

NEWS TODAY

CIVIL UNREST AND MILITARY EXERCISES POSE HEIGHTENED RISKS TO MORE THAN 200 THREATENED SPECIES: IUCN

• International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released a report titled “Conflict and conservation” that focuses on the complex relationships between nature and armed conflict.

➢ Objective of the report is to help bring the importance of nature conservation into mainstream political and economic decision-making.

• Key highlights of the report

➢ Major threats posed by the conflict

 ⇒ Direct killing of wildlife (e.g., for food)

 ⇒ Degradation of ecosystems

 ⇒ Disruption of conservation efforts

➢ Armed conflicts were particularly prevalent in some of the world's more biodiverse regions.

➢ Conflicts were less frequent within the boundaries of natural reserves and other protected areas.

➢ Degradation of nature was associated with increased risk of conflict.

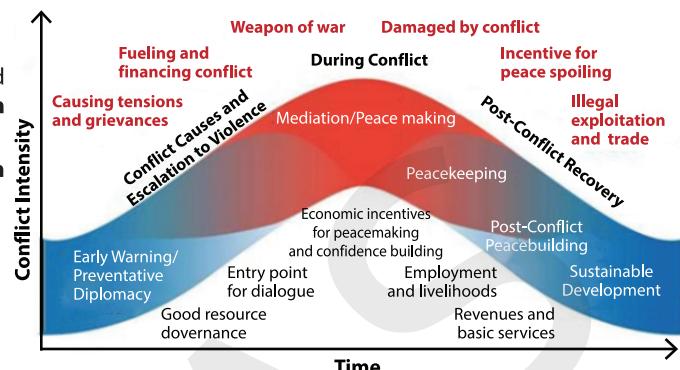
• Recommendations

➢ Conservation, restoration and sustainable management of natural resources can help reduce the pressures that drive conflict by improving the condition and productivity of the landscape.

➢ Establishing safeguards for staff in protected areas and other conservationists.

➢ Sanctions against those who commit environmental war.

➢ Coordinate law enforcement efforts across sectors and scales to strengthen prevention and mitigation.



GLOBAL METHANE ASSESSMENT: BENEFITS AND COSTS OF MITIGATING METHANE EMISSIONS REPORT RELEASED

• Report is released by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

• Key Findings of report:

➢ Human-caused methane emissions must be cut by 45% to prevent a rise in global warming by up to 0.3 degrees Celsius by 2045.

➢ More than half of global methane emissions come from human activities in three sectors- fossil fuels (35%), waste (20%) and agriculture (40%).

 ⇒ In the agricultural sector, livestock emissions from manure and enteric fermentation constituted were key contributors.

➢ Mitigation potential varied between countries and regions.

 ⇒ India and Europe had the greatest potential to reduce methane emissions from the waste management.

➢ Fossil fuel industry had the greatest potential for low-cost methane cuts. Up to 80% of measures in the oil and gas industry could be implemented at negative or low cost.

➢ It suggested that three behavioural changes i.e., reducing food waste and loss, improving livestock management and adopting healthy diets could reduce methane emissions by 65–80 million tonnes per year.

ABOUT METHANE:

○ It is a short-lived climate pollutant (SLCP) and a potent greenhouse gas ten of times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

○ It is responsible for 30% of global warming since the pre-industrial level.

○ It contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone, a dangerous air pollutant.

CLIMATE AND CLEAN AIR COALITION (CCAC):

○ It is voluntary partnership of governments, civil society and private sector to protect the climate and improve air quality through actions to reduce short-lived climate pollutants.

○ The initial focus is on methane, black carbon, and HFCs.

○ India joined the CCAC in 2019.

SEBI PROPOSES VARIOUS REFORMS TO PROMOTE START-UPS AND IMPROVING INDIAN SECURITIES MARKET

Step	Objective
Eased eligibility and listing criteria on the Innovators Growth Platform (IGP) as well as norms for company to delist or to migrate to the main board (i.e., National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Easier fund raising by start-ups. ➢ Introduced in 2019, IGP is aimed at providing technology-oriented start-ups or companies with early-stage investors a listing opportunity with a much more relaxed framework compared to the mainboard. ➢ The platform is yet to see any listing.
Changes to the disclosure requirements for listed companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aimed at mitigating the information asymmetry. ○ It will prevent companies from passing on sensitive information to select groups of investors, which puts small shareholders in a disadvantageous position. ○ Paves the way to strengthen the corporate governance framework of the Indian securities market.
Removed the list of restricted activities or sectors from definition of 'venture capital undertaking'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More flexibility to venture capital funds (VCF). ➢ VCF is a type of investment fund that invests in early-stage startup companies that offer a high return potential but also come with a high degree of risk.

• Eligibility Criteria for Start-up Recognition in India:

➢ An entity shall be considered a start-up up to 10 years from its date of incorporation.

➢ Its turnover for any of the financial years since its incorporation hasn't exceeded Rs 100 crore,

➢ Is involved in working towards innovation/ improvement of existing products, services and processes and should have the potential to generate employment etc.

• India is home to the world's third largest start-up ecosystem.

PANEL RECOMMENDS RELEASING PRISONERS IN VIEW OF 'THREATENING' SITUATION IN CAPITAL

- High-powered committee constituted to decongest jails to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has said that Right to Life under Article 21 unconditionally embraces even an undertrial/convict walled off from the society.
 - It laid down the criteria for release of around 4,000 under trial prisoners on interim bail for 90 days.
 - Last year in March when pandemic broke out, nearly 6,000 undertrial prisoners were released on bail to decongest Tihar jail.
- Overcrowded prisons in India**
 - In 2019, prisons were filled 118.5% of their capacity. 69% of all prisoners were undertrials.
 - Overcrowding results in restlessness, tension, inefficiency and general breakdown in the normal administration.
 - A large number of prisoners have already spent more time than they would have upon conviction.
- Suggestions**
 - Plea bargaining:** The accused agreeing to plead guilty before trial in exchange for a lenient sentence.
 - Open Prisons** with minimal supervision and prisoners are not locked up in prison cells.
 - Law Commission recommended to release under trials who have completed specific period of sentence.
 - District and Sessions Judges to visit jails regularly** as envisaged in Model Prison Manual 2016.

TECHNICAL GROUP REPORT ON SOCIAL STOCK EXCHANGE (SSEs)

- A technical group on SSEs constituted by Securities and Exchange Board of India has recommended that following entities will not be allowed to raise funds through SSEs:
 - Political and religious organisations, trade organisations, corporate foundations and infrastructure and housing companies (except affordable housing).
- Other key suggestions**
 - Non-profit organisation** and **for-profit enterprise** can list on the SSE provided they can demonstrate social intent and impact. Three parameters to establish primacy of social impact objective are:
 - Engaged in at least one of the 15 broad eligible activities (which include eradicating hunger, poverty; Promoting education, gender equality etc.)
 - Target underserved or less privileged population segments.
 - Should have at least 67% of its activities qualifying as eligible activities to the target population.
 - Capacity building fund for SSE** with a corpus of Rs 100 crore, to be housed under NABARD.
- SSE functions as a **regulated funding platform** to allow **social enterprises and voluntary organizations with a social purpose**, to raise funds.
- Key objective** of an SSE is to help **improve access to capital** for enterprises that seek to deliver a positive change in society.

ALSO IN NEWS

WhatsApp defers May 15 deadline on privacy policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In January 2021, WhatsApp had told its users that it had updated its privacy policy.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Under the policy, WhatsApp will collect metadata (data that provides information about other data) from their chats with business accounts and share them with other Facebook companies.WhatsApp users in Europe can opt-out of the new privacy policy owing to General Data Protection Regulation.Earlier, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had asked WhatsApp to withdraw the new privacy policy saying it violated the 2011 IT Rules.
National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">NFRA has prepared a provisional database of companies and auditors that come under its regulatory ambit.It is a regulatory body constituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in 2018.It was set up under Companies Act 2013 to oversee compliance with Accounting and Auditing Standards by companies that can be described as Public Interest Entities (PIEs). This group includes all listed companies, and large unlisted companies.
e-Sanjeevani OPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To help the civilian authorities in dealing with the rising cases of COVID-19, Ministry of Defence took initiative under which retired military doctors will provide online consultation on e-Sanjeevani OPD to all the citizens of the country.e-Sanjeevani OPD is a flagship telemedicine platform of the Government, developed by the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC), under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.It provides free consultations to Indian citizens in need.
Kabasura Kudineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a Siddha medicine which was subjected to clinical trials for studying efficacy in Covid-19 patients by Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS) under the Ministry of Ayush.It has been found useful in the treatment of mild to moderate covid-19 infection.Siddha System of Medicine is a traditional Tamil System of medicine. Its origin goes back to B.C 10,000 to B.C 4,000.
Sinopharm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is Chinese COVID-19 vaccine for which World Health Organization (WHO) has given the green light for use worldwide.<ul style="list-style-type: none">It estimates that Sinopharm is 79% effective against coronavirus.Earlier, WHO has also listed the Pfizer/BioNTech (USA), AstraZeneca (British-Swedish), Johnson & Johnson (USA), and Moderna vaccines (USA) for emergency use.
BlockTrack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Researchers at the IIT-Madras have developed a blockchain-based data exchange system- BlockTrack for a mobile phone-based application.BlockTrack aims to digitise healthcare information systems while ensuring the protection of sensitive personal information and medical records by decentralising the control and ownership of patient data.