

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 26-03-2024

Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024

The Union environment ministry recently notified Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024.



Captive Elephants under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972

Elephants are, according to the provisions of the WPA, a Schedule 1 species, and therefore, be it wild or captive, cannot be captured or traded under any circumstances.

Section 12 of the Act allows Schedule I animals to be translocated for 'special purposes' such as education and scientific research.

They can also be translocated for population management of wildlife without harming any wild animals and the collection of specimens for recognised zoos/museums.

Captive elephants, because of their historical role in forest management, timber transport, presence in estates of erstwhile royal families and in temple precincts for religious purposes can be owned and therefore come under a special category. However, strict rules guide the transfer of such elephants.



Section 40(2) of the WPA prohibits the acquisition, possession, and transfer of a captive elephant without the written permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWW) of the State.

The Environment Ministry in 2021 brought in an amendment that allowed the transfer of elephants for 'religious or any other purposes.'

Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024

It lays down the procedure to be followed for the transfer of captive elephants within a state or between two states.

The notification authorises the CWW of states and UTs to permit or reject the transfer of captive elephants.

The CWW shall permit the inter and intra-State transfers if the owner of the elephant is no longer in a position to maintain it or if the animal will have a better upkeep than in the present circumstances.

The transfer of captive elephants won't be permissible unless the genetic profile of the animal has been entered in the electronic monitoring application of the MoEFCC (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change).

The application for transfer of captive elephants should be made to the deputy conservator of forests (DCF), having jurisdiction over the area where the elephant is registered.

The DCF will conduct an inquiry and physical verification of the facility where the elephant is presently housed, and also the facility where the elephant is proposed to be housed and obtain a certificate of a veterinary practitioner, and then forward the details to the CWW, who within seven days will accept or reject the transfer.

It is an international agreement between governments. It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). It entered into force in July 1975. Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties – in other words, they have to implement the Convention – it does not take the place of national laws. The CITES Secretariat is administered by UNEP and is located in Geneva, Switzerland.



Eligibility:

NDRF guidelines state that natural calamities of cyclones, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloud burst, pest attack, and cold wave and frost considered to be of severe nature by the Government of India (GoI) and requiring expenditures by a state government in excess of the balances available in its own SDRF will qualify for immediate relief assistance from NDRF.

The NDRF also covers man-made disasters such as terrorist attacks, chemical or biological disasters, or nuclear disasters as notified by the Central Government.

For availing the NDRF funds, states are required to submit a memorandum indicating the sector-wise damage and need for funds. The Centre, on its part, assesses the damage and grants the additional funds to states.

The financial assistance from NDRF is for providing immediate relief and is not compensation for loss/damage to properties /crops. In other words, the NDRF amount can be spent only towards meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief, and rehabilitation.

The NDRF is not used for disaster preparedness, restoration, reconstruction, and mitigation. These activities are funded by other schemes such as the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF), the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), National Flood Management Programme (NFMP), etc.

Sources of Financing NDRF:

It is financed through the levy of a cess on certain items, chargeable to excise and customs duty, and approved annually through the Finance Bill.

The requirement for funds beyond what is available under the NDRF is met through general budgetary resources.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the National Disaster Management Authority takes decisions on the expenses from NDRF.

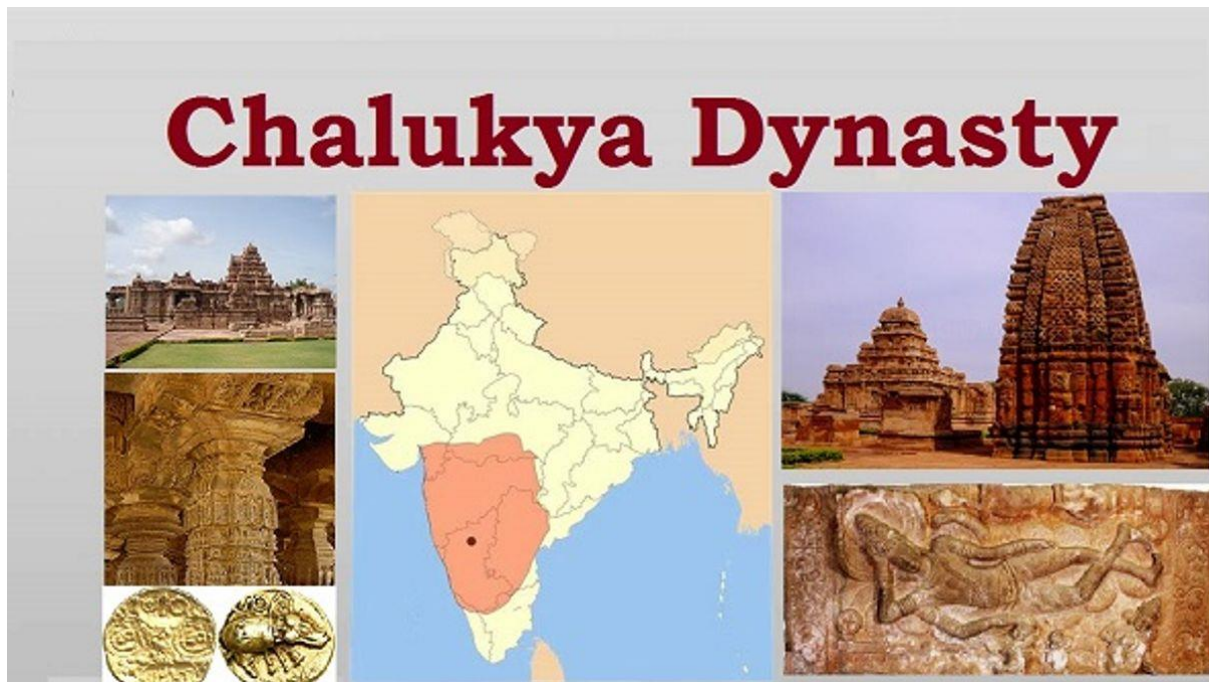
The NDRF accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) every year.

NDMA is the apex body for Disaster Management in India and is headed by the Prime Minister of India. Setting up of NDMA and the creation of an enabling environment for institutional mechanisms at the State and District levels is

mandated by the Disaster Management Act, 2005. NDMA is mandated to lay down the policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management.

Chalukyas of Kalyani

A 900-year-old Kannada inscription from the Kalyana Chalukya dynasty has been found in a state of utter neglect at Gangapuram, a temple town, in Mahaboobnagar district, Telangana.



The Chalukyas ruled over the central Indian plateau of the Deccan between the sixth and twelfth centuries.

During that period, they ruled as three closely related but individual dynasties.

The Chalukyas of Badami, who ruled between the sixth and eighth centuries, and the two sibling dynasties of the Chalukyas of Kalyani, or the Western Chalukyas, and the Chalukyas of Vengi, or the Eastern Chalukyas

Key Facts about Chalukyas of Kalyani

Primarily a Kannadiga dynasty, they were known after their capital city, Kalyani. It is present in the modern-day Bidar district of Karnataka.



The empire was established by Tailapa II when the Western Chalukya was a feudatory of the Rashtrakuta Empire and Tailapa II governed Tardavadi in the Bijapur district of Karnataka.

In the 300 years long rule in the western Deccan and southern part of the Indian peninsula, Chalukya of Kalyani expanded and reached the zenith of power during the rule of Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126 CE).

It is considered the most successful period of the later Chalukya rulers in Karnataka's history, and many scholars refer to this period as the 'Chalukya Vikrama era'.

Vikramaditya VI was not only controlling feudatories in the northern region, such as Kadamba Jayakesi II of Goa, Silhara Bhoja, and the Yadava King; he won several battles against the Chola dynasty.

He won the battle of Vengi in 1093 and defeated Cholas again in 1118. He gained the rights on territories amid hostilities with the Cholas.

The victory in the battle of Vengi alleviated the Chola influence, and during this time, Vikramaditya VI became the emperor of a vast territory spanning from the Kaveri River in the south to the Narmada River in the north and along the western ghats.

Decline:

After Vikramaditya VI's death, the consistent confrontation with the Chola dynasty exploited both empires and gave opportunities to their subordinates to rebel.

After 1126, the Western Chalukya empire started declining, and by the time of Jagadhekamalla II, everything was falling apart.

Administration, Art, and Architecture:

The Western Chalukya administration was mainly hereditary, where the king passed his powers to the male heir and brother in the absence of a male heir.

The whole kingdom was divided and managed by feudatories such as the Hoysala and the Kakatiya.

While the Chalukya Dynasty maintained a great army of infantries, cavalries, elephant units, etc, the Western Chalukyas followed the trend and achieved a great extent of power.



They were primarily Hindus but also acknowledged and tolerant of Buddhism and Jainism.

The Chalukyas contributed greatly to the development of Kannada and Telugu literature.

The Western Chalukya minted punch-marked gold coins called pagodas with Kannada legends.

Coins were minted, and cryptograms of temples, lions, and lotus were imprinted on them.

Their architecture is a link between the Badami Chalukya architecture of the 8th century and the Hoysala architecture of the 13th century. The Western Chalukya dynasty is considered to be a crucial era for the evolution of Deccan architecture.

Their art is also called the 'Gadag style' because numerous temples were built in the Tungabhadra-Krishna doab region in the present-day Gadag district.

Their temples depict both religious and secular themes.

The Mallikarjuna temple of Bellary, Siddeshvara temple in Haveri, Kallesvara temple in Davangere district, etc are a few of the finest examples of later Chalukya architecture.

The Rashtrakuta Dynasty ruled parts of South India from the 8th to the 10th century CE. At its zenith, their kingdom included the modern state of Karnataka in its entirety along with parts of the current Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Their importance can be gauged from the writings of many Islamic travellers and scholars, especially Al-Masudi and Ibn Khordadbeh (10th century CE), who wrote that all the other kings of India at that time prayed to the Rashtrakutas as a higher power and prostrated themselves in reverence before them, such was their influence and impression.

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary

Telangana is presently grappling with forest fires in Tadvai region of Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary.

About Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary

It was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1953.

The sanctuary is located near the border of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

The perennial river Dayyam Vagu flows through this beautiful sanctuary. This Vagu separates the wildlife sanctuary into two parts.

The sanctuary is also famous for the Sammakka Sarakka Jathra, one of Asia's largest tribal jahtra, taking place here every two years.

The River Godavari also passes through the sanctuary.

Vegetation: The region falls in the tropical dry deciduous type of vegetation.

Flora: The sanctuary is thus rich in the growth of teak, bamboo and other trees like madhuca and terminalia. Climbers are the unique features which are found in abundance across the length and breadth of this Sanctuary.

Fauna:

The keystone species in the sanctuary are Indian gour and giant squirrel.

It provides the dwelling ground for Tiger, Leopard, Jackals Sloth Bear, Panther, Wolf, Wild Dogs, Chousingha, Sambar

A deciduous forest is a biome dominated by deciduous trees which lose their leaves seasonally. The Earth has temperate deciduous forests, and tropical and subtropical deciduous forests, also known as dry forests.

Exchange Traded Fund





SEBI, the markets regulator, has issued directives to mutual fund houses, instructing them to cease accepting further inflows into schemes investing in overseas exchange-traded funds (ETFs) from April 1, 2024.

This action comes in response to the near-fulfillment of the mandated investment limit of \$1 billion in foreign ETFs.

What is an Exchange Traded Fund?

An ETF, or exchange traded fund, is a marketable security that tracks an index, a commodity, bonds, or a basket of assets like an index fund.

Unlike regular mutual funds, an ETF trades like a common stock on a stock exchange. The traded price of an ETF changes throughout the day like any other stock, as it is bought and sold on the stock exchange.

The trading value of an ETF is based on the net asset value of the underlying stocks that an ETF represents.

ETFs typically have higher daily liquidity and lower fees than mutual fund schemes, making them an attractive alternative for individual investors. ETFs are considered to be more tax efficient compared to other mutual fund schemes.

There are mainly five types of ETFs – equity ETF, bonds ETF, commodity ETF, international ETF and sectoral/thematic ETF.

Reasoning Behind SEBI's Direction

The capital market regulator's move aims to prevent breaching the upper limit of \$1 billion for investments in overseas ETFs.

According to industry insiders, the mutual fund sector has already reached 95% (\$950 million) of the \$1 billion limit, prompting SEBI's intervention to temporarily halt inflows into overseas ETFs.

Overall Limit for Mutual Funds Investing in Overseas ETFs

Currently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set an overall cap of \$7 billion for fund houses to invest in overseas stocks or mutual funds.

Mutual funds are permitted to invest up to \$1 billion in overseas exchange-traded funds.

The mutual fund industry has been advocating for an increase in the overseas investment limit beyond the existing \$7 billion.



RBI's Response to the Industry's Demand

RBI has acknowledged the mutual fund industry's requests to revise the overseas investment limit.

However, RBI emphasized that any decision on revisiting the limit would be contingent upon the stability of the rupee on a durable basis.

Understanding Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)

Definition and Characteristics

An ETF, or exchange-traded fund, is a marketable security that tracks an index, commodity, bonds, or a basket of assets, similar to an index fund.

Unlike traditional mutual funds, ETFs trade on stock exchanges like common stocks, with their prices fluctuating throughout the trading day based on supply and demand.

ETFs offer higher daily liquidity and lower fees compared to mutual fund schemes, making them an appealing option for individual investors.

They are considered more tax-efficient and offer diverse investment options, including equity ETFs, bonds ETFs, commodity ETFs, international ETFs, and sectoral/thematic ETFs.

TEESTA RIVER

Teesta river is a major right bank tributary of the Brahmaputra (known as Jamuna in Bangladesh), flowing through India and Bangladesh.

It is 414 km long with a total catchment area of 12,159 km².

Origin

It originates in the Himalayas near the Tso Lhamo Lake, in Sikkim and flows to the south through West Bengal before entering Bangladesh.

Source: Pahurni glacier, Khangse glacier and ChhoLhamo Lake are also considered the sources of the Teesta River.

River basin

The major portion of the river basin lies in India and only 17% of it is in Bangladesh.



Teesta basin is home to around 30 million people, 2% in Sikkim, 27% in West Bengal; and 71% in northwest Bangladesh

Major Tributaries of Teesta River

Left-bank Tributaries: Lachung Chhu, Chakung Chhu, Dik Chhu, Rani Khola and Rangpo Chhu.

Right-bank Tributaries: Zemu Chhu, Rangyong Chhu and Rangit River.

The river joins the Brahmaputra in Bangladesh before it flows into the Bay of Bengal after meeting with the Ganges and the Meghna.

Barrages and projects

There are two large barrages on Teesta that diverts water for mainly irrigation purpose: one at Gajoldobha in India and the other at Duani in Bangladesh.

Teesta -V Dam : 510MW, Gangtok district, Sikkim.

Teesta III Dam : 1200 MW, Mangan district, Sikkim.

Teesta Low Dam III : 132MW , Kalimpong district, West Bengal.

Teesta Low Dam IV: 160MW, Kalimpong district, West Bengal

Barakhata Teesta Barrage, Bangladesh.

Teesta VI Dam: 500MW, Gangtok district, Sikkim.

Rangit III Dam: On Greater Rangeet River which is a tributary of Teesta River. Output:60MW, Gyalshing district.

Gati Hydropower Project: A 110 MW Gati Hydropower Project lies on River Rangpo, a tributary of River Teesta. Location Pakyong District in Sikkim

Dikchu River Hydroelectric Power Project: Output: 96 MW on Dikchu River, tributary of River Teesta, Gangtok district, Sikkim.

Madhya Bharat Power Corporation Limited : on Ranikhola, a tributary of Teesta, Output: 96MW Gangtok district, Sikkim.

Water sharing conflict

Disputes over the appropriate allocation and development of the water resources of the river have remained a subject of conflict between India and Bangladesh for almost 35 years, with several bilateral agreements and rounds of talks failing to produce results.



RV Educational Institutions®
RV Training Academy®

Negotiations have been going on since 1983.

In 1983, a temporary solution had been worked out— Bangladesh would get 36%, India would get 39% while the rest of the water remained unallocated.

Both countries signed a water sharing treaty in 1996 which would look into water sharing between the two countries.