

## 1. Zo People

### Why now?

Violent clashes broke out in Churachandpur last week between individuals belonging to the Zomi community on one side, and those belonging to the Hmar and Kuki communities on the other. All three communities fall under the larger Zo umbrella.



### Who are the Zo people?

The Zo people are an ethnolinguistic group who speak the Kuki-Chin languages. Although there is no universally accepted origin story, the scholarly consensus is that the Zo people settled in what is today Myanmar thousands of years ago, travelling from China via Tibet.

Constant feuds among various tribal clans drove many westward to modern-day Mizoram and parts of Manipur in the 17th century. There they settled in new villages, but remained socially and emotionally enmeshed with the Chin tribes of Myanmar.

### Present status

Today, a majority of the Zo population lives in "Manipur and Mizoram in Northeast India, Bangladesh, and Chin State of Myanmar".

The Zo people comprise various sub-tribes and clans such as the Chin, Kuki, Mizo, Lushei, Zomi, Paitei, Hmar, Ralte, Pawi, Lai, Mara, Gangte, Thadou, etc.

### What are the dynamics between various Zo tribes?

At the heart of the clash last week is a long power struggle over the representation of various small tribes, with their unique identity, that are clubbed together as the Zo. Notably, tribes identifying as Zomi reject the term Kuki, pointing to its colonial origin, and oppose "assimilation" under Kuki identity.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express

## 2. How India's bioeconomy is faring, the road ahead

### Recent Report

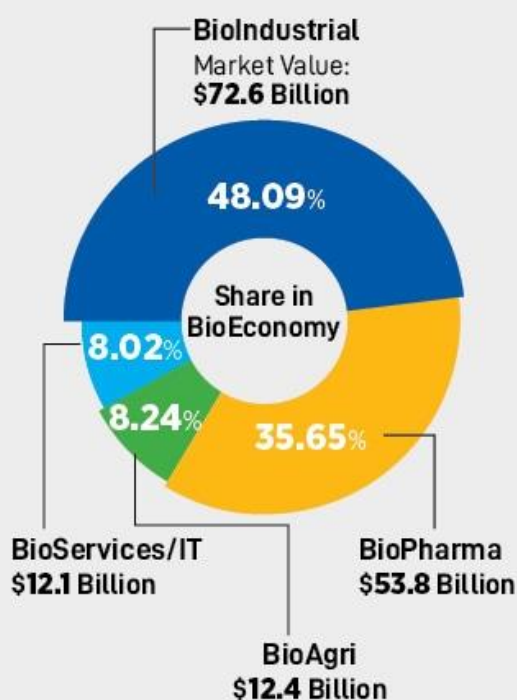
A new government report has pegged the value of India's bioeconomy in 2024 at more than \$165 billion, accounting for over 4.2% of the country's GDP.

The India BioEconomy Report, released by the Department of Biotechnology, says there is ample opportunity for this sector to grow to about \$300 billion by 2030, and to \$1 trillion by 2047.

### Bioeconomy Meaning

Bioeconomy refers to the industrial use of biological resources (plants, animals, and microorganisms), and the replication of natural biological processes in the production of goods and services.

### Key contributors to India's bioeconomy



This is not new in itself. Biological resources and natural processes have been integral to the healthcare, pharmaceutical, and agriculture sectors for a long time. But their use is now expanding to many other areas. Bioresources like plants or microorganisms are renewable, relatively cheap, and locally available, while natural processes are more sustainable and eco-friendly.

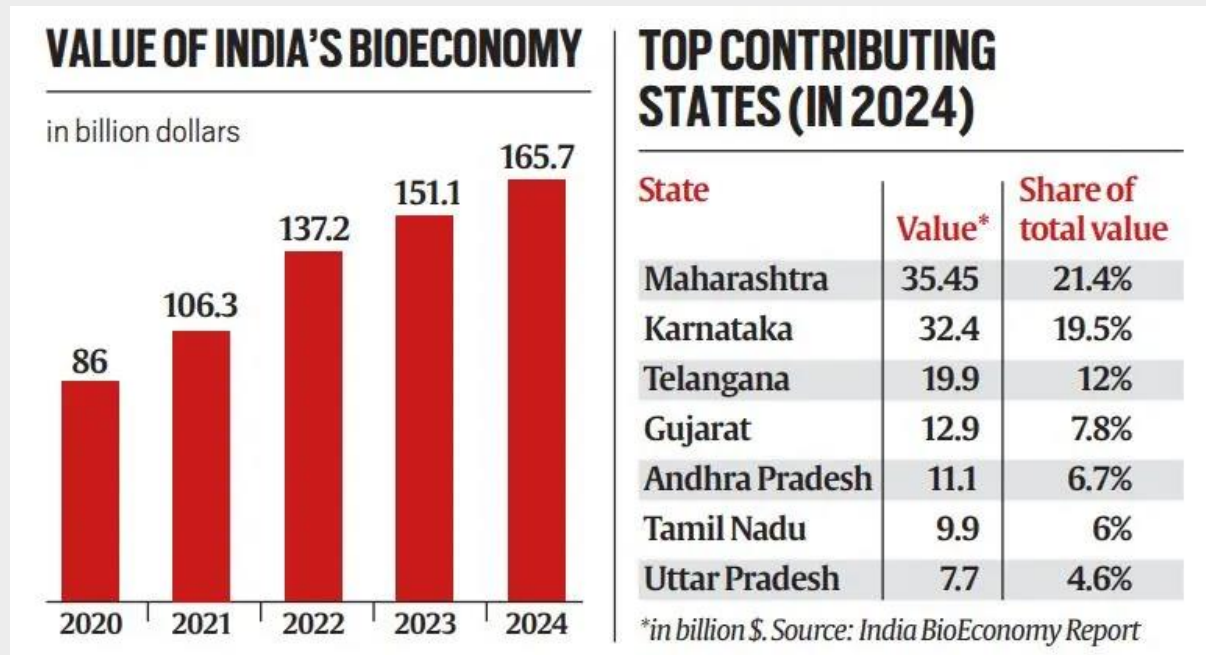
### Example

A prime example of this is the growing use of ethanol, which is produced through fermentation of crops like sugarcane or corn by microorganisms, as a biological alternative to fuels traditionally derived from hydrocarbons. Modern biology offers sustainable alternatives to clothes, plastics, construction materials, medicines, and a wide variety of chemicals.

### Growing Bioeconomy

The report shows that the value of India's bioeconomy nearly doubled in the last five years, from around \$86 billion in 2020 to \$165 billion in 2024.

The report showed that only five states — Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh — accounted for more than two-thirds of the value generated in the bioeconomy. The entire eastern and northeastern region generated less than 6% of the total value.



While the 4.2% share in the overall GDP was comparable to figures in the United States and China, the bioeconomy of countries like Spain and Italy accounts for more than 20% of their GDP.

### BioE3 push

Realising the potential for greater use of biotechnology in economic processes, the government in 2024 unveiled the BioE3 policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment).

Its main objective is to establish India as a global hub for bio-manufacturing, and a major centre for research and development in biotechnology.

The report also recommends the creation of a National BioEconomy Mission, and single-window regulatory mechanisms for biotech innovations.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: PIB

### 3. Why activists are worried about Section 44(3) of new data protection law

#### Section 44(3) of DPDP Act

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) received the President's assent on August 11, 2023, and will come into force after the Rules under the Act are notified. In January, Vaishnaw's ministry invited feedback and comments on the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025. The window for comments on the draft Rules closed on February 18.



The DPDP Act is intended to "provide for the processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognises both the right of individuals to protect their personal data and the need to process such personal data for lawful purposes".

Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act mentions a change that will be made in Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act. This change, RTI activists say, will greatly reduce the amount of information that government agencies are obligated to disclose under the 2005 Act.

### **Section 8(1)(j) of RTI Act**

This section states: "...There shall be no obligation to give any citizen...information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer or the appellate authority...is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information."

Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act shortens this clause in the RTI Act to broaden the scope for denying information. It says: "In section 8 of the Right to Information Act, 2005, in sub-section (1), for clause (j), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: — "(j) information which relates to personal information".

### **Why the change matters**

Activists point out that a lot of personal information about public servants such as their assets and liabilities are published because it is seen to serve a public purpose. The blanket exemption now granted to all "information which relates to personal information" could be used to deny the public their right to know, they say.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Indian Diaspora

Source: The Hindu

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