

2024

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS





## Daily Current Affairs from *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express* & *The Assam Tribune*

**14<sup>th</sup> Nov 2024**

### CONTENT LIST

#### GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
1	SC slams bulldozer action, lists demolition rules	Polity (IE)	1
2	The perfect cocktail of layered discrimination	Constitution (TH)	8

#### GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
3	Steps initiated to rejuvenate springs of NE	Environment & ecology (AT)	1
4	India's tea, sugar exports raise sustainability concerns at home	Agriculture (TH)	7

#### GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

##### 1. SC slams bulldozer action, lists demolition rules

**Context:** Slamming the use of bulldozers against properties of crime accused, the Supreme Court, while underlining that the executive cannot play judge, ruled on Wednesday that demolition of properties of citizens without following due process is contrary to the rule of law. Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan, emphasized that powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, has laid down certain conditions including mandatory notice which authorities must comply with before demolishing properties. Furthermore, the executive cannot become a judge and decide that a person accused is guilty and, therefore, punish him by demolishing his residential/commercial property/properties. Such an act of the executive would be transgressing its limits.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** Recently, the Supreme Court of India criticised the practice of 'Bulldozer Justice', which is becoming a norm in the country. The Supreme court has stayed demolition drives through

bulldozers till October 31. The Supreme Court has criticised the practice of the practice of demolishing properties based on criminal accusations.

- **Violation of the Rule of Law:** Bulldozer demolitions without due process violate the rule of law and the principles of natural justice, that governs state actions in a country.
  - *For ex-* Demolitions without serving proper advance notices and right of representation.
- **Violation of Fundamental Rights:** The hasty bulldozer justice of demolition of private homes is violation of Right to Shelter which has been recognized as a part of the right to life, guaranteed by Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.
- **Violation of the established principle of Presumption of Innocence:** Demolition of properties based on alleged criminal charges violates the principle of presumption of innocence until proven guilty.
- **Specific targeting of Minorities:** Several reports highlight the selective targeting of minority communities, especially Muslims, using bulldozer demolitions.
  - *For Ex-* Amnesty International reported that 128 properties, mostly owned by Muslims, were demolished in between April and June 2022, affecting 617 people.
- **Promotes authoritarianism:** According to some critics, bulldozer action reflects a troubling shift towards authoritarianism by making it a means of political retribution against dissenters or marginalized groups.
- **Ethical issues:** Bulldozer justice conflates the roles of judge, jury, and executioner, and goes against the constitutional principle of separation of power. Further, there are ethical concerns of disproportionate punishments involving innocent family members of the accused.
- **Way forward:** *Adequate surveys before Demolition-* The Supreme Court has mandated the administration to undertake a survey before carrying out demolitions. Also, the enforcement of basic procedural protocols, like giving sufficient advance notices, must be followed by the authorities.

*Pan-India procedural guidelines-* Pan India guidelines should be incorporated into relevant legislation and rules of the municipal authorities. Proper procedures must be followed during the pre-demolition, demolition and post-demolition phase.

*Shifting the Burden of Proof-* The burden of proof should be shifted to the authorities to justify demolition and displacement. This will ensure protection of the basic human right of right to shelter.

*Independent Review Mechanism-* An independent committee with judicial and civil society representatives should be constituted to review the legality of proposed demolitions.

*Focus on Rehabilitation-* Proper guidelines should be drafted for rehabilitation of innocent victims of the accused families in cases of bulldozer actions. International human rights standards also emphasise the right to adequate housing and compensation for forced evictions.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 2. The perfect cocktail of layered discrimination

**Context:** Delimitation, the biggest elephant in the room called the Indian Union, is about to take centre stage. Federalism is part of the inviolable basic structure of the Constitution of India. The Indian Union is a federal union. States are the federating units. Most States find their basis in language and many States of the Indian Union are continuations of ethno-linguistic homelands that have existed for centuries or even millennia. This is precisely why the Supreme Court of India has termed States as political units and not

arbitrary administrative units. Indian unity was forged in the anti-imperialist struggle against British imperialism and that unity continues in independent India through a delicate balance of power distribution between federating units and ongoing dialogue between diverse peoples of the Indian subcontinent.

### Key points

- **Overview:** The Delimitation of constituencies for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is to be carried out based on the First Census after 2026. The 2021 Census was originally postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently due to delays on the part of the Central government.
- **Delimitation:** Delimitation means the process of fixing the number of seats and boundaries of territorial constituencies in each State for the Lok Sabha and Legislative assemblies. It also includes determining the seats to be reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in these houses. This 'delimitation process' is performed by the 'Delimitation Commission' that is set up under an act of Parliament.
  - *Delimitation commission* - The Commission is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India. Composed of Retired Supreme Court judge, Chief Election Commissioner, Respective State Election Commissioners.
  - *Functions* - To determine the number and boundaries of constituencies to make the population of all constituencies nearly equal. To identify seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, wherever their population is relatively large.
  - *Powers* - In case of a difference of opinion among members of the Commission, the opinion of the majority prevails. The Delimitation Commission in India is a high-power body whose orders have the force of law and cannot be called in question before any court.
- **Constitutional Provisions:** Under Article 82, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census. Under Article 170, States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Significance of Delimitation:**
  - Representation* - Delimitation ensures fair representation in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies by adjusting the number of seats based on population changes. This is crucial for upholding the democratic principle of "one citizen-one vote-one value."
  - Equity* - By readjusting the boundaries of territorial constituencies, delimitation aims to ensure equitable distribution of seats among different regions, considering population shifts over time. This helps prevent underrepresentation or overrepresentation of specific areas.
  - Reserved Seats for SC/ST* - Delimitation determines the allocation of reserved seats for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in accordance with constitutional provisions, ensuring adequate political representation for marginalized communities.
  - Federalism* - Delimitation impacts federal principles by influencing the distribution of political power among states. It is essential to strike a balance between population-based representation and federal considerations to maintain harmony among diverse regions.
  - Population Control Measures* - Historically, the freezing of seats based on the 1971 Census aimed to incentivize population control measures. However, the impending delimitation exercise raises questions about the effectiveness and implications of this policy in the context of changing demographics.
- **Concerns Related to Delimitation:**
  - Regional Disparity* - Disparity in representation between north and southern part of India in the Lok sabha due to population as a deciding factor.

*Inadequate Funding* - After the 15th Finance Commission used the 2011 Census as a basis for its recommendation, concerns were raised about southern states losing funding and representation in parliament.

*Affecting the Reservations for SCs/ STs* - The scheduled delimitation and reallocation of seats may result in not only a loss of seats for southern states but also an increase in power for political parties with their base of support in the north. The exercise will also affect the division of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in each state (under Articles 330 and 332).

- **Way forward:** There is a need to balance democratic representation with federal considerations. Suggestions include capping the number of Lok Sabha seats while increasing the number of MLAs based on population, alongside empowering local bodies for grassroots democracy.

### GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

#### 3. Steps initiated to rejuvenate springs of NE

**Context:** Natural springs are lifelines for people living in hilly areas, but unfortunately, natural springs are drying up for various reasons. That is why, the Brahmaputra Board, in collaboration with the concerned State Governments of the Northeast states and technical experts, have launched a programme to rejuvenate the drying springs and revive the dried-up ones. Springs are natural discharges of groundwater, and they play a crucial role in the lives of people living in the hill areas. Even while implementing the Jal Jeevan Mission, spring water is used to supply water to households and when springs dry up, people will not get water. When the water of the springs gets dirty, people will get contaminated water.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** On the steps that need to be taken to rejuvenate the springs, the first step would be to ensure that the natural recharge points of the springs are protected, and no construction work is allowed in the area. Underground water levels should not be allowed to dwindle at any moment and even pits or retention walls can be constructed to prevent wastage of water.
- **Importance of springs in NE:** Contribution to rivers: The springs contribute a large share to the base flow of the large Himalayan rivers such as the Brahmaputra — more than glaciers, ice and snow. Meeting water needs: Moreover, the mountainous regions of the northeastern states are mostly dependent on these springs to meet their water needs.
- **Springs:** Springs are fed by aquifers, a system of rocks/rock material, which stores and transmits water to such springs. Different rocks show different properties that are characteristic of the process of the formation of the rock. The extent of mountains aquifers, their geometry and hydrological parameters exhibit large variation influencing spring behaviour. Recharge to the spring is governed by spring type, aquifer geometry and its properties. Geologically, springs are classified into five types.

*Depression Springs* - Depression springs are formed in unconfined aquifers when the topography intersects the water table, usually due to the surface stream incision. As the Springs are formed because of earth's gravitational pull they are named depression or gravity springs. These are usually found along the hillside and cliffs.

*Fracture Springs* - Fracture springs occur due to existence of permeable fracture zones in low permeability rocks. Movement of groundwater is mainly through fractures that constitute the porosity and permeability of aquifers. Springs are formed where these fractures intersect the ground surface.

*Karst Springs* - The term 'Karst' is derived from a Slavic word that means barren, stony ground. It is also the name of a region in Slovenia near the border with Italy that is well known for its sinkholes and springs. Geologists have adopted karst as the term for all such terrain. Cavities are formed in carbonates rocks (limestones, dolomites, etc.) due to dissolution of rock material by chemical reaction. Water moves through these cavities and openings to form a spring or a system of springs.

*Fault Springs* - Faulting may also give rise to conditions in which groundwater (at depth) under hydrostatic pressure (such as in confined aquifers) can move up along such fault openings to form a spring.

*Contact Springs* - Contact springs emerge at contacts where relatively permeable rocks overlie rocks of low permeability. Spring water emerges at such contacts.

- **Drying up of springs:** The drying of springs in Northeast India may be because of human-induced geological and land use changes, along with the impact of climate change, especially rainfall.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission & its implications:** In the Budget 2021-22, Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) was announced under the Ministry of Housing of Urban Affairs to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal- 6.
  - *Rejuvenation of water bodies* - To augment sustainable fresh water supply and create green spaces and sponge cities to reduce floods and enhance amenity value through an Urban Aquifer Management plan.

### GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

#### 4. India's tea, sugar exports raise sustainability concerns at home

**Context:** India is one of the world's largest agricultural product exporters. Indian agricultural export was valued at \$53.1 billion in 2022-23, up from \$8.7 billion in 2004-05, a six-fold increase in less than two decades. For an economically developing economy like India, exports play a significant role in strengthening the economy by increasing revenue, foreign exchange, and transactional options. But the rapid surge in exports poses multiple challenges to sustainability of the production, processing, and distribution systems of the respective commodities.

#### Export Data

- **About:** India's goods exports reached USD 41.68 billion in March 2024 compared to the FY 2022-23, despite a 0.67% decline from last year's tally, Imports, on the other hand, dropped by 6% to USD 57.3 billion during the same period. The goods trade deficit contracted to USD 15.6 billion, the lowest in 11 months.
- **Impact on Full-Year Figures (2023-24):** While goods exports averaged USD 35.4 billion in the first ten months, the last two months' spike lifted the full-year export figure to USD 437.1 billion. This performance is 3.1% below the record USD 451.1 billion achieved in the previous year.
- **FY 2023-24 Projections:** Despite persistent global challenges like the Ukraine war, and the West Asian crisis, overall exports are estimated to surpass last year's record.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** Agricultural commodity production in India lives in a unique context — high domestic consumption and now rapidly growing exports — that may benefit producers and consumers; but

increasing dependencies between different parts of the supply chain compromise ecological sustainability

- **Tea:** India is the world's fourth-largest tea exporter and second-largest producer, contributing 10% of global exports. The latter totalled 188.76 million kg in 2022, with a value of \$641.34 million, and an increase of 21.47% year on year in volume and 12.43% year on year in value. The total value of Indian tea exports for 2022-23 was \$793.78 million. Domestic consumption constitutes 80% of total production. The top export destinations of Indian tea are the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Iran, the U.S. and the U.K.
- **Sugar:** India is the world's second-largest sugar producer, with 34 million metric tonnes of production, which is about a fifth of the global production. India's sugar exports grew by 291% from \$1,177 million in FY 2013-14 to \$4,600 million in FY 2021-22 and 64.90% in 2021-22. The country exported sugar to 121 countries, according to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics. About 50 million farmers depend on sugar cane cultivation in India. An additional half million depend on sugar and allied factories. According to NITI Aayog, the industry has an annual turnover of ₹1 lakh crore.
- **Way forward:** There needs to be more focus on addressing environmental issues and safeguarding the health and safety of both workers and consumers to develop an inclusive agrarian economy that benefits both local communities and global markets.

