

Daily Current Affairs To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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GS Paper 1 – Indian Geography

Jenu Kuruba Tribe: Keepers of the Forest and Tradition

Context: In a significant moment for indigenous rights, **Jenu Kuruba families** have begun returning to their **ancestral forest lands** inside **Nagarhole National Park**, marking a powerful step toward reclaiming their cultural and ecological heritage.



Who are the Jenu Kuruba?

The Jenu Kuruba tribe is one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), residing primarily in the Kodagu and Mysore districts of Karnataka. Their name comes from the Kannada words "Jenu" meaning honey and "Kuruba" referring to a community, highlighting their traditional role as honey gatherers and forest foragers.

Livelihood and Cultural Identity:

For generations, the Jenu Kurubas have lived in harmony with the forest, drawing sustenance from **non-timber forest produce**, honey collection, small-scale **shifting agriculture**, and **minor forest-based crafts**.

- They live in small forest hamlets known as "Hadi".
- Many also engage in wage labour or small-scale farming outside the forest during non-harvest seasons.

In different regions, they are also known as "**Then Kurumba**" or "**Kattu Naikar**", reflecting variations in language and local naming traditions.

Social Structure and Leadership:

The Jenu Kuruba community follows a semi-nomadic lifestyle with a distinct social framework:

- Leadership is decentralized and traditional, led by a headman (Yajamana) and a ritual leader (Gudda).
- These leaders manage internal disputes, community affairs, and rituals without interference from **formal law enforcement or religious institutions**.

Their system fosters **self-governance, mutual cooperation, and cultural continuity**, resisting homogenization under dominant societal norms.

Spiritual Beliefs and Expressions:

The tribe's **belief system** centers around **nature and ancestral spirits**. They have **unique deities** and **ritual practices** rooted in the forest ecosystem.

- Their **folk songs and dances** reflect themes of **marriage, farming, mythology**, and **seasonal rituals**.
- These cultural expressions are not only forms of entertainment but also means of preserving **oral history** and **spiritual wisdom**.

Struggles and Reclamation:

In recent decades, the Jenu Kurubas faced **displacement** due to wildlife conservation policies, particularly the creation of **Nagarhole National Park**. Despite their **sustainable relationship with the forest**, they were evicted in the name of ecological protection.

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However, their return today is a result of **long-standing advocacy and legal support** under the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, which recognizes the **rights of forest-dwelling communities** to reside and thrive in their ancestral habitats.

Did You Know?

- **PVTGs**, like the Jenu Kurubas, represent **the most marginalized tribal communities** in India, with low literacy rates, health indicators, and economic opportunities.
- The Jenu Kuruba community has often collaborated with conservationists to demonstrate how indigenous stewardship of forests can support biodiversity rather than harm it.
- Nagarhole Forest, their homeland, is a critical habitat for tigers, elephants, and many endemic species—underscoring the importance of coexistence between conservation and indigenous rights.

Conclusion: A Culture Rooted in the Forest

The story of the **Jenu Kuruba tribe** is one of **resilience**, **deep ecological knowledge**, and **cultural richness**. As they return to their rightful homes, they not only reclaim their land but also reinforce the idea that **indigenous communities are natural custodians of forests**, not threats to them. Their journey serves as a reminder that **development and conservation must always honor the voices of those who have lived in balance with nature for centuries**.

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GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology

HAROP Drones: Precision Loitering Munitions in Modern Warfare

Context: In a powerful demonstration of advanced strike capability, the **Indian armed forces** recently utilized **Israeli-origin HAROP drones** during **'Operation Sindoor'** to target **critical air defence infrastructure** across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).



What is the HAROP Drone?

The **HAROP (Harpy 2)** is a **loitering munition system**—a hybrid between a drone and a missile **developed by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)**. Unlike conventional drones that return after completing surveillance tasks, HAROP is **designed to identify and destroy enemy targets** by crashing into them with its onboard explosive payload.

Dual Role: Surveillance and Strike

This drone belongs to a unique class of **autonomous kamikaze drones**. It can:

- Loiter over a target area for several hours
- Detect radar signals or visual cues
- Dive onto the target with precision and eliminate it

The **HAROP** is especially effective against **air defence** systems, radar installations, missile batteries, and **command-and-control centres**, offering the ability to suppress enemy air defences before a manned strike.

Key Features of HAROP:

- Endurance: Can stay airborne for over six hours, providing persistent surveillance and targethunting capabilities.
- **Explosive Payload**: Carries a **16 kg high-explosive warhead**, capable of eliminating hardened targets.
- Range & Speed: Operational range of 200 km and a top speed of 417 km/h.
- **Dimensions**: Wingspan of **3 meters**, length of **2.5 meters**.
- Altitude: Can operate at a service ceiling of ~15,000 feet.
- Accuracy: Delivers a Circular Error Probable (CEP) of less than one meter, ensuring pinpoint strikes.
- Seeker Systems: Equipped with electro-optical (EO) and infrared (IR) sensors to detect, track, and engage targets—even in low-visibility conditions.

Advanced Operational Capabilities:

- Man-in-the-loop Mode: Offers real-time human intervention for precision strike decisions, ensuring ethical and tactical control.
- Abort Function: Operators can cancel a mission mid-flight to prevent unintended collateral damage.

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- **Stealth and Flexibility**: Launches from mobile ground stations and attacks from **steep or shallow angles**, bypassing terrain and radar-based defences.
- Jamming Resistance: Operates effectively in GPS-denied environments, offering anti-jamming capabilities critical for modern electronic warfare.

India and HAROP:

• India has been an active user of HAROP drones for over a decade, integrating them into its triservice strategic operations. The drones have played a key role in tactical surveillance and suppression of enemy air defences (SEAD) during cross-border operations.

In recent years, India has considered upgrading its HAROP fleet with improved **target recognition**, **AI-based guidance**, and **enhanced range**, showcasing a continued commitment to **next-gen precision warfare systems**.

Did You Know?

- HAROP is based on IAI's earlier "Harpy" drone but includes day/night surveillance and visual targeting.
- It has been used by countries like Israel, Azerbaijan, South Korea, and Germany in various combat theatres.
- Its "fire-and-forget" capability combined with real-time human oversight makes it one of the most reliable loitering munitions in the world.

Conclusion: Drones That Think and Strike

The **HAROP** drone represents a leap forward in precision strike technology, blending endurance, autonomy, and surgical accuracy. As conflicts evolve into high-tech hybrid warfare, such systems will play an increasingly vital role in counter-air defence, pre-emptive strikes, and deep-penetration missions—offering nations like India a significant tactical edge on the battlefield.











GS Paper 3 – Economy

India Unveils Draft Climate Finance Taxonomy to Accelerate Green Investments

Context: India has taken a significant step toward aligning its climate goals with financial policy by introducing a **Draft Climate Finance Taxonomy**, aimed at attracting sustainable investments and strengthening the nation's transition to a low-carbon economy.

What is the Climate Finance Taxonomy?

The **Ministry of Finance** has released a draft framework titled **'India's Climate Finance Taxonomy'**, which aims to:

- Define and classify economic activities based on their environmental impact.
- Steer capital flows toward clean energy and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- **Prevent greenwashing**—the misleading promotion of projects as 'green' without meaningful environmental benefits.

This taxonomy is designed to support India's dual national targets:

- Achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2070
- Transforming into a developed nation under the 'Viksit Bharat 2047' vision

Key Objectives of the Framework:

The draft taxonomy serves as a **strategic tool for investors**, **financial institutions**, **and policymakers** by offering:

- Clear definitions of climate-aligned investments
- Transparent criteria for project evaluation
- Support for low-carbon technologies and emission-reduction pathways

It also acts as a **credible national benchmark** to counter inflated claims by developed countries in international climate finance negotiations, ensuring **greater accountability and transparency**.

Core Principles and Categories:

The taxonomy is built on **international best practices** while being tailored to India's development context. It classifies activities into two broad categories:

- **Climate Supportive**: Directly contribute to **greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction** or **climate resilience**. *Examples: Solar energy, electric mobility, energy-efficient buildings.*
- **Climate Transition**: Help reduce the **carbon intensity** of traditionally high-emission sectors. *Examples: Cleaner technologies in steel, cement, and thermal power.*

Key Sectors Identified for Green Investment:

The taxonomy highlights sectors critical for India's climate goals:

- Power generation and distribution
- Green buildings and resilient infrastructure
- Low-emission transport and mobility
- Sustainable agriculture and food systems

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Water resource management and water security

These focus areas will guide both public and private investment towards long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

Massive Push in Energy and Adaptation Investment:

Power Sector Expansion Goals:

India plans to dramatically scale up its installed power generation capacity from 470.4 GW (as of February 2025) to 777.14 GW by 2049.

A key focus will be on Advanced Ultra Super Critical (AUSC) thermal power technology, which offers:

- Efficiency of 46% (compared to ~38% for subcritical and ~41–42% for supercritical systems)
- Lower carbon emissions per unit of electricity generated •

This represents a **transitional path** for coal-based power generation, enabling energy security while aligning with climate goals.

India's Climate Adaptation Investment Needs:

India's **Initial Adaptation Communication** to the United Nations (submitted in December 2023) estimates that the country needs a **whopping 56.68 trillion (≈ USD 648.5 billion)** by 2030 to fund adaptation measures.

The investment is required across several climate-vulnerable sectors, including:

- Agriculture and food systems
- Forestry and biodiversity
- **Fisheries** ٠
- Urban and rural infrastructure
- Water resources •
- **Ecosystem restoration and climate resilience**

This financial requirement underscores the magnitude of climate risk India faces and the urgent need for **resource mobilization**, both domestically and internationally.

Why This Matters Globally:

India's taxonomy initiative could serve as a **template for other developing economies**, helping them attract climate finance while resisting the practice of greenwashing by wealthier nations. It also reinforces India's role as a **responsible stakeholder** in global climate governance.

Did You Know?

- The European Union's Sustainable Finance Taxonomy served as one of the inspirations for India's framework.
- India is among a handful of developing countries creating a national-level green finance classification system.

Conclusion: A New Era for Climate-Aligned Capital

India's **Draft Climate Finance Taxonomy** marks a crucial turning point in the integration of **climate goals** with economic planning. By defining what truly qualifies as "green" or "transitional," this framework paves the way for targeted investment, policy coherence, and global credibility.

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GS Paper 1 – Geography

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Iran in the Spotlight: Celebrating 75 Years of Diplomatic Ties with India

Context: As part of commemorating **75 years of diplomatic relations, Iran's Foreign Minister** is on a significant visit to **India**, reinforcing the longstanding cultural, economic, and strategic partnership between the two nations.

Where is Iran Located?

Iran, officially known as the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, lies at the **strategic crossroads of West Asia**, acting as a vital geopolitical bridge between the **Middle East, Central Asia**, and **South Asia**.

- **Capital**: **Tehran**, a vibrant metropolis and Iran's political, cultural, and economic center.
- Neighbouring Countries:
 - **North**: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan
 - o **East**: Afghanistan and Pakistan
 - West: Iraq
 - Northwest: Türkiye
- **Maritime Neighbours**: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Surrounding Water Bodies:

Iran is uniquely flanked by key bodies of water:

- North: Caspian Sea, the world's largest inland water body by surface area.
- South: Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, crucial for global oil shipping lanes and naval strategy.

Geographical and Climatic Diversity

Iran's landscape is incredibly diverse, shaping its culture, agriculture, and settlement patterns.

- **Climate**: Varies from **arid deserts** to **semi-arid steppes**, with **subtropical** zones along the Caspian coast.
- Mountain Ranges:
 - Zagros Mountains (west) form a natural barrier and host oil reserves.
 - **Alborz Mountains** (north) contain **Mount Damavand** Iran's **highest peak** at 5,610 meters and the **tallest volcano in Asia**.
- Major Rivers:
 - Karun River Iran's only navigable river, vital for inland trade.
 - Others include **Dez**, **Karkheh**, and **Diyala**.

Rich Natural Resources:

Iran is renowned for its wealth of **natural resources**, which fuel its economy and geostrategic influence.

- Hydrocarbons:
 - One of the **top five nations** globally in terms of **proven oil and natural gas reserves**.



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- Minerals:
 - Rich in **chromium**, **copper**, **iron ore**, **lead**, **manganese**, **zinc**, **sulphur**, and **coal**.
- Iran's **mining industry** is considered one of the **most underexplored** yet promising sectors in the region.

Interesting Facts About Iran:

- **Persian Civilization**: Iran is home to **one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations**, dating back to **circa 7000 BCE**.
- **Cultural Heritage**: Cities like **Isfahan**, **Shiraz**, and **Persepolis** reflect the country's glorious imperial past and architectural marvels.
- Language: The official language is Persian (Farsi).
- **Strategic Importance**: Iran sits on the **Strait of Hormuz**, a chokepoint through which nearly **one-fifth of the world's oil trade** passes.

India-Iran Relations: A Historical Connection

India and Iran share deep-rooted **historical**, **cultural**, **and linguistic ties**, strengthened by:

- Shared interests in regional connectivity, especially through the Chabahar Port project.
- Cooperation in **energy, infrastructure, and trade**.
- Common concerns about regional security, especially in Afghanistan and West Asia.

Iran's role as a regional powerhouse—rich in history, resources, and strategic value—makes it a critical partner for India in shaping a secure and prosperous neighbourhood.

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GS Paper 2 – Governance, Health, and Social Justice

India Sees Remarkable Drop in Maternal Mortality: A Leap Towards Safer Motherhood

Context: India has taken a **significant step forward in maternal healthcare**, as reflected in the latest decline in the **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)**. The country's MMR has reduced to **93 per 100,000 live births** during **2019–21**, compared to **97 in 2018–20** and **103 in 2017–19**, according to data from the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India**. This progress showcases the impact of targeted health policies, greater institutional support, and community-level awareness programs.



What is the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)?

• The Maternal Mortality Ratio is a key measure of a nation's maternal health and healthcare quality. It represents the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births within a defined period. A maternal death refers to the death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy, due to complications related to or worsened by the pregnancy itself, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Global Benchmark: The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.1** targets an MMR of **below 70 by 2030**. India's current decline marks a **positive trajectory** toward this global target.

Improving Trends but Uneven Progress Across States:

Despite national-level success, **regional inequalities** continue to pose a challenge. Several states are still recording **alarmingly high MMRs**, including:

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- Madhya Pradesh: 175
- Assam: 167
- Uttar Pradesh: 151
- Odisha: 135
- Chhattisgarh: 132
- West Bengal: 109
- Haryana: 106

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Demographic Highlight: The **20–29 years age group** accounts for the **highest number of maternal deaths**, followed by the **30–34 years group**—the most active reproductive age bracket. This signals an urgent need for **targeted maternal health interventions** for young women.

Key Causes Behind Maternal Mortality in India:

Maternal deaths are largely preventable. However, they continue due to a mix of **healthcare system gaps** and **social challenges**:

- Obstetric complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- Unsafe abortions due to lack of access to proper facilities
- Delayed medical care and lack of skilled attendants
- Inadequate nutrition, especially in rural and tribal areas
- Social stigma and low awareness around reproductive health

Global Context: Around **700 women die daily** from pregnancy-related complications worldwide, with over **90% of maternal deaths** occurring in **low- and lower-middle-income countries**—India included. *Download Our Application*









Government Programs Making a Difference:

India's drop in MMR is driven by the success of key national health missions and maternal welfare programs, including:

- Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA): Offers free quality antenatal checkups on a fixed day every month.
- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY): Provides financial incentives to encourage institutional deliveries, especially among underprivileged groups.
- Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres: Deliver comprehensive primary healthcare, including maternal and neonatal services.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan**: Focuses on **nutritional enhancement** for mothers and children, especially in high-risk districts.

These programs have boosted **institutional birth rates**, enhanced **access to trained medical staff**, and supported **nutritional care** for expectant mothers.

Persistent Challenges That Need Urgent Focus:

While progress is evident, the journey toward maternal safety for all Indian women still faces critical roadblocks:

- **Poor infrastructure** in remote and economically backward regions •
- Lack of emergency obstetric care in rural healthcare centers
- Limited community outreach and awareness of government programs
- **Cultural barriers** and **early marriages** increasing pregnancy-related risks

Special Concern: Teenage pregnancies, often due to early marriage, remain a hidden contributor to maternal deaths. Strengthening laws and awareness around **reproductive rights** is crucial.

Conclusion: Toward Safer Motherhood for Every Woman

India's consistent improvement in the Maternal Mortality Ratio is a testament to robust policy execution, growing health infrastructure, and empowered communities. However, achieving the SDG target of **MMR < 70** by 2030 will demand **sustained efforts**, especially in high-burden states.

Future efforts must emphasize:

- Bridging rural-urban healthcare gaps •
- Strengthening emergency care systems
- Boosting awareness on maternal entitlements and services

With the right investments, India can ensure that **no woman dies while giving life**.

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GS Paper 3 - Environment and Ecology

Guardians of Nature: The Vital Role of Indigenous Communities in Biodiversity Conservation

Context: Across the globe, **conservation models** often fail to recognize the crucial contributions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). While India took a progressive step with the **Forest Rights Act (FRA)**, **2006**, the dominant conservation paradigm still tends to be state-centric. frequently sidelining the traditional custodians of forests and biodiversity.

To truly achieve sustainable and inclusive conservation, India must empower IPLCs not only through legal



recognition but also through active participation in environmental governance.

How Do Indigenous Communities Protect Biodiversity?

India is home to over **700 tribal communities**, each with deep ecological knowledge and cultural practices that are closely intertwined with the natural world. Their role in biodiversity conservation is both practical and spiritual, rooted in centuries-old traditions.

Preservers of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK):

IPLCs possess rich oral knowledge on medicinal plants, forest ecosystems, and animal behavior. **Example**: The **Kani tribe** of Kerala contributed to the discovery of the medicinal plant *Arogyapacha*, leading to the development of a patented drug and a benefit-sharing model.

Protectors of Sacred Forests and Community Lands:

Tribal communities often maintain sacred groves, which serve as biodiversity hotspots. **Example:** The **Bishnoi community** of Rajasthan protects **Khejri trees**, antelopes, and birds, often risking their lives for wildlife.

Custodians of Native Crops and Seeds:

Indigenous farming methods help genetic diversity maintain in agriculture. • Example: In Odisha and Nagaland, communities practice jhum cultivation with long fallow periods, preserving **indigenous seed varieties** and soil fertility.

Living in Harmony with Wildlife:

Cultural taboos and ethical codes promote **non-exploitative interactions** with nature. • Example: The Soliga tribe of Karnataka coexists with tigers and elephants in the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve, demonstrating peaceful cohabitation.

What Legal Frameworks Support Indigenous Conservation in India?

India has introduced several progressive laws and policies aimed at recognizing the ecological role of IPLCs:

Biological Diversity Act (BDA), 2002:

Establishes Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at local levels to record and conserve • biodiversity, and safeguard traditional knowledge.

Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006:

Grants legal rights to forest land and resources to Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest • dwellers.

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Empowers Gram Sabhas to manage and conserve forests, ensuring community-led sustainable practices.

Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996:

Gives tribal communities control over land and water resources in Scheduled Areas, promoting ٠ decentralized natural resource management.

Joint Forest Management (JFM):

Encourages **collaborative forest governance** between forest departments and local communities, ٠ especially in **non-timber forest product (NTFP)** management.

National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP):

Supports participatory conservation, integration of traditional practices, and community • capacity-building to enhance **ecosystem resilience**.

What More Can Be Done to Empower IPLCs in Conservation?

While India's legal framework is commendable, implementation gaps and top-down approaches persist. To foster a more inclusive model of conservation:

1. Fully Enforce the Forest Rights Act (FRA):

- Expedite Community Forest Resource (CFR) claims.
- Strengthen the decision-making role of **Gram Sabhas** in conservation areas. •
- Train local leaders in biodiversity governance.
- 2. Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Policy Making:
 - Establish national and state-level platforms to **document traditional knowledge**.
 - Involve IPLCs in drafting local biodiversity plans and forest management strategies.
- 3. Include IPLCs in the '30 by 30' Global Biodiversity Agenda: India's commitment to protect 30% of its land and marine ecosystems by 2030 must include IPLCs as co-managers, not just beneficiaries.
- 4. Promote Ethical Use of Traditional Knowledge: Prevent biopiracy by ensuring intellectual property rights and benefit-sharing mechanisms with local communities.
- 5. Strengthen Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs): Provide legal backing, training, and funding to **enable BMCs to actively participate** in ecological decision-making.
- 6. Provide Financial Incentives for Community Conservation:
 - Introduce **eco-certification**, **carbon credit systems**, and **community forest enterprise grants**.
 - Support local innovations such as eco-tourism, wildlife stewardship, and sustainable harvesting of forest products.

Conclusion: Indigenous Wisdom, the Key to India's Ecological Future

India's indigenous communities are **not just stakeholders—they are stewards** of the nation's biodiversity. Their **deep ecological insights**, **communal ethics**, and **nature-based traditions** offer time-tested solutions to environmental degradation.

By ensuring **legal recognition**, financial empowerment, and decision-making authority, India can create a truly inclusive conservation model—one that honors both ecological sustainability and social justice.

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