



Sadbhavna Sammelan in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 22 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, on the left bank of 'Har Ki Paudi' in Haridwar, Uttarakhand tourism minister organised a two-day 'Sadbhavna Sammelan'.

- Thousands of people assembled for the conclave in which the minister spoke on **spirituality and importance of the [Ganga](#)** for Hindus.

Key Points

- Flowing for over **2,600 km across northern and eastern India**, the Ganga is considered a goddess and a focus of religious devotion for Hindus.
 - The river is **source of drinking water** for more than 40% of India's 1.4 billion population living in the [Gangetic river basin](#) spread across six states and a union territory between Uttarakhand and West Bengal.
- According to [Jal Shakti ministry](#) data, around three million litres of sewage is emptied into the Ganga everyday and only about half of that is treated.
 - In the holy city of Varanasi alone, it is estimated that 4,000 bodies are burnt on the banks of the river everyday.
 - Dams in Uttarakhand block the river flow, turning the river into a stream at several places during the summer months.
 - The **hydropower projects** in the state are mostly run of the river (ROR), except the [Tehri Dam Project](#), which is a storage project for hydropower development and augments the non-monsoon river flows.
 - According to the [Central Pollution Control Board's \(CPCB\)](#), testing of samples from 59 of the 97 water quality monitoring stations along the river the **faecal coliform** in the river was above the permissible level at 70% of the locations in January 2023.
 - Faecal coliform is a **group of bacteria** found in the **gut and faeces of warm-blooded animals** and its contamination indicates presence of human faecal matter.
- In 2024, the [Namami Gange scheme](#), a diverse set of interventions to clean and rejuvenate the river, reduced the "pollution load" in the river.
- The polluted river stretches were being **rejuvenated through approved action plans** to achieve the target of outdoor bathing criteria as notified by the environment ministry.

THE GANGA RIVER MAP



Namami Gange Programme

- It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, **approved as a 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014** to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- It is being operated under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- The program is being **implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and its state counterpart organizations** i.e State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).
- In **phase 2 of Namami Gange Programme (2021-26)**, the states will focus on expeditious completion of projects and preparation of bankable Detailed Project Report (DPR) for projects in Ganga tributary towns, cutting down delays.
 - Focus is also being given to the **revival of small rivers and wetlands**. For the future, each Ganga district is to develop scientific plans and health cards for at least 10 wetlands and adopt policies for reuse of treated water and other by-products.

2024

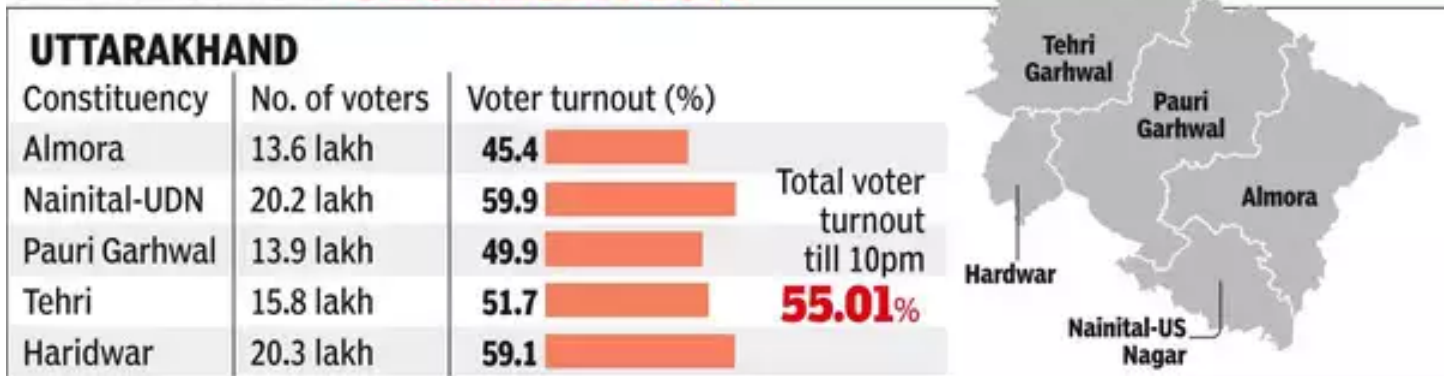
Why in News?

Uttarakhand recorded a **voter turnout of around 55.01 % across the five Lok Sabha seats** with a major dip of 6.3% votes (estimated) as compared to 61.4% in 2019 polls.

Key Points

- All **five constituencies** experienced a drop in voter participation in 2024 elections.
- The voter turnout was lowest in Almora at 45.4%, with the highest turnout seen in Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar constituency at 59.9%, followed by Haridwar at 59.7%, Tehri at 51.7%, Pauri Garhwal at 49.9%, and the SC reserve seat of Almora at 45.4%, as reported by the **official Election Commission of India app**.
- Uttarakhand has a collective of **83.2 lakh general electors** and additionally **93,357 service voters**.

SEAT-WISE SEGREGATION



Voter Turnout App

- This application was launched on **18th April 2019** by the **Election Commission of India to increase citizen participation in elections** and to provide instant information about voter turnout on the voting day.
- It is used to **display real time voter turnout details** including Male, Female and Third Gender in **each Assembly Constituency/Parliamentary Constituency**. This app can be used by citizens to capture live voter turnout data.
- The Voter Turnout app allows citizens to get information about the estimated voter turnout for each state separately. The **app also allows users to share voting percentage** with their contacts via Facebook, Twitter, Gmail and WhatsApp. That means any person can share the percentage of real-time voting in his social media account.
- **No data can be pre-fed in the Voter Turnout App**. The Voter Turnout App is designed to show estimated voter turnout for each state and can be used up to the district and assembly constituency level. On the day of voting, state wise, district wise and assembly constituency wise voter turnout updates can be seen.

Election Commission of India (ECI)

About

- **Autonomous Constitutional Authority** - Administers Union/state election
 - LS, RS, State LA, the offices of the President and VP
- Estd - **25th Jan 1950** (National Voters' Day)



Constitutional Provisions

Part XV - Article 324 to 329

Structure

- 1 Chief Election Commissioner and 2 Election Commissioners **appointed by President**
- **Tenure- 6 years, or up to the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier
- Retiring ECs – **eligible for further appointment by the govt.**
- **Removal of CEC-** Resolution on the **ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity**, with majority of 2/3rd members present and voting, supported by more than 50% of the total strength of the house



Major Roles and Responsibilities

- Determining Electoral Constituencies
- Preparing/Revising electoral rolls
- Notifying the schedules and dates of elections
- **Registering political parties and granting them the status of national or state parties**
- Issuing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for political parties
- Advising the President on **matters concerning the disqualification of MPs**



Challenges

- Truncated Tenure of CEC
- Executive Influence in Appointments
- Dependence on Centre for Finance
- Lack of Independent Staff



Drishti IAS

Bhiwadi To Delhi-Mumbai Expressway | Rajasthan | 22 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, realtors body **Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI)** has urged the Rajasthan Government to **facilitate the linkage of Bhiwadi**, an emerging industrial and residential hub, to the **Delhi-Mumbai Expressway**.

Key Points

- **CREDAI NCR** Bhiwadi Neemrana requested this to not only **stimulate economic growth** but also facilitate **smoother movement of goods and people**, thereby **fostering regional development and prosperity**.
 - It is one of the Chapters of CREDAI NCR representing developers of **Bhiwadi, Dharuhera, and Neemrana**.
- They also suggested exploring the possibility of developing a road along the **Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)** with an interchange at the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.

Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI)

- CREDAI is the **apex organisation representing** more than **11,940 real estate developers** spread across 23 states and 170 city chapters.
- Since its **inception in the year 1999**, CREDAI has worked consistently to improve the standards of **fairness, transparency and ethical behavior in the real estate sector**.

Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)

- It is a **high speed and high capacity railway corridor that is exclusively meant for the transportation of freight**, or in other words, goods and commodities.
- DFC involves the **seamless integration of better infrastructure** and state of the art technology.
- **DFC consists of two arms:**
 - **Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC):**
 - It starts at **Sahnewal (Ludhiana) in Punjab** and ends at **Dankuni in West Bengal**.
 - The EDFC route has **coal mines, thermal power plants and industrial cities**. Feeder routes are also being made for these.
 - The EDFC route covers Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal
 - The **World Bank is funding** a majority of the EDFC.
 - The **351-km-long 'New Bhaupur-New Khurja section'** will decongest the existing Kanpur-Delhi main line and double the speed of freight trains from 25 kmph to 75 kmph.
 - **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC):**
 - The other arm is the around **1,500-km WDFC from Dadri in Uttar Pradesh to Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Mumbai**, touching all major ports along the way.
 - The WDFC covers Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.
 - It is **being funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency**.

Boost for Artisans in Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 22 Apr 2024

Why in News?

The Rajasthan government is planning to implement an **'integrated cluster development scheme'**, which will help boost the productivity and quality of handicrafts, handlooms, and [Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises \(MSME\)](#) sectors.

- A draft had already been prepared and suggestions were being sought from stakeholders.

Key Points

- **Cluster development schemes** are being run by various central government ministries such as MSME, textiles, food processing, information and technology, and commerce and industry to support MSMEs.
- According to the draft policy, there are **four main components of the scheme:**
 - The key component includes **support for artisans, craftsmen, and weavers** for undertaking soft interventions for capacity building, operation of the raw material bank for easy availability of resources, and market development through e-commerce platforms.
 - The other is support for MSME clusters for establishing **Common Facility Centres (CFCs)** with assistance from the state government for projects of up to Rs 5 crore.
 - Another component notes infrastructure development for existing clusters in **non-Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO)** industrial areas and for greenfield clusters in non-RIICO industrial areas.
- The draft policy says that for implementation of the cluster development project related to artisans, craftsmen and weavers, a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** will be constituted as a partnership firm and/or a trust or society or co-operative society or company or producer company etc. with at least ten artisans, craftsmen and/or weavers, having registered artisan ID card. Artisans, craftsmen, and weavers practicing their trade in Rajasthan will be eligible to be part of the SPV.

Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO)

- It is a premier agency of the Government of Rajasthan that has played an important role in the industrial development of Rajasthan, it was **formed in 1980**.
- A Government enterprise established under **Companies Act, 1956** on 28th March 1969 as Rajasthan State Industrial & Mineral Development Corporation (RSIMDC) was divided into two entities on 1st January 1980:
 - Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Limited (**RIICO**)
 - Rajasthan State Mineral Development Corporation (**RSMDC**)

Deemed Forest Status | Rajasthan | 22 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court asked the state to highlight the “**steps being taken for identification and survey of Orans, De-Vans, Rundhs among others such groves as forest land**”. In response to this the Rajasthan government finally notified its sacred groves, known as Orans, as “**deemed forest**”.

Key Points

- Orans are a vital part of community life in Rajasthan community forests that are sometimes centuries old, traditionally seen as sacred, preserved and managed by rural communities, with local laws and rules governing their use.
 - Pastoralists take their livestock to the Orans for grazing.
 - These also serve as places for the communities to congregate for social events and festivals.
 - They are also the natural habitat for the critically endangered **Great Indian Bustard (GIB)**.
- The **Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980** had certain restrictive provisions, wherein the Centre’s approval was required to convert the status of forest to non-forest land. But in the amended FCA, the clearance of deemed, unclassified and private forests can be done by the state government itself.
- In a Supreme Court case where the constitutionality of these amendments has been challenged, the Court noted in an interim order that deemed forests as per the **1996 Godavarman case** should be protected.

Orans

- These are community-conserved green spaces that include indigenous trees, such as **Khejri (*Prosopis cineraria*) and Rohida (*Tecomella undulata*)**, and are usually dedicated to local deities.
- They were on the verge of destruction as revenue records marked them as a culturable wasteland of government land that could be brought under cultivation. This made it easier for Orans to be allotted for non-forest activities.

Special Breed Cows in Madhya Pradesh | Madhya Pradesh | 22 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, **Madhya Pradesh** Chief Minister welcomed a pair of **Punganur cows**, specially brought from Andhra Pradesh.

Key Points

- The Punganur cow is a dwarf cattle breed native to the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. It is one of the **world's smallest humped cattle breeds**.
- It has **high resilience to drought** and can adapt to low-quality feed.
- It is also **prized for its milk**, which boasts a higher fat content, making it ideal for producing ghee.
 - A Punganur cow can give around 1 to 3 litres a day, and the milk fat content is 8% as compared to 3 to 4% in other native breeds.

- The milk is also rich in nutrients such as **Omega fatty acids, calcium, potassium, and magnesium.**
- It has a **broad forehead and short horns.** The horns are crescent-shaped and often lose curving backward and forward in males and lateral and forward in females.
- Punganur cows are considered **eco-friendly, requiring less water, feed, and space** compared to hybrid breeds.
- Many temples in Andhra Pradesh, including the famous **Tirupati Tirumala Temple,** use the milk of a Punganur cow for **Ksheera Abhishekam (milk offering to the deity).**

