

1. Baiga PVTG in Chhattisgarh Granted Habitat Rights

Introduction

The Baiga Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Chhattisgarh has received habitat rights, following the recognition of habitat rights of Kamar PVTG's earlier. This important development affects 19 Baiga villages, encompassing 6,483 people across various districts in the state.

Understanding Habitat Rights

Habitat rights entail recognition of a community's rights over their customary territory, encompassing various aspects such as socio-cultural practices, livelihood means, ecological knowledge, and more. These rights help preserve traditional livelihoods and ecological wisdom while coordinating government initiatives for PVTG communities.

Legal Basis for Habitat Rights

Habitat rights are granted under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. The Act defines "habitat" as the area where primitive tribal groups and forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes reside.

Protecting Habitat Rights

Habitat rights provide legal protection, allowing PVTGs to safeguard their habitat from detrimental developmental activities. Consent and consultation of the gram sabha are essential, and disputes can be escalated to the court if not resolved.

PVTG Classification

PVTGs are tribes characterized by technological backwardness, low literacy rates, stagnant or declining population growth, and subsistence-level economies. They often live in remote and challenging areas.

Recognition Across India

Out of 75 PVTGs in India, only three have received habitat rights, including Bharia in Madhya Pradesh; Kamar and now Baiga in Chhattisgarh.

PVTGs in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is home to seven PVTGs, with a combined population of 2.50 lakh, out of a total tribal population of 78.22 lakh. The central government has designated five tribes as PVTGs, while the state government recognized the other two.

Determining Habitat

The process of defining a habitat involves consultation with tribal leaders, considering their culture, traditions, and occupation. This is corroborated by various government departments to declare a habitat.

Initiating Habitat Rights in Chhattisgarh

The procedure for granting habitat rights in Chhattisgarh commenced with the Kamar tribes as a pilot project in December 2021. It is a gradual process, considering the introverted and reserved nature of PVTGs.

So far, 22 Para/Tola (hamlets) with around 2,500 people from the Kamar tribe and 6,483 people from the Baiga tribe have received habitat rights.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Indian Express

2. Hamas Disrupts Potential Israel-Saudi Agreement

Reason for Hamas Attack

Hamas, the Palestinian militant group, has attacked Israel, potentially to disrupt ongoing negotiations between Israel and Saudi Arabia mediated by the United States. The agreement could signify a significant shift in the Middle East political landscape, with potential consequences for the priority of an independent Palestinian state.



Understanding the Potential Deal

The deal being negotiated between Israel and Saudi Arabia, brokered by the US, primarily involves Saudi Arabia formally recognizing Israel for the first time since its establishment in 1948. The driving force behind this recognition is the Kingdom's quest for security guarantees from the US, particularly protection against Iran, its longstanding rival.

Benefits for Israel

Formalizing relations with Saudi Arabia holds several advantages for Israel, including economic benefits, legitimacy in the predominantly Muslim region, and enhanced political standing for its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

US Interests

The United States seeks to counter growing Chinese influence in the region and improve its relations with Saudi Arabia. Providing security guarantees to Saudi Arabia is seen as a way to prevent the Kingdom from aligning more closely with China.

Impact on Palestinians

The impact on the Palestinians remains uncertain. While Saudi Arabia has expressed commitment to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, there's the possibility that the deal might not fully address the Palestinian statehood issue.

US Timing and Iran Factor

The US aims to finalize the deal before the next presidential elections. Iran's continued nuclear program makes it imperative for the US to strengthen ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel, both of which view Iran as an adversary.

Hamas' Disruptive Role

The conflict between Israel and Hamas, along with Israel's counterattack, has caused delays in the deal's timeline and garnered sympathy for Palestinians across the Arab world. A critical statement from the Saudi Foreign Ministry expressing concerns about the situation and blaming Israel has complicated matters, leading to uncertainty about the agreement's completion.

Potential Iranian Involvement

Although there's no concrete evidence of Iran's direct involvement in the attacks, there's belief that Iran supported and possibly encouraged Hamas to launch the onslaught, indirectly contributing to the conflict's disruption.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Hindu & The Indian Express

3. The Geographical Indication Tag for Goan Cashews

Introduction

In recent news, Goan cashews have been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This recognition carries significant implications for the cashew industry in Goa. Let's explore how cashews became a major contributor to Goa's economy, the challenges faced by cashew producers, and how the GI tag can help.

Significance of the GI Tag

A GI tag signifies that a product originates from a specific geographical region and possesses unique characteristics and qualities. It serves as a product quality recognition in the international market. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant views this as a milestone for the state's cashew industry.

Differentiating Authentic Goan Cashews

Cashew manufacturers and processors hope that the GI tag will assist consumers in distinguishing genuine Goan cashews from those sourced from outside the state, which are often misleadingly marketed as 'Goan cashews.' This has been a concern as small traders from other states sell cheaper imported cashews labeled as Goan cashews, impacting the reputation of Goan cashews.

The Importance of the GI Tag

The GI tag could enhance the export potential of Goan cashews. However, strict action against illegal marketing practices is essential to protect the value of the GI tag.

Historical Significance of Cashews in Goa

Cashew was introduced to Goa by the Portuguese in the 16th century and became an integral part of the state's identity. It transitioned from a crop for afforestation and soil conservation to an economic asset. Goan prisoners in Portuguese territory discovered the edible value of cashew nuts during Goa's freedom movement.

Evolution of Cashew Production

The cashew industry in Goa gradually expanded, moving from cottage industry status to large-scale production. Cashew kernels were exported to countries like the USA, facilitating foreign trade.

Foreign Investment and Export

Foreign investors established factories in Goa due to lower import duties and favorable conditions, significantly contributing to the region's industrial production. By 1961, the cashew processing industry accounted for a substantial portion of industrial output in Goa and was a major export.

Summary

In summary, the GI tag for Goan cashews aims to protect the authenticity of these products and differentiate them from cheaper imitations in the market, ultimately benefiting the cashew industry in Goa.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: The Indian Express

4. India ranks 111 out of 125 countries in hunger index

India's performance

India ranks 111 out of a total of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023. India's ranking is based on a GHI score of 28.7 on a 100-point scale, where 0 is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. This categorises India's severity of hunger as "serious". Afghanistan, Haiti and 12 sub-Saharan countries performed worse than India on the GHI.

The Union government has contested India's performance for the third year in a row, citing flawed methodology.

What is Global Hunger Index?

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) measures and tracks hunger at global, regional and national level. The index is calculated annually, and the report is issued in October each year. Besides presenting GHI scores, each year the GHI report includes an essay addressing one particular aspect of hunger.

GHI was created in 2006 by the US-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and German NGO Welthungerhilfe. In 2007, the Ireland based NGO Concern Worldwide also became a co-publisher. However, in 2018, IFPRI gave up its involvement and the GHI became a joint project of Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide.

GHI Scores

The Global Hunger Index measures hunger on a 100-point scale, with 0 being the best score (no hunger) and 100 being the worst, although neither of these extremes is reached in practice. The severity of hunger associated with the range of possible GHI scores is as follows:

Levels	Description	Numerical Value
Low hunger	Value less than 10	≤ 9.9
Moderate hunger	Value from 10, but less than 20	10.0–19.9
Serious hunger	Value from 20, but less than 35	20.0–34.9
Alarming hunger	Value from 35, but less than 50	35.0–49.9
Extremely alarming hunger	Value from 50 and above	≥ 50.0

Components of GHI

For each country in the list, the GHI looks at four indicators:

1. Undernourishment: Undernourishment reflects inadequate food availability. It is calculated by the share of the population whose calorie intake is insufficient.
2. Child Wasting: Child wasting reflects acute undernutrition. It is calculated by the share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height.
3. Child Stunting: Child stunting reflects chronic undernutrition. It is calculated by the share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age.
4. Child Mortality: Child mortality reflects both inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environment. It is calculated by the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Each country's data on the above four indicators is arranged on a 100-point scale. Thereafter, a final score is calculated after giving 33.33% weight each to components 1 and 4 (Undernourishment and Child Mortality) and giving 16.66% weight each to components 2 and 3 (Child Wasting and Child Stunting).

Countries with score of less than or equal to 9.9 are put under "low" hunger category; those with score between 10 and 19.9 are put under "moderate" hunger category; those with score between 20 and 34.9 are put under "serious" hunger category; those with score between 35 and 49.9 are put under "alarming" hunger category and those with score 50 and above are put under "extremely alarming" category.

GHI is a comprehensive measure of Hunger

Hunger is commonly understood in terms of food deprivation and is calculated based on the level of calorie intake. This is a very narrow definition of hunger.

GHI takes into account a very broad definition of hunger. It takes into account four key parameters. These parameters capture multiple dimensions of hunger such as not just inadequacy of calorie intake but also deficiency of micronutrients, providing a far more comprehensive measure of hunger. The GHI score is based on a formula which combines four indicators that together capture the multi-dimensional nature of hunger, including under-nourishment, child stunting, child wasting, and child mortality.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: The Hindu