



## UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 01-01-2023

### Exercise Desert Cyclone

The Joint Military Exercise 'Desert Cyclone 2024' between India and UAE will be held from January 2 to January 15 in Rajasthan.

#### About Exercise 'Desert Cyclone':

It is the inaugural edition of joint military exercise "Desert Cyclone 2024" **between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).**

The exercise aims to enhance interoperability by learning & sharing best practices in Urban Operations.

This exercise is marking a significant milestone in the strategic partnership.

#### Key facts about India and UAE relations

India and the UAE established diplomatic relations in 1972 and UAE opened its Embassy in Delhi in 1972 whereas India opened its Embassy in Abu Dhabi in 1973.

The first-ever India-UAE Joint Air Forces exercise took place in September 2008 at the Al-Dhafra base in Abu Dhabi.

India has also been a regular participant at the biennial International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) in Abu Dhabi.

Earlier this year, two ships of the Indian Navy, **INS Visakhapatnam**, and **INS Trikand** participated in bilateral exercise 'Zayed Talwar' with the UAE to enhance interoperability and synergy between the two navies.

## GREEN DEPOSITS



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has clarified its stance on green funds, stating that banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) do not need to raise green funds. However, if they choose to do so, they must adhere to the prescribed framework.

- Green deposits are a type of financial product that allows investors to support environmentally friendly projects and initiatives. **They are similar to regular deposits, except that the bank or financial institution guarantees that the funds will be used for green purposes**, such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, or waste management.
- Green deposits are attractive for investors who want to align their money with their values and contribute to the fight against climate change. They also offer competitive interest rates and tax benefits in some countries.
- **The RBI had previously issued detailed guidelines in April 2023 for the acceptance of "green deposits" by banks and NBFCs.** These funds are intended to finance activities such as renewable energy, green transport, and green buildings.

### Key points from the RBI's clarification

**Green Deposit Framework:** The framework for the acceptance of green deposits came into effect from June 1, 2023.

**Interest Payments:** RBI-regulated entities (REs) are required to pay interest on green deposits to customers as per agreed terms and conditions, irrespective of the allocation or utilization of proceeds.

**Premature Withdrawal:** There is no restriction on the premature withdrawal of green deposits. However, REs must adhere to existing guidelines.

**Impact of Withdrawals:** Premature withdrawals will not impact activities or projects undertaken using the proceeds of green deposits.

**Temporary Parking of Proceeds:** REs can temporarily park proceeds of green deposits, pending allocation towards green activities or projects, in liquid instruments with a maximum maturity of up to one year.

**Foreign Banks:** Foreign banks can have a common global policy on green deposits, but they must comply with the framework for green deposits raised in India after June 1, 2023.

**Currency Denomination:** Green deposits can only be denominated in Indian rupees if they are raised in India after June 1, 2023.

## NATIONAL TRANSIT PASS SYSTEM



**The National Transit Pass System (NTPS), branded as 'One Nation-One Pass,'** was recently launched by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, and Labour and Employment. This initiative aims to



facilitate the seamless transit of **timber, bamboo, and various forest produce across India.**

### **About National Transit Pass System (NTPS)**

The National Transit Pass System (NTPS) is a digital platform aimed at simplifying the process of obtaining transit permits for timber, bamboo, and other minor forest produce.

### **Key Features**

**Role and Workflow-Based Application:** NTPS operates on roles and workflows, accessible as a desktop web portal and mobile application.

**Online Registration and Application Submission:** Users can register and submit applications for Transit Permits (TP) or No Objection Certificates (NOC) via the web portal and mobile app.

**Species Classification:** Online application for species grown on private lands that are either exempted or not exempted from the transit pass regime.

**Online Generation of Permits:** Transit Permits or NOCs are generated online based on the species category.

**E-Payment System:** Payment for permits can be made online through the mobile app or web portal before downloading the Transit Permit.

### **Key Benefits**

**Expedited Issuance of Permits:** Streamlines the process of obtaining permits for timber, bamboo, and other minor forest produce without physically visiting forest offices.

**Digital Replacement of Manual System:** Replaces the traditional paper-based transit system with an efficient online process.

**Nationwide Permit:** Offers a single permit valid across India for the transit of timber, bamboo, and other minor forest produce, contributing to ease of doing business.

**Seamless Movement Across States:** Facilitates seamless movement across state borders from the origin to the destination through the use of the mobile app.

**Ease for Producers and Transporters:** Reduces hardships for timber and bamboo producers, farmers, and transporters at forest check posts.

**Promotion of Agro-forestry:** Encourages and promotes agro-forestry activities across the country.

**Cost and Time Savings:** Saves transportation costs and time for farmers and traders, leading to increased income for farmers.

## SALTON SEA



Under California's Salton Sea, the U.S. Department of Energy has recently found the greatest lithium resource in the world.

### About Salton Sea

It is a **saltwater lake** that is shallow and situated in **southern California's lower Colorado Desert**.

It is a geological depression that is below sea level and nestled between mountain ranges.

**Formation:** Until 1905–06, when diversion controls on the Colorado River broke a few miles below the California–Mexico border, the area that is now the lake was a salt-covered sink or depression (a remnant of prehistoric Lake Cahuilla) about 280 feet (85 metres) below sea level.

Floodwaters rushed northward, filling the depression.

A series of protective levees was constructed in 1907, which prevented the sink from becoming deeper in the future.

As of right now, it is 228 feet below sea level.

It has 130 miles of shoreline spread across an area of 970 square km.

### **Key information about lithium:**

It is a soft, silvery-white metal that is the head of group 1 (the alkali metals group) of the periodic table of elements.

Its characteristics include having the lowest density of all metals, being the lightest of all solid elements, reacting violently with water, and having a body-centered cubic crystal structure.

**Occurrence:** Although lithium is not found in nature as a metal, it is found in small amounts in igneous rocks, brine deposits, and as salts in mineral springs.

Its concentration in seawater is 0.1 parts per million (ppm).

**Uses:** Lithium is important in rechargeable batteries for cell phones, laptops, digital cameras, and electric vehicles.

## **NICARAGUA**





At least 20 passengers from Gujarat who were on the Nicaragua-bound flight, which was pulled back mid-route from France recently, were questioned by the authorities in an attempt to expose a potential illegal immigration network.

### **About Nicaragua**

It is the largest of the Central American republics and a country in the region.

Borders: Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south encircle the nation.

The country's eastern border is shared by the Caribbean Sea while its western border is provided by the Pacific Ocean.

History: It was the only Latin American nation to have experienced simultaneous Spanish and British colonisation.

After gaining independence from Spain in 1821, it spent a number of years as a part of the Mexican Empire.

Then it joined the Provinces of Central America, a confederation of neighbouring nations centred on Guatemala City.

In 1838, Nicaragua broke away from the group and attained complete independence.

### **Form of Government:**

It is a Republic. The president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term.

Power is divided among four governmental branches: the executive, legislative, judicial, and Supreme Electoral Council.

Capital: Managua

Official Languages: Spanish, English, indigenous languages

Currency: Nicaraguan córdoba (NIO)

### **Population:**

It is made up mostly of mestizos (people of mixed European and indigenous ancestry).

Most people live in the western Pacific lowland region between the Pacific coast and Lake Managua.

## BHILS



The recent discovery in Madhya Pradesh's Bagh unveils the fascinating intersection of tribal traditions and scientific revelations.

The revelation that revered **Bhil deities were actually 66-million-year-old fossilized titanosaur eggs** prompts a debate on the coexistence of cultural beliefs and scientific discoveries.

### Details

The Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) confirmed the **deity stones as fossilized dinosaur eggs, marking the region as India's largest dinosaur hatchery.**

Over 256 fossilized dinosaur eggs have been discovered in Bagh, showcasing the area's rich paleontological heritage.

Madhya Pradesh and BSIP **aspire to obtain UNESCO Global Geopark status for Bagh's dinosaur park, aiming for international acknowledgment of its geological and paleontological importance.**

Challenges lie in harmonizing scientific advancements with local sentiments and cultural beliefs.





## About Bhils

The Bhil community is an indigenous ethnic group primarily located in the western regions of India.

### **Ethnic Background and Geographical Distribution**

**Ethnicity:** Bhils belong to a tribal group outside the traditional Hindu caste system. They speak the Bhil languages, which is a subgroup of the Western Zone of the Indo-Aryan languages.

**Geographical Distribution:** The Bhil community resides in several states, including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bengal, and Tripura. They inhabit forested and hilly regions, showcasing a strong connection to their environment.

### **Etymology and Historical References**

**Etymology:** The term "Bhil" is suggested to originate from words such as "billa" or "billu," signifying "bow" in the Dravidian lexicon. It references the communities' association with forests and hills, where the bow and arrow were prevalent weapons.

**Historical References:** Bhil Kings have been mentioned in ancient texts like the Mahabharata, indicating their historical presence in regions like Malwa and Central India from ancient times until 325 B.C. They controlled substantial territories before Rajput conquests.

### **Socio-Political Movements and Struggles**

**Against Colonial Rule:** The Bhil community resisted British colonial rule and faced several rebellions, notably in the mid-1800s. The British labeled them as a criminal tribe under the Criminal Tribes Act 1871, leading to persecution and marginalization.

**Mutinies and Protests:** Over the years, Bhils protested against unjust taxation, forced labor, and cultural restrictions. Leaders like Govind Guru and Motilal Tejawat played pivotal roles in advocating for their rights.

### **Demographics and Social Status**

**Population and Classification:** Bhils are the largest tribal group in India and are officially classified as a Scheduled Tribe in various states under the Indian government's positive discrimination program.



**Sub-divisions:** The Bhil community comprises various endogamous territorial divisions, each with its distinct clans and lineages, seen in Rajasthan as Bhil Garasia, Dholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, among others.

### **Language, Culture, and Traditions**

Bhilis **predominantly speak Bhili**, encompassing around 36 identified dialects influenced by regional languages like Gujarati, Marathi, and Rajasthani.

Their **culture is diverse, featuring Pithora painting and Ghoomar dance as notable art forms.**

Their cuisine includes maize, onion, garlic, and chili, with traditional clothing, ornamentation, and religious beliefs enriching their heritage.

### **Societal Structure and Political Aspirations**

**Societal Structure:** Each Bhil village traditionally operates under a headman (**gameti**) who resolves local disputes and issues.

**Political Aspirations:** There have been periodic demands for the formation of a separate state called Bhil Pradesh, encompassing tribal-dominated regions across Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra.