

Haryana Forest Census

Why in News?

According to the first state-wide tree census there are around **4.1 crore trees outside designated forests in Haryana,** with **neem, shisham, pipal, bargad and eucalyptus** being the most common species.

Key Points

- Approximately 150 surveyors, taxonomists, and technical staff were engaged in the project for a duration of 13 months to assist authorities in making well-informed decisions regarding green cover management in the state.
 - It provides data on the number of trees in each district outside forest areas. The highest tree counts were found in Yamunanagar, Ambala, Sirsa, Bhiwani, and Hisar.
 - Faridabad had the lowest count, with Kurukshetra, Palwal, Gurgaon, and Rohtak following suit.
- Covering only 6.7% of its total area, Haryana has the smallest forest and tree cover in India. The <u>National Forest Policy</u> aims for a 20% coverage for each state.
 - Out of 22 districts in Haryana, 21 have less than 20% forest and tree cover.
 - Karnal ranks the lowest with 1.8%, Panchkula tops the list with 47.4%, and Gurgaon stands sixth at 12.9%.
- The state is witnessing a rapid decline in tree cover too, as reported by the <u>Forest Survey of India</u>, with a 140 sq km reduction in the tree cover (excluding forest area) from 2019 to 2020.
 - Forest department officials are planning to enhance conservation efforts using census data.
 - They are advocating that the government earmark at least 25% of panchayat and common lands for plantations, institutions should have 33% of their area under tree cover, and urban local bodies should focus on developing green spaces in cities, drawing inspiration from Hyderabad's initiatives.
 - Emphasizing the importance of high-quality seedlings, officials stressed that using them is crucial for ensuring the survival and growth of trees.

National Forest Policy

- India's forests are currently governed by the National Forest Policy, 1988
- It has environmental balance and livelihood at its centre.
- Salient Features and Goals:
 - Maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and restoration of ecological balance.
 - Conservation of Natural Heritage (existing).
 - Checking Soil Erosion and Denudation in catchment areas of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.
 - Checking extension of sand dunes in desert areas of Rajasthan and along coastal tracts.
 - Substantially increasing Forest/Tree Cover through Afforestation and Social Forestry.
 - Taking steps to meet requirements of fuel, wood, fodder, minor forest produces, soil and timber of Rural and Tribal Population.
 - Increasing the productivity of Forests to meet National Needs.
 - Encouraging efficient utilization of Forest Produce and Optimum Use of Wood (Timber).
 - Generation of Work Opportunities, the involvement of Women.

Forest Survey of India

- The Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun has been conducting biennial (once every two years) assessments of forest cover since 1987, and the findings are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR).
- As per the latest assessment in ISFR 2021, India's total forest and tree cover stands at 8,09,537 square kilometers, which accounts for 24.62% of the country's geographical area.
- Notably, this represents an increase of 2261 square kilometers compared to the ISFR 2019 assessment, indicating positive strides in forest conservation efforts.

The Vision

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