



1. Landfill Fire

Topic: Disaster Management



In News: The Kochi landfill site around Brahmapuram that caught fire recently was a stark reminder that Indian cities need to be prepared for more such incidents as summer approaches.

More on the Topic

- India's municipalities have been **collecting more than 95% of the waste generated in cities but the efficiency of waste-processing is 30-40% at best.** Indian municipal solid waste consists of about 60% biodegradable material, 25% non-biodegradable material and 15% inert materials, like silt and stone.
- Municipalities are expected to process the wet and dry waste separately and to have the recovered by-products recycled.
- Unfortunately, **the rate of processing in India's cities is far lower** than the rate of waste generation, so unprocessed waste remains in open landfills for long periods.
- **This openly disposed waste includes flammable material** like low-quality plastics, which have a relatively higher calorific value of about 2,500-3,000 kcal/kg (compared to around 8,000 kcal/kg for coal), and rags and clothes.
- In summer, **the biodegradable fraction composts much faster, increasing the temperature of the heap to beyond 70-80° C.**
- Higher temperature + flammable material = a chance for the landfill to catch fire. Some fires have been known to go on for months.

Way Ahead:

- There are two possible permanent solutions to manage landfill fires.



- **One: Completely cap the material using soil and close landfills in a scientific manner.** This solution is unsuitable in the Indian context as the land can't be used again for other purposes.
- Closed landfills have specific standard operating procedures, including managing the methane emissions.
- **Two: Clear the piles of waste through bioremediation** – i.e. excavate old waste and use automated sieving machines to segregate the flammable refuse-derived fuel (RDF), such as plastics, rags, clothes, etc., from biodegradable material.
- The recovered RDF can be sent to cement kilns as fuel, while the bio-soil can be distributed to farmers to enrich soil. The inert fraction will have to be landfilled.

Source: Indian Express

2. Too-Big-To-Fail' banks

Topic: Economy

TOO BIG TO FAIL

	Bucket	Banks	Additional common equity tier I need as % of RWAs*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) classified into five grades (buckets) • RBI to announce list every August starting this year 	5	—	1
	4	—	0.8
	3	SBI	0.6
	2	—	0.4
	1	ICICI	0.2

- Banks will have to fulfil extra capital requirement norms (common equity tier I capital)

- Banks must meet the extra norms in three years by April 1, 2019

- Common equity tier I capital usually comprises a bank's equity capital, retained earnings and share premium

***RWAs: Risk weighted assets**

In News: The failure of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank in the US raises questions on the safety of depositors' wealth everywhere.



More on the Topic:

- India remained a safe haven during the global financial crisis triggered by the collapse of investment bank Lehman Brothers in 2008, with domestic banks, backed by sound regulatory practices, showing strength and resilience.
- A decade and a half on, Indian banks remained unaffected by the failure of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and Signature Bank in the US recently, despite the global interconnectedness in the financial sector.
- Also, RBI has classified SBI, ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank as D-SIBs — these banks have to earmark additional capital and provisions to safeguard their operations.

About the resilience of Indian banks:

- A reason why an SVB-like failure is unlikely in India is that **domestic banks have a different balance sheet structure.**
- **Household savings constitute a major part of bank deposits in India**, this is different from the US, where a large portion of bank deposits are from corporates.
- A large chunk of Indian deposits is with **public sector banks, and most of the rest is with very strong private sector lenders** such as HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and Axis Bank.

About Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs):

- RBI has classified SBI, ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank as D-SIBs. The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016, and became fully effective from April 1, 2019.
- **The additional CET1 requirement was in addition to the capital conservation buffer.**
- It means that **these banks have to earmark additional capital and provisions to safeguard their operations.**
- Under the D-SIB framework announced by RBI on July 2014, the central bank was required, from 2015, **to disclose the names of banks designated as D-SIBs, and to place them in appropriate buckets** depending upon their Systemic Importance Scores (SISs).
- Depending on the bucket in which a D-SIB is placed, an additional common equity requirement is applicable to it.

How does RBI select D-SIBs?

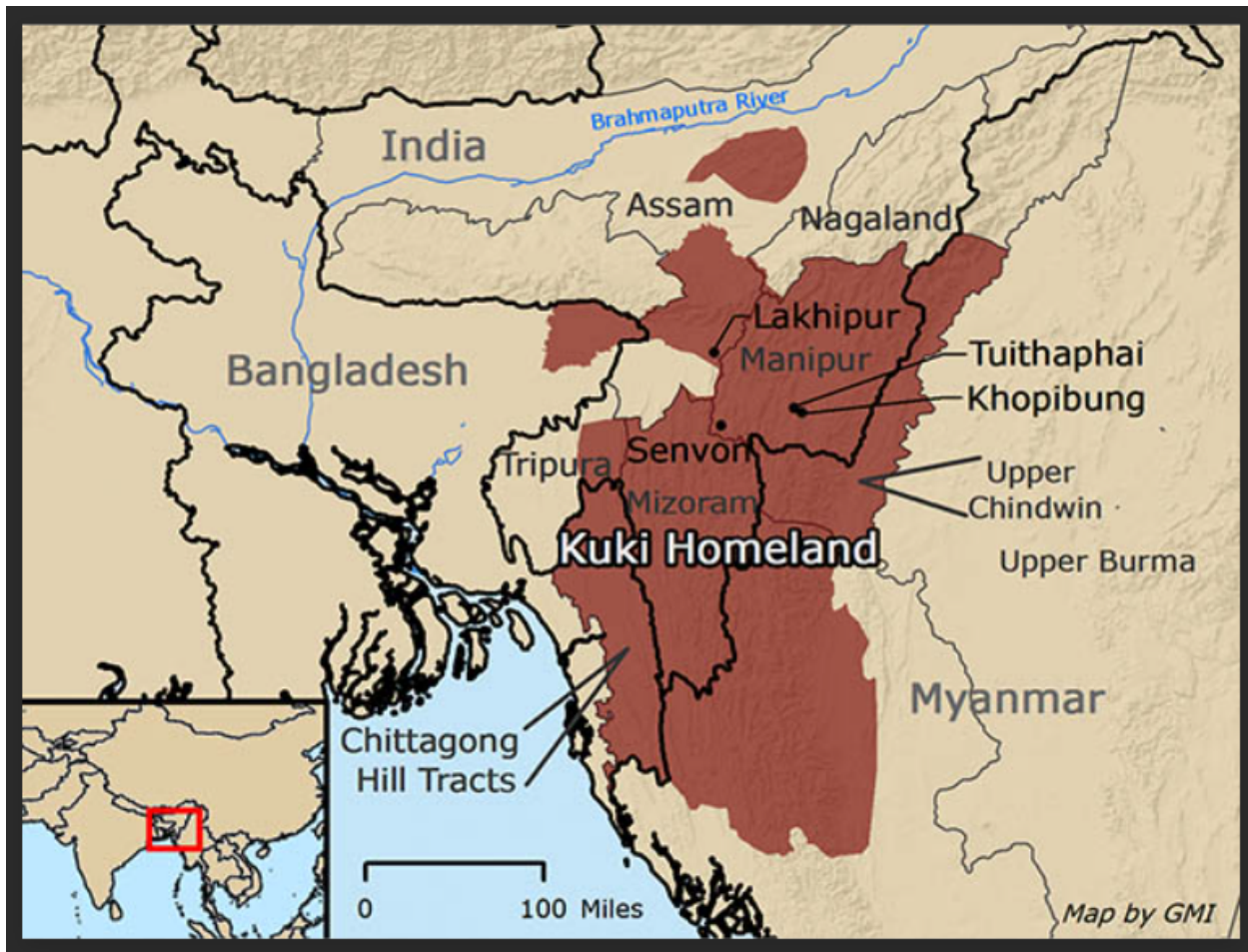
- The RBI follows a two-step process to assess the systemic importance of banks.
- **First, a sample of banks to be assessed for their systemic importance is decided.**
- Banks are selected for computation of systemic importance based on an analysis of their **size (based on Basel-III Leverage Ratio Exposure Measure) as a percentage of GDP.** Banks having a size beyond 2% of GDP will be selected in the sample.
- Once the sample of banks is selected, a detailed study to compute their systemic importance is initiated.
- Based on a range of indicators, **a composite score of systemic importance is computed for each bank.** Banks that have a systemic importance above a certain threshold are designated as D-SIBs.

- Next, the D-SIBs are segregated into buckets based on their systemic importance scores, and subjected to a graded loss absorbency capital surcharge, depending on the buckets in which they are placed.
- A D-SIB in the lower bucket will attract a lower capital charge, and a D-SIB in the higher bucket will attract a higher capital charge.

Source: Down to Earth

3. Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement

Topic: Internal Security



In News: Manipur government has decided to withdraw from the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with two hill-based tribal militant groups, alleging they were “influencing agitation among forest encroachers”.

More on the Topic:



- While the Naga movement is the country's longest-running insurgency, underground Kuki groups, too, have **fought the Indian government for an 'independent Kuki homeland', spread across Manipur.**
- The Kuki insurgency gained momentum after **ethnic clashes with the Nagas of Manipur in the early 1990s**, with the Kuki arming themselves against Naga aggression.
- While the two tribes have shared a hostile relationship since colonial times, things came to a head in the 1990s when the Naga-Kuki clashes took place.
- **Land that the Kukis claim to be their "homeland" in the Manipur hills overlaps with the imagined Naga homeland of Greater Nagaland or Nagalim.**

About the Suspension of Operations pact:

- There are nearly 30 Kuki insurgent groups in Manipur, of which 25 are under tripartite Suspension of Operations (SoO) with the Government of India and the state.
- As many as 17 are under the umbrella group Kuki National Organisation (KNO), and eight are under the United People's Front (UPF).
- The SoO pact was signed in August, 2008, with the primary objective of **initiating political dialogue.** Talks are ongoing under former special secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), as the interlocutor.
- The Kuki outfits who were **initially demanding a separate Kuki state have come down to a 'Kukiland territorial council'**, which would have financial and administrative powers independent of the Manipur Assembly and government.

The terms of the SoO pact?

- While the period of the Suspension of Operation agreement is one year, it is extendable according to the progress of its implementation.
- To oversee the effective implementation of the SoO pact, **a committee called the Joint Monitoring Group (JMG), with representatives from all the signatories, has been formed.**
- The important terms under the pact are that security forces, including state and central forces, are not to launch any operations, nor can the underground groups.
- The signatories of UPF and KNO shall **abide by the Constitution of India, the laws of the land and the territorial integrity of Manipur.** They are prohibited from committing all kinds of atrocities, extortion, among others.
- The militant cadres are to be **confined in designated camps identified by the Government. Arms are deposited in a safe room** under a double-locking system. The groups are given arms only to guard their camps and protect their leaders.
- As a rehabilitation package, **the UG cadres living in the designated camps are given a monthly stipend** of Rs 5000. Financial assistance is also being provided to maintain the designated camps.

What Lies Ahead:

- There are chances that the **outfits may restart their operations.**
- The revocation of the SoO agreement has now **raised questions about the government's intent to resolve the issue earliest.**



- Central Government is **expected to respond the scenario soon.**

Source: Hindu

4. Military Exercises

Topic: International Relations

In News: There are number of Military exercises concluded recently.

More on the Topic:

- **Bold Kurukshetra:**
- The Singapore Army and Indian Army participated in the 13th edition of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra, a bilateral armour exercise at Jodhpur Military Station, India.
- Exercise Bold Kurukshetra is conducted under the ambit of the bilateral arrangement for the joint Army Training and exercises between the Singapore Army and the Indian Army.
- **Exercise La Perouse – 2023:**
- The exercise was conducted in the Indian Ocean Region, and was aimed at enhancing maritime domain awareness and optimising maritime coordination amongst the participating navies in the Indo-Pacific Region.
- In addition to Indian Naval ships, the exercise witnessed participation of the Royal Australian Navy, French Navy, Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force along with the UK Navy and United States Navy.
- **Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX):**
- It is a naval exercise conducted with multiple friendly countries like Japan, France etc
- **Exercise Sea Dragon 23:**
- It is a coordinated multi-lateral Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise with participation of Navy from India, US, Japan, Canada and Republic of Korea.

Source: PIB

5. Zoji La Pass

Topic: Geography



In News: Border Roads Organisation (BRO) reopened Zoji La on Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway in record 68 days.

More on the Topic:

- Zoji La used to normally close by October or November every year and reopen only by April-May, resulting in almost six-month closure time.
- With the renewed focus on infrastructural development and augmentation of connectivity to the northern borders in the recent years, there has been a strategic requirement of minimising the closure time of Zoji La during winters.
- Zoji La Pass is a high mountain pass at an elevation of 11,578 ft above sea level, located in **Kargil district of Ladakh**.
- It is the **strategic link connecting Ladakh to Srinagar** and the rest of India.

Source: Business Standard



6. Mission Sahbhagita

Topic: Government Schemes



In News: Mission Sahbhagita is established for participatory conservation and sustainable use of Wetlands.

More on the Topic:

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) with a mission of healthy and effectively managed network of 75 wetlands of national and international significance.
- It strives to enable a society ownership approach with communities leading at the forefront.

Source: Business Standard

7. Eurasian Otter

Topic: Environment and Ecology





In News: Presence of Eurasian otter proves that stretches of Neeru river stream still unpolluted.

More on the Topic:

- The Eurasian otter classified as '**near threatened**' on the **IUCN Red List** is regarded as a flagship species and indicator of high-quality aquatic habitats, its presence is encouraging for the health of the Neeru stream.
- Otters are mammals of the family Mustelidae consisting of 13 species. They are found in every continent except Australia and Antarctica.
- The Eurasian otter covers the largest range of any Palearctic mammal.
- The species is persecuted as a pest in countries such as India, China and Nepal, and its populations have declined due to **hunting for food and pelt, habitat loss, pollution and climate change.**

Source: Business Standard
