishment of hotels and resorts, erection of electrical cables, drastic change of agricultural systems etc.
 - **Permitted:** Ongoing agriculture and horticulture practices by local communities, rainwater harvesting, organic farming etc.
- **About Western Ghats**
 - The Western Ghats run along India's west coast, starting from Gujarat through Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
 - Covering 160,000 square kilometers, they're a massive mountain range.
 - Anamudi, in Tamil Nadu, is their highest peak.
 - Recognized for their significance, they're on the UNESCO World Heritage list.
 - **Biological Diversity:** Among the world's top 8 hotspots for biodiversity.
 - **Role in Water Systems:**
 - ◆ They act as a water source for rivers that provide water to 40% of India.
 - ◆ Rivers flowing from here are crucial for agriculture and life in the region.
 - **Climate Influence:**
 - ◆ Their winds influence the climate by bringing in moisture. These winds cause monsoon rains in summer.
 - ◆ They are also responsible for the drying up and cooling of the peninsula in winter.

DRAFT NOTIFICATION SET TO EXPIRE

3 states seek shrinking of eco-sensitive areas in Western Ghats

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

KARNATAKA, MAHARASHTRA and Goa, three of the six states where the Centre has proposed eco-sensitive areas (ESA) to protect the Western Ghats, have sought a reduction in the extent of these ESAs to allow development works.

The states flagged the need for rationalisation of these ESAs, spread over 56,825 sq km in the Ghats in their discussions with an expert panel appointed by the Centre to finalise a draft notification. The current draft is in the fifth iteration, with its first version issued in March 2014. And with a consensus elusive so far, the latest draft notification, published in July 2022, is set to expire, too.

Sources said the expert committee will submit its report to the Environment Ministry by September despite a June-end deadline. While the panel will consider the states' demands, it will stick to the principles of ecological protection and follow a uniform approach, they said.

The panel, headed by Sanjay Kumar, former Director General of Forests, and comprising members from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, was appointed in July 2022.

It has since held multiple meetings with officials from the six Western Ghats states — Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu — besides seeking inputs from Geological Survey of India, National Institute of Hydrology, Forest Survey of India and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.

During the meetings, sources said, Karnataka, where an area of 20,668 sq km was proposed as ESA, maintained its opposition to the K Kasturirangan panel report, which formed the basis for the original draft, saying the livelihood of people in the region would be hit. The Kasturirangan panel had identified 37 percent of the Ghats as ecologically sensitive and recommended prohibition or regulation of certain activities.

Goa, on the other hand, demanded reduction of the 1,461 sq km earmarked as ESAs in the state by nearly 370 sq km. Johnson Fernandes, Director, Dept. of Environment and Climate Change, Goa said, the reduction of ESAs has been sought in the Sattari, Canacona and Ponda talukas.

Texts and calls seeking comment from Karnataka's Department Of Ecology & Environment did not elicit a response. Officials of Maharashtra's environment department refused to comment saying the matter was "still under consideration".

4. Satnami Sect

Recent events of importance

- **Why in News:** The Satnami sect has recently made headlines due to their protest against the government in Chhattisgarh regarding the desecration of **Jaitkham**, a **sacred religious site** located in the Baloda Bazar district.
- **Who are the Satnamis?**
 - The Satnamis are a predominantly Scheduled Caste sect living mainly in Chhattisgarh and parts of Madhya Pradesh.
 - Guru Ghasidas, an **18th-century saint** is revered as the spiritual leader of the Chhattisgarh Satnamis.
 - Furthermore, the Satnamis find their roots in the teachings of Kabir, a **15th-century Bhakti poet** who advocated for the worship of an immanent, formless Absolute.
 - **1657:** A mendicant named Birbhan, inspired by the teachings of Kabir, founded a Satnami community in Narnaul in present-day Haryana in 1657. Initially, most Satnamis belonged to an “untouchable” caste engaged in leatherwork.
 - **Features:**
 - ◆ They rejected ritual and superstition
 - ◆ They forbid caste distinctions within their community.
 - ◆ Displaying sympathy towards the poor and skepticism towards authority and wealth
- **History of Protests**
 - **Revolt Against Aurangzeb:** During the Mughal era, the Satnamis rose against Aurangzeb's oppressive tax demands, leading to a significant rebellion in Punjab and Haryana. Despite facing severe suppression, they fought valiantly for their rights.
 - **Revival under Guru Ghasidas:** Guru Ghasidas led the revival of the Satnami community in the mid-18th century, emphasizing the worship of one true God and rejecting idol worship. His teachings allowed the Satnamis to transcend social restrictions and embrace their spirituality.
- **Guru Ghasidas (1756-1836)**
 - Guru Ghasidas was born in Chhattisgarh in an untouchable family. Ghasidas was born in a socio-political milieu of misrule, loot and plunder.
 - He was a great social reformer and philosopher in Chhattisgarh.
 - The Satnam Panth (sect) is said to be based on these principles formulated by Ghasidas.
- **Kabir Das (1440-1518)**
 - Kabir Das, a revered Indian saint and mystical poet, lived during the 15th and 16th centuries. His teachings have left a profound impact on Indian spirituality.
 - **Philosophy of Oneness with God:** Kabir emphasized the **concept of unity with God** and saw karma as the true path to enlightenment. His teachings influenced people's attitudes towards kindness and righteousness.
 - **Fusion of Hindu Bhakti and Muslim Sufi Beliefs** Kabir's love for God transcended religious boundaries, merging Hindu Bhakti and Muslim Sufi beliefs. He sought to unite Hindus and Muslims through a universal spiritual path.
 - According to Kabir, every life is influenced by two spiritual truths: Jivatma (individual soul) and Paramatma (universal soul). He believed that **moksha**, or liberation, occurs through the merging of these two heavenly truths.
 - **Literary Contributions:** Kabir Das authored 72 works, including Kabir Bijak, Kabir Bani, and Anurag Sagar. His literary contributions continue to inspire spiritual seekers across generations.

Satnamis: Dalit religious community with a history of protests

ANUPRAKASH NADU
6th June 2024, 12:02 PM IST

MEMBERS of the Satnami religious sect live in the village of the Superintendent of Police and police the office of the District Collector with stones in Baloda Bazar district of Chhattisgarh on Monday after desecration over the desecration of a religious site at Anur Caste in the district.

Members of the mostly Scheduled Caste Satnami community in Narnaul district of Haryana Pradesh, the desecration of a religious site in Baloda Bazar district, an 18th-century saint who was the spiritual leader of the Chhattisgarh Satnamis.

Early Satnamis of Narnaul

Guru Ghasidas was born in 1756, however, the attribution of the sect to him is back in history. The present sect is said to be founded by him in the year 1657.

15th-century Bhakti poet Kabir but was likely a Hindu.

Kabir, who rejected idolatry and the worship of organized religion, was a devotee of the immanent, formless Absolute, which he referred to as the name or nameless.

In 1657, a mendicant named Birbhan, who was inspired by the teachings of Kabir, founded a Satnami community in Narnaul in present-day Haryana. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's oppressive tax demands led to a significant rebellion in Punjab and Haryana.

Despite facing severe suppression, they fought valiantly for their rights.

Revival under Guru Ghasidas

Guru Ghasidas led the revival of the Satnami community in the mid-18th century, emphasizing the worship of one true God and rejecting idol worship. His teachings allowed the Satnamis to transcend social restrictions and embrace their spirituality.

EXPLAINED HISTORY

under Chhatra

There are several theories as to the source of Chhatra's suppression and persecution. Some believe it was due to his rejection of caste distinctions and his emphasis on the worship of one true God.

Others believe it was due to his rejection of idol worship and his emphasis on the worship of the immanent, formless Absolute.

When the local Mughal ruler (the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb) ordered the execution of Kabir, the Satnamis were forced to flee to Narnaul.

In the 18th century, the Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

Rebellion broke out. The rebels occupied Narnaul and later for some time, but the Mughals eventually crushed the rebellion.

According to some, the religious philosophy of Guru Ghasidas evolved from that of the earlier Satnamis. His "true and foremost rule" was the worship of one true God, through the chanting of his name, "Satnam", and the absence of any form of caste hierarchy. "Satnam" was a term of "true worship". "Satnam" was a term of "true worship". "Satnam" was a term of "true worship".

Over the years, many Satnamis adopted caste Hindu practices, but the sect remained a distinct community. Some Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

Rebellion broke out. The rebels occupied Narnaul and later for some time, but the Mughals eventually crushed the rebellion.

According to some, the religious philosophy of Guru Ghasidas evolved from that of the earlier Satnamis. His "true and foremost rule" was the worship of one true God, through the chanting of his name, "Satnam", and the absence of any form of caste hierarchy. "Satnam" was a term of "true worship". "Satnam" was a term of "true worship". "Satnam" was a term of "true worship".

Over the years, many Satnamis adopted caste Hindu practices, but the sect remained a distinct community. Some Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

They were forced to flee to Narnaul, where they founded the Satnami community.

The Satnamis were persecuted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

5. Heatwaves have not been included as a notified disaster

GS 3 (Environment)

- **Why in news:** The current extreme heatwave across the country has reignited discussions about including heatwaves as a notified disaster under the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005. If this inclusion occurs, states will be able to use disaster response funds to provide compensation, relief, and manage the effects of heatwaves. At present, states must use their own funds for these activities.

Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005

About

- ◆ It is a comprehensive legal framework to establish and manage disaster management policies and procedures by defining roles and responsibilities at the national, state, and district levels.

Key features

◆ Establishment of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

- Chaired by the Prime Minister.
- Responsible for laying down policies, plans, and guidelines for disaster management.

◆ State and District Disaster Management Authorities

- States - Chaired by the Chief Minister, responsible for implementing national policies and plans.
- Districts - Chaired by the District Magistrate, responsible for disaster management at the district level.

◆ National Executive Committee (NEC)

- Comprises secretaries of various ministries.
- Assists the NDMA in performing its functions and coordinates disaster response and relief measures.

● National Plan and State Plans

- The act mandates the preparation of a National Plan for disaster management by the NDMA and State Plans by State Disaster Management Authorities.

◆ Disaster Response and Mitigation Funds

- Establishment of the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for immediate relief and response efforts.
- National Disaster Mitigation Fund and State Disaster Mitigation Funds for long-term disaster risk reduction and mitigation.

◆ Community Participation

- Encourages community-based disaster management and awareness programs.
- Involvement of local bodies and communities in disaster preparedness and response activities.

What are notified disasters?

About

- ◆ Notified disasters are specific types of disasters that have been officially recognized and listed by the government for special consideration and management under the DM Act, 2005.

Heatwaves as Disaster

Under provisions of the Disaster Management Act, states can draw money from two specific funds. Since heatwaves are not notified under the Act, states have to use their own funds to deal with their fallout

SDRF & NDRF ALLOCATIONS FOR STATES

| STATE | ALLOCATION | RELEASE | STATE | ALLOCATION | RELEASE |
|------------------|------------|---------|----------------|------------|---------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 1,351.2 | 453.4 | Madhya Pradesh | 42.0 | 34.9 |
| Assam | 754.8 | 343.4 | Mizoram | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Bihar | 1,544.0 | 434.4 | Nagaland | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Chhattisgarh | 500 | 164.4 | Odisha | 1,004.4 | 709.0 |
| Goa | 12.0 | 4.4 | Punjab | 42.4 | 24.4 |
| Gujarat | 1,574.8 | 148.0 | Rajasthan | 1,324.4 | 434.4 |
| Haryana | 374.0 | 254.4 | Sikkim | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 404.8 | 184.4 | Tamil Nadu | 1,000 | 400 |
| Jharkhand | 402.0 | 474.4 | Uttarakhand | 120 | 84.4 |
| Karnataka | 524.8 | 344.4 | Uttar Pradesh | 2,274.0 | 82.0 |
| Kerala | 364.0 | 134.4 | West Bengal | 1,004.4 | 444.0 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 2,444.8 | 862.0 | | | |
| Manipur | 1,744.0 | 1,424.0 | | | |

Source: NDMA

In the last 15 years, however, both the severity and frequency of heatwaves have increased. In 2015, for instance, the country witnessed a record number of heatwaves, with temperatures soaring above 45°C in several parts of the country. This has led to a significant number of deaths and illnesses, particularly among the elderly and those working in outdoor jobs. The government has taken several measures to mitigate the impact of heatwaves, including providing relief camps, distributing water, and encouraging people to stay hydrated. However, the lack of a legal framework for notified disasters has made it difficult for states to access disaster response funds for relief and compensation. The NDMA has been advocating for the inclusion of heatwaves as notified disasters, but the government has been reluctant to do so. The government has argued that heatwaves are a natural phenomenon and that states should be responsible for managing them. However, the increasing frequency and severity of heatwaves have made it clear that a legal framework is needed to ensure that states have access to disaster response funds for relief and compensation. The NDMA has been advocating for the inclusion of heatwaves as notified disasters, but the government has been reluctant to do so. The government has argued that heatwaves are a natural phenomenon and that states should be responsible for managing them. However, the increasing frequency and severity of heatwaves have made it clear that a legal framework is needed to ensure that states have access to disaster response funds for relief and compensation.

- ◆ These disasters are formally acknowledged to ensure systematic and structured response and relief efforts, **often involving the allocation of dedicated funds and resources.**

■ Categories of notified disasters under DM Act 2005

- ◆ The Act includes 12 categories of notified disasters, which are: Cyclone, Drought, Earthquake, Fire, Flood, Tsunami, Hailstorm, Landslide, Avalanche, Cloudburst, Pest attack, Frost and cold waves
- ◆ These are eligible for relief assistance under the SDRF and NDRF.
 - The states first utilise the funds available in the SDRF, and only if the magnitude of the disaster is unmanageable with the SDRF, states seek the money from the NDRF.
 - While the **entire money of the NDRF comes from the central government, states contribute 25% of the money in the SDRF** (10% in case of special category states), the rest comes from the Centre.

● Heatwaves - not included as notified disasters

■ Heatwaves - a common occurrence during summer

- ◆ Though heatwaves are not a new phenomenon in India, these were not viewed as a disaster when the Act came into being in 2005.
- ◆ It was because heatwaves were a common occurrence during summer, and not really an unusual weather event.

■ Increasing demand for including heatwaves as notified disaster

- ◆ Over the years, both the severity and frequency of heatwaves have increased.
 - Due to increased economic activity, there is a far larger number of people who have to remain outdoors for their livelihoods or other reasons, exposing them to the risk of a heat-stroke.
 - 23 states are vulnerable to heatwaves. These states as well as several vulnerable cities have now prepared heat action plans (HAPs) to deal with the impacts of extreme heat.
- ◆ HAPs involve activities like creation of shaded spaces, ensuring availability of cool water in public places, distribution of simple oral solutions, and reorganising the schedules of schools, colleges and office working hours.
- ◆ These measures require expenditure but state governments have not been able to use the SDRF for them. This is the reason for the demand for inclusion of heatwaves as a notified disaster in the DM Act.

● Why is the Centre not adding heatwaves as a notified disaster now?

■ Reluctance of Finance Commission

- ◆ The 15th Finance Commission, whose recommendations are currently in effect, stated that the existing list of notified disasters already largely meets the needs of the states and did not support including heatwaves.
- ◆ Nevertheless, it endorsed an enabling provision created by the previous Commission that allows states to **use up to 10% of their SDRF for local disasters such as lightning or heatwaves, which states can notify themselves.**
- ◆ Using this provision, **at least four states — Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Kerala —** have classified heatwaves as local disasters.
- ◆ **Practical Difficulties**
- ◆ The main reason behind the reluctance to add heatwaves as a notified disaster is the significant financial implications.
- ◆ The government would have to provide Rs 4 lakh compensation for every life lost due to a notified disaster, along with compensation for grievous injuries.
- ◆ Heatwaves claim many lives annually, and the recorded number of deaths has been increasing, with over 500 heat-related deaths reported this year.
- ◆ Mandating compensation could reveal even more deaths.
- ◆ Additionally, attributing deaths to heatwaves is challenging because most deaths are due to pre-existing conditions exacerbated by extreme heat, making it hard to ascertain the direct impact of heat.
- ◆ This differs from other disasters where victim identification is straightforward.

■ Fund allocated by Finance commission and associated challenges

- ◆ 15th Finance Commission recommended allocating Rs 1,60,153 crore to various State Disaster Response Funds (SDRFs) for 2021-26.

- ◆ States like Uttar Pradesh received about Rs 11,400 crore, while Maharashtra received the maximum, about Rs 19,000 crore.
- ◆ This money is intended for all types of disasters during this period.
- ◆ There is a concern that these funds could become insufficient if heatwaves and lightning are added to the list of notified disasters.

6. General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR)

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** The Telangana High Court has ruled against a taxpayer against whom the revenue department had invoked the General Anti-avoidance Rule (GAAR).
- **About General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR):**
 - GAAR is an **anti-tax avoidance law** in India to **curb tax evasion and avoid tax leaks**.
 - It came into effect on 1st April 2017.
 - The GAAR provisions come under the **Income Tax Act, 1961**.
 - It is a tool for **checking aggressive tax planning**, especially those transactions or business arrangements that are entered into with the objective of avoiding tax.
 - It is specifically **aimed at cutting revenue losses** that happen to the government due to aggressive tax avoidance measures practiced by companies.
 - It is meant to apply to **transactions that are prima facie legal, but result in tax reduction**.
 - Broadly, tax reduction can be divided into three categories.
 - **Tax mitigation** is a 'positive' term in the context of a situation where taxpayers take advantage of a fiscal incentive provided to them by tax legislation by complying with its conditions and taking cognisance of the economic consequences of their actions.
 - **Tax mitigation is permitted** under the Act. This tax reduction is acceptable even after GAAR has come into force.
 - **Tax evasion** is when a person or entity does not pay the taxes that are due to the government.
 - ◆ This is **illegal and liable to prosecution**. Illegality, wilful suppression of facts, misrepresentation, and fraud—all constitute tax evasion, which is prohibited under law.
 - ◆ This is also **not covered by GAAR**, as the existing jurisprudence is sufficient to cover tax evasion/Sham transactions.
 - **Tax avoidance** includes **actions taken by a taxpayer, none of which are illegal** or forbidden by the law.
 - ◆ However, although these are not prohibited by the law, they are **considered undesirable and inequitable** since they undermine the objective of effective collection of revenue.
 - ◆ GAAR is specifically against transactions where the sole intention is to avoid tax.
 - ◆ In this, the taxpayers **used legal steps which resulted in tax reduction**, which steps would not have been undertaken if there was no tax reduction.
 - ◆ This kind of tax avoidance planning is sought to be covered by GAAR.
 - With GAAR, there is **no difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion**. All transactions which have the implication of avoiding tax can come under the scanner of GAAR.

7. Microalgae

GS 3 (Science and Tech)

- **Why in News:** CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) scientists have spotlighted the potential of Chlorella Growth Factor (CGF), a protein-rich extract derived from the microalgae 'Chlorella sorokiniana', as an ideal ingredient for a wide range of food and feed applications.
- **About Microalgae:**
 - They are **microscopic algal species**, as opposed to other algae that are macroscopic.
 - They are **mostly unicellular**, although some complex associations giving colonies with larger structures exist.
 - Depending on the species, their sizes can range from a few micrometers (µm) to a few hundreds of micrometers.
 - Unlike higher plants, microalgae **do not have roots, stems or leaves**.
 - They are **mostly photosynthetic**. Their ability to photosynthesize is due to the presence of photosynthetic pigments.
 - They can be found in a variety of **aquatic habitats**, being able to thrive in freshwater, brackish, marine, and hypersaline aquatic environments.
 - **Examples** of unicellular algal species are **green algae, diatoms, and dinoflagellates**.

■ Importance:

- ◆ They play a pivotal role in ecosystems as **primary producers**.
- ◆ Their adaptability and diverse taxonomy make them a crucial component of aquatic food webs, supporting various organisms and influencing nutrient cycling.
- ◆ They are a **rich resource of lipids, proteins, carbohydrates**, and pigments with nutritional and health benefits.
- ◆ **Spirulina and Chlorella**, two types of microalgae, are often consumed as dietary supplements.
- ◆ Through photosynthesis, they release oxygen as a byproduct, and thus, they are a vital contributor of oxygen in the environment.
- ◆ They can form **symbiotic relationships** with other organisms. For example, they live within the tissues of corals (zooxanthellae) and provide them with nutrients through photosynthesis.
- ◆ Some of them are also capable of **fixing nitrogen**. Eg: **Nostoc, Anabaena, and Oscillatoria**.

8. Gender Gap Report 2024**Recent events of importance**

- **Why in News:** Of the 30 Union ministers in the newly formed Indian cabinet, only two are women. Overall, the number of ministers in the central council has reduced from 10 in the previous government to seven.
- **About Report**
 - The Global Gender Gap Report 2024, released by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**, highlights the **persistent gender inequality** across various sectors globally.
 - **Findings**
 - **Top-Ranking Countries:** Iceland has maintained its position as the most gender-equal country for the 14th consecutive year, with a gender gap score of 91.2%.
 - Other Nordic countries, such as Norway, Finland, and Sweden, also rank high in the top five.
 - **India ranked 129** in this year's index, scoring marginally **lower than the previous edition**.
 - This slight regression is mainly the result of small declines in '**Educational Attainment**' and '**Political Empowerment**', while '**Economic Participation and Opportunity**' slightly improved.
 - India ranked the **third-lowest among the South Asian economies**, faring worse than Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

9. Kala-azar**GS 3 (Science and Tech)**

- **Why in News:** In the wake of the rising public health threat caused by parasitic infection visceral leishmaniasis (VL),(kala-azar), the WHO launched a new framework to guide health authorities, policy makers and other stakeholders to eradicate the disease in eastern Africa.
- **More on News:**
 - Kala-azar, also known as **visceral leishmaniasis (VL)**, is a severe form of leishmaniasis caused by the protozoan parasite *Leishmania donovani*.
 - It is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected female sandfly, primarily *Phlebotomus argentipes* in India.
 - **Symptoms:** The disease is characterized by irregular bouts of fever, substantial weight loss, swelling of the spleen and liver, and severe anemia if left untreated, which can lead to death within two years.
 - **Diagnosis:** Diagnosis is made by combining clinical signs with parasitological or serological tests, such as the rK39 diagnostic kit.
 - Kala-azar is **endemic in 75 countries** across Asia, Africa, and the Americas, with India accounting for 18% of the global burden in 2020.

MCQ Current Affair
13th June, 2024

1. Nagarhole Tiger Reserve lies in which one of the following states?

- a) Odisha
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Karnataka
- d) Madhya Pradesh

2. The “Pterosaurs”, recently seen in the news, refers to:

- a) They were the first vertebrates capable of flight
- b) They are closely related to birds
- c) They were the first mammals to fly
- d) They are closely related to bats

3. Kala-azar is a severe form of leishmaniasis caused by which one of the following?

- a) Protozoan
- b) Virus
- c) Fungi
- d) Bacteria

4. The Global Gender Gap Report 2024 is released by which one of the following?

- a) World Bank
- b) World Economic Forum (WEF)
- c) United Nations (UN)
- d) International Monetary Fund (IMF)

5. With reference to the General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR), consider the following statements:

- A. It is an anti-tax avoidance law in India to curb tax evasion and avoid tax leaks.
- B. All transactions that have the implication of avoiding tax can come under the scanner of GAAR.
- C. Tax mitigation measures for tax reduction are not permitted under the GAAR.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answers Current Affairs
13th June, 2024

1. c
2. a
3. a
4. b
5. b

