

Forest Declaration Assessment 2025 Report

Released by Forest Declaration Assessment, the report highlights that the world is **off track to zero down on deforestation by 2030**.

Key Findings of the Report

- ▶ **Deforestation Rate:** 8.1 million hectares of forest lost in 2024, a level of destruction **63% higher** than the trajectory needed to halt deforestation by 2030.
- ▶ **Misaligned Financial flows:** With Harmful subsidies outweighing green subsidies by over **200:1**.

Key Reasons for Rising Forest Degradation

- ▶ **Permanent Agriculture:** Contributed to around **86% of deforestation** through cultivation of oil palm, cacao, orchards, nuts, rubber, seasonal crops, and pasture.
- ▶ **Mining sector :** Around **77% of global mines** are located less than **50 km from Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)**.
- ▶ **Environmental Crimes:** Including illegal deforestation and logging, generates around \$281 billion annually.

Key Shifts Needed to Halt Deforestation

- ▶ **Mandatory Regulation over Voluntary Pledges:** To ensure accountability, traceability, and compliance.
- ▶ **Valuing Forests and Ending Externalization:** Pricing the **real costs of deforestation and degradation**.
- ▶ **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Witnessing full participation of Indigenous Peoples (IPs), local communities (LCs), women, and civil society.

Key Goals For Forest Restoration

- ▶ **Bonn Challenge:** Bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and **350 million hectares by 2030**.
 - ⊕ India pledged to restore **26 million hectares by 2030**.
- ▶ **Target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) (2022):** At least **30%** of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems to be under **effective restoration by 2030**.

2025 Global Hunger Index report “20 Years of Tracking Progress: Time to Recommit to Zero Hunger” released

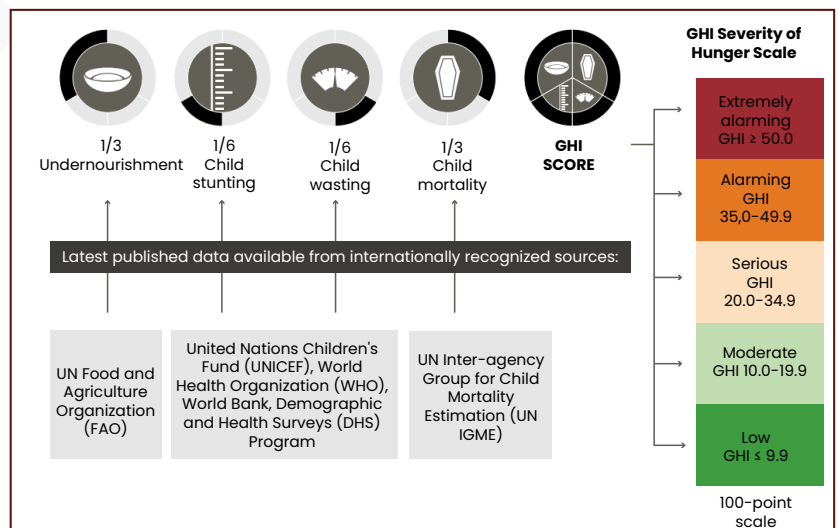
The report has been published by the Irish humanitarian organisation **Concern Worldwide**, the German aid agency Welthungerhilfe, and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV).

Key Findings

- ▶ Global hunger has seen **little reduction since 2016**, and stalled progress is pushing the 2030 target of zero hunger out of reach.
- ▶ **India is ranked 102nd among the 123 countries** assessed with a GHI score of 25.8 which is classified as serious.
- ▶ **Factors behind hunger crisis:** Conflict (primary driver), climate change and environmental shocks destroying food systems, economic fragility including inflation and currency depreciation, reduced humanitarian official development assistance, income inequality etc.

About Global Hunger Index (GHI)

- ▶ **GHI** is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels.
- ▶ Based on the values of the **four indicators and values (refer image)**, a GHI score is calculated, where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst.
 - ⊕ **Undernourishment** (Insufficient caloric intake); **Child stunting** (Children with low height under age 5); **Child wasting** (Children with low weight for their height under age 5); **Child mortality** (Children who die before their fifth birthday).



Status of Elephants in India: DNA Based Synchronous All India Population Estimation of Elephants (SAIEE) 2021-25

SAIEE is India's first DNA-based count of elephants conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India, under the aegis of Project Elephant Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Key Findings of the report

- It estimates **total Asian Elephant population at 22,446** and India harbours the **largest wild population** – approximately 60% of global total.
- Currently, wild elephants persist **mainly in four forested hill regions**— Himalayan foothills, Northeastern states, East-central India, and Western/Eastern Ghats—with a small feral population in Andaman Islands;
 - ⊕ **Western Ghats hosts the largest population of wild elephants** followed by North Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains.
- Among states, **Karnataka supports highest population**, followed by Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- **Threats:**
 - ⊕ **Habitat Shrinkage & Fragmentation:** Once-contiguous elephant population in the Western Ghats is rapidly disconnecting due to **changing land use**, including expanding commercial plantations (coffee and tea), **invasive plants, farmland fencing, human encroachment and mushrooming developmental projects.**
 - ⊕ **Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC):** Rising sharply in **Central India and Eastern Ghats.**
 - ⊕ **Linear Infrastructure:** Roads, railways, and power lines disrupt corridors and cause **fatalities via electrocution and collisions.**
- **Recommendations:** Strengthening corridors and connectivity, restoration of habitat, improving protection strategies and mitigation of developmental projects.

Asian Elephants

- **Largest land mammal on Asian continent**, they inhabit dry to wet forest and grassland habitats in 13 range countries.
- **Characteristics:**
 - ⊕ Elephants are organized into **complex social structures** led by a matriarch (a female leads the group).
 - ⊕ They have the **longest gestation period** of any mammal, lasting 22 months.
- **Role of Elephants in Ecosystem:** Create pathways for other animals in dense forest, creation of micro ecosystems, and seed dispersal maintaining forest diversity.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - ⊕ Endangered in IUCN Red List
 - ⊕ Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act 1972
 - ⊕ Listed in Appendix I of CITES

India-Mongolia marked 70 years of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

The two countries also celebrated the **10th anniversary of their Strategic Partnership** with key MoUs signed during the visit of Mongolian President to India.

Key MoUs signed

- **Development Cooperation:** Both countries reaffirmed commitment to the **Mongol Oil Refinery Project**, being implemented with US\$ 1.7 billion Line of Credit by India.
- **Cultural Relations:** MoU between **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council** and **Mongolia's Arkhangai Province.**
- **Spiritual Cooperation:** India plans to send holy relics of Lord **Buddha's disciples Sariputra and Maudgalyayana** to Mongolia, help digitise the 1 million ancient Buddhist manuscripts, and link **Nalanda and Gandan Monastery.**
- **Others:** Free e-visas to Mongolian citizens, strengthening trade through exploring the potential of third-country ports, enhance cooperation in Uranium, resilient supply chains and critical minerals, etc.

Significance Of Mongolia For India

- **Strategic Importance:** Mongolia's **strategic location**, essential for enhancing geopolitical balance and regional stability.
- **International and Development Cooperation:** Both countries commit to a **free, open, and rule based Indo-Pacific**, along with cooperation in multilateral fora.
- **Energy and Economic Partnership:** Mongolia has vast reserves of **coking coal**, useful for Steel industry.



India-Mongolia Relations

- **Bilateral Relations:** **Diplomatic Ties** established in 1955 And **Strategic Partnership** in 2015.
- **Economic Relations:** **110.8 Million USD** total Bilateral trade (2024).
- **Military Cooperation:** Military exercises, namely, **Nomadic Elephant** and **Khaan Quest.**

IUCN World Conservation Congress released update to IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

Latest update modified the **conservation status of 12 Indian bird species**, downlisting eight species, signaling positive trends in their conservation while uplisting four species.

► **Four species that have been uplisted include:**

- ⊕ **Indian Courser, Indian Roller and Rufous-tailed Lark** uplisted to Near Threatened;
- ⊕ **Long-billed Grasshopper-warbler** uplisted to Endangered.

► All these four species depend upon **open natural ecosystems**, which include habitats like grasslands, semi-arid landscapes, desert, croplands, hilly scrublands, and fallow lands.

- ⊕ **Threats to these ecosystems:** Expansion of power infrastructure, intensification of agriculture, introduction of invasive species, and conversion of grasslands into woodlands through afforestation.

Update to IUCN Red List

► **More than half of bird species globally are in decline** primarily due to habitat loss and degradation, driven by agricultural expansion and intensification and logging.

- ⊕ Birds play **vital roles in ecosystems** and for people, serving as pollinators, seed dispersers, pest controllers, scavengers and ecosystem engineers.

► **Three species of Arctic seal** have moved **closer to extinction** with primary threat being sea ice loss driven by global warming.

- ⊕ **Seals, a keystone species**, play a central role in food web, consuming fish and invertebrates and recycling nutrients.

► **Green Sea Turtle**, a keystone species, has improved in status from Endangered to Least Concern, due to sustained conservation efforts.

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

- Established in **1964**, Red List is world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species.
- It divides species into **nine categories**: Not Evaluated, Data Deficient, Least Concern, Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered, Extinct in the Wild and Extinct.
- IUCN Red List is **updated at least twice each year**.

Also In News



Google's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hub

Google Announces **USD 15 Billion Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hub** in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

► This **Gigawatt-Scale Hub** constitutes **Google's largest-ever investment** in India and its **largest AI hub centre located outside the United States**.

► The investment spanning over **five years (2026–2030)** aligns with the **Viksit Bharat Vision** and would help meet the goals of **India AI Mission**.

Key Features

► **Purpose-built Data Centre Campus:** Bringing together advanced AI infrastructure, data centre capacity, large-scale renewable energy sources, and fibre-optic network, in one place.

► **Construction of New International Subsea Gateway:** Including multiple **international subsea cables** to land in Visakhapatnam (India's Eastern Coast).



Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)

The **8th Session** of the CCSCH began in Guwahati. **About Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH).**

► It is one of the **subsidiary bodies** under **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** for spices and culinary herbs to elaborate standards in harmonization with worldwide standards.

- ⊕ **CAC or Food Code** is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.

- ⊕ Part of the **Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme**.

► Established in **July 2013** by the CAC at its 36th meeting held at **Rome**.

► India is the **host country** and **Spices Board, Kochi** act as the **secretariat** for CCSCH.





LIMBS

Ministry of Law and Justice launches "Live Cases" Dashboard under **Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS)**.

- It presents real-time data visualization of court cases, enabling proactive decision-making and better inter-ministerial coordination.

About LIMBS

- LIMBS is a **web-based litigation monitoring system** from central government's perspective.
- It is an **easy to access online tool to monitor the court cases** on 24x7 basis in a more transparent, effective and proactive manner during the entire life cycle of a litigation.



Nile River

Heavy Rains and Rising Water levels along the **Nile River** affected many in South Sudan.

About Nile River

- Longest River** in the World.
- Runs across **11 African Countries**.
 - Egypt, Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan.
- Originates after the **Blue and White Nile rivers** meet in **Khartoum**, Sudan to form the River Nile, which flows northwards through Egypt to the **Mediterranean Sea**.
 - White Nile** begins at **Lake Victoria** and flows through Uganda and South Sudan, while the **Blue Nile** begins at **Lake Tana** in Ethiopia.



Operation Chakra V

Recently, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka under **Operation Chakra- V**.

About Operation Chakra- V

Aim: To bring cybercriminals to justice and safeguard citizens across borders from digital exploitation.



World Economic Outlook (WEO)

IMF projected India's GDP growth rate for 2025-26 to **6.6% (6.4% earlier)** and **6.2% for 2026-27** in its WEO.

- Global growth is projected to **slow from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026**.

About World Economic Outlook

- Published by :** International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Purpose:** It presents **analyses and projections** of the world economy in the near and medium term.
- It is usually **published twice a year** with updates in between.



National Security Guard (NSG)

Government is setting up NSG hub in Ayodhya, with six other NSG hubs functional in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Jammu.

About NSG

- NSG is Federal Contingency World Class Zero Error Force to deal with **anti-terrorist activities in all its manifestation**.
 - NSG was modelled on the pattern of the **SAS of the UK and GSG-9 of Germany**.
 - It is a task-oriented Force and has two complementary elements in the form of the **Special Action Group (SAG) and the Special Ranger Groups (SRG)**.
- Established:** 1986 through National Security Guard Act, 1986.
- Ministry :** Ministry of Home Affairs.



Major and Minor Minerals

Ministry of Mines classifies limestone as a major mineral.

- Earlier limestone was classified as minor mineral as well as major mineral depending upon the end use.

About Major and Minor minerals

- Under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, minerals are broadly classified in two categories, i.e. major minerals and minor minerals.
- The major minerals** cover fuel minerals consisting of coal, lignite, petroleum & natural gas and metallic minerals including atomic minerals and non-metallic minerals.
- Minor minerals** consist of materials such as marble, slate, shale etc.
- MMDR Act gives State Governments the power to make rules for minor minerals.



Mini Warm Pool

Scientists have uncovered that Arabian Sea Mini Warm Pool (MWP) acts as a self-correcting mechanism that helps the monsoon recover from the disruptions caused by the previous El Niño.

About Arabian Sea Mini Warm Pool (MWP)

- The **Arabian Sea MWP** is a **small patch** of unusually warm sea surface temperatures (SST) in the Arabian Sea, especially the southeastern part (**near the Kerala coast**).
 - A warm pool is defined as a **body of very warm water**, typically with sea surface temperatures exceeding 28.5°C, that plays a **significant role in influencing regional climate and weather patterns**.
- Duration:** Forms every year during April and May, just before the onset of the Indian Summer Monsoon.