

To receive Daily news juice pdf on your WhatsApp, send name and city through WhatsApp on 75979-00000.

## **1. States identify thousands of hectares of 'degraded' forest land to be offered for earning green credits**

### **What is Green Credit Programme?**

Few weeks ago, Union Environment Ministry announced the rules for its Green Credit Programme (GCP).

Under the scheme, registered and approved entities can pay to finance afforestation projects in specific tracts of degraded forest and wasteland. The actual afforestation will be carried out by State forest departments.

Two years after planting — and following an evaluation by the International Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), an autonomous body of the Environment Ministry — each planted tree could be worth one 'green credit'.

### **Offset obligations**

These green credits can then be used by companies which have diverted forest land for non-forest purposes and razed thousands of trees to offset some of their obligations under India's compensatory afforestation laws.

These laws oblige any industry or institution that is permitted to raze forest and use that land for non-forestry purposes, to provide an equivalent amount of non-forest land to forest authorities and pay them to afforest that land.

The condition is that such land be as close as possible to the forest tracts which have been razed. However, if such land is unavailable, twice the amount of 'degraded' forest land may also be made available for compensatory afforestation.

Additionally, companies must also compensate for the value of the forest ecosystem, called the 'net present value'.

### **Challenges in fulfilling offset obligations**

In several States including Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh where large tracts have been historically diverted for mining, getting contiguous non-forest land for compensatory afforestation is challenging.

In fact, the Compensatory Afforestation Fund, whose corpus comes from the environmental compensation money paid by companies and which is to be used by States for afforestation, has thousands of crores of unspent money, simply because suitable land for regenerating forests, revenue or degraded, is unavailable.

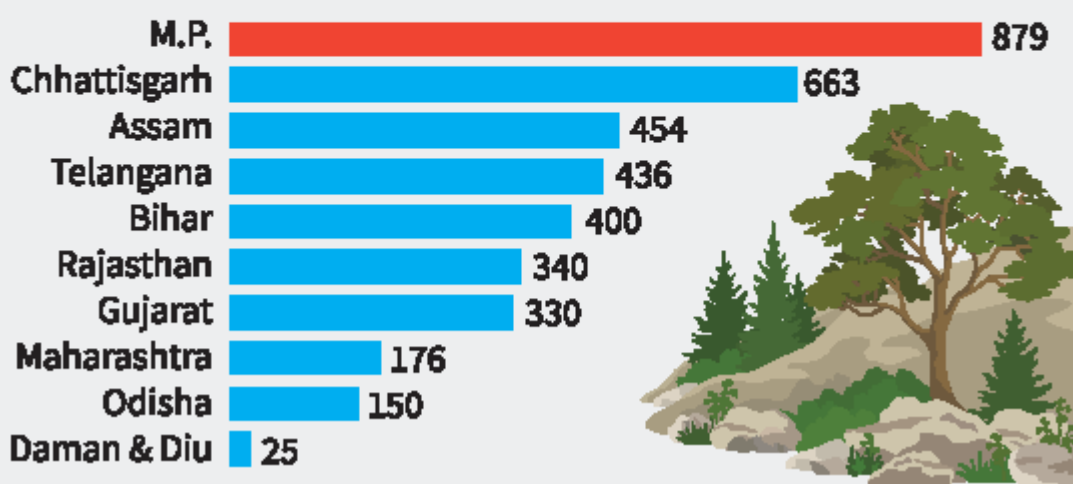
### Land identification by States

10 States have identified parcels of degraded forest land, totalling about 3,853 hectares, that will be available for individuals, groups, public and private sector units to earn — and potentially trade — green credits.

Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh alone account for up to 40% of the forest land made available.

## Greening degraded lands

The chart shows the area (in hectares) of degraded forest land available for afforestation



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: Indian Express

## 2. CAA Rules allow dual citizenship: pleas in SC

### Why in News?

The Rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act do not require foreign applicants to effectively renounce the citizenship of their native country, creating a possibility for dual citizenship which is directly violative of the Citizenship Act, petitioners have argued in the Supreme Court.

Written submissions filed by the petitioners ahead of the April 9 hearing of their plea to stay the CAA Rules said that Section 9 of the Citizenship Act of 1955 and Article 9 of the Constitution both clearly and explicitly prohibit the acquisition of dual citizenship.

### Other questions raised

1. The petitioners noted that a presumption of religious persecution is inherent in the CAA. The Union government views the law as a succour for refugees who fled persecution from the target countries with state religions.

But only a “selected group” of such migrants are eligible for the benefits of CAA, the petitioners said. Excluded refugee groups continue to remain illegal migrants, barred from seeking Indian citizenship under any mode.

2. “Even while including Pakistan in the list of countries, it fails to extend protection to [the] Ahmadiyya community which is one of the most persecuted groups in Pakistan. It similarly excludes rationalists, atheists and agnostic persons who do not profess any religion,” the petitioners submitted.

3. Refugees from Myanmar are excluded, though the country was a part of British India till 1935 and though the International Court of Justice had found that genocide was perpetrated there against Muslim Rohingya refugees who are presently, due to persecution, living in India under abject conditions under threat of deportation. Similarly, the CAA and its Rules exclude Sri Lanka.

4. While the Statement of Objects and Reasons of CAA mentions ‘Partition’ and ‘undivided India’ as the reason for the selection of non-Muslims as a protected class of refugees, the CAA included Afghanistan which was not a part of undivided India.

## Fundamental question

**The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the pleas against the CAA and related rules on April 9**

■ **Petitioners say rules overlook the fact that effective renunciation of citizenship is a prerequisite for citizenship in cases where the nationality of another country is clearly**

**attributable to the applicant**

■ **They ask why only a selected group of migrants are eligible**

■ **They see ‘fundamental flaw’ in claim that CAA and its rules will help persecuted minorities**



Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Polity

Source: The Hindu

**3. What is the Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules Order?**

### **Why in News?**

To incentivise India's solar module manufacturing industry, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has brought into effect from April 1 an executive order, The Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (Requirements for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2019.

### **What is the context of the executive order?**

This order was first issued by the MNRE in 2019 and requires makers of solar modules to voluntarily submit to an inspection of their manufacturing facilities by the National Institute of Solar Energy, a Ministry-affiliated body. Being on the list as an 'approved' manufacturing facility certifies a company as a legitimate manufacturer of solar panels and not a mere importer or assembler. This became necessary because India's solar industry, its claim of indigenously notwithstanding, is heavily reliant on imports of cheaper and comparable-quality solar modules from China.

Modules are multiple solar panels joined together. Solar panels are an assembly of solar cells. Despite being among the top manufacturers in the world and a commitment to scale solar installation four-fold by 2030, local production of these cells and modules is much below demand. India also has limited capacity to make the raw material of a cell — ingots, wafers — and is dependent on imported cells.

### **Why is India reliant on imports?**

The creation of such a list was also aimed at restricting imports from China, which controls nearly 80% of the global supply, with the downturn in diplomatic relations between the countries also being a factor. India has ambitious plans of sourcing about 500 GW, nearly half its requirement of electricity, from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. This would mean at least 280 GW from solar power by that year or at least 40 GW of solar capacity being annually added until 2030. In the last five years, this has barely crossed 13 GW though the government has claimed that COVID-19 affected this trajectory. The difficulty is that meeting the targets require many more solar panels and component cells than India's domestic industry can supply.

### **If the list is voluntary why pay to be on it?**

The major advantage of being on the list is eligibility to compete for tenders issued by the government for its flagship solar energy programmes. This includes among others the recently announced PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The scheme envisages subsidising rooftop solar installations for nearly one crore households in the country involving an estimated subsidy of ₹75,000 crore. However, only domestic manufacturers, certified as part of the Approved Models and Manufacturers (AMM) list, would be eligible. There is also another scheme called the PM KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyaan) that aims to provide solar pumpsets and rural electrification. For manufacturers to be eligible to provide components under this scheme, they have to be certified as genuine local manufacturers.

The government also has a ₹24,000 crore scheme, called the Production Linked Incentive Scheme, that is targetted at incentivising domestic manufacture of solar panels and their components. Eligibility for this scheme too requires one to be a bona fide local manufacturer. So far, 14 major companies have become eligible for incentives to manufacture solar modules

worth 48 GW. However, these restrictions apply only to fresh projects and plants and facilities commissioned before March 2024 can rely on imported modules.

### **Is India's manufacturing capacity adequate?**

Last year was a fortunate year for Indians in the solar business. China which supplies over 80% of solar components globally saw a curb in orders from the U.S. on the grounds that the former relied on "forced labour" by Uiyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang province. Europe too scaled back imports from China and a beneficiary of this was India which exported nearly \$1 billion worth of modules in six months of 2023-24. However, reports suggest that the U.S. might roll back duties on China and this could again mean uncertainty for the future of Indian exports. It is estimated that nearly half of India's solar modules are imported from China and the demand-supply mismatch is expected to persist. The government, however, has claimed that beginning this year, there will be a significant rise in manufacturing capacity. While the list of certified manufacturers on the AMM list has grown to 82 according to the MNRE, there is yet no list of such manufacturers of solar cells, implying that India is still far away from achieving a comfortable degree of self-reliance.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: The Hindu