



Current Affairs of the Day

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EIA norms will make polluter pay heavy penalty: Javadekar

- Among the key motives of the proposed Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2020 (EIA 2020) was to bring environmental violators under a regulatory regime by imposing a heavy penalty on them, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said.

Criticism:

- A key criticism was a clause that allowed illegal projects to be approved post-facto.
- That is, it could have been set up in contravention of existing laws but managers of the project could later on approach a dedicated Expert Appraisal Committee, called a “violations committee”, that would impose a fine and lay down additional conditions and thereby possibly legalise the company’s operations.

Value Added Information

The key points of dispute with the proposed draft are that:

- It shortens the period of public consultation hearings to a maximum of 40 days.
- It reduces from 30 to 20 days the time provided for the public to submit their responses during a public hearing for any application seeking environmental clearance.
- It also allows the declaration of some areas as “economically sensitive areas” without a public hearing or environmental clearance, and several “red” and “orange”-classified toxic industries could now operate as close as 0-5 km from a Protected Area in “callous disregard” for forests.
- The increased validity of the environment clearances for mining projects (50 years versus 30 years currently) and river valley projects (15 years versus 10 years currently) raises the risk of irreversible environmental, social and health consequences on account of the project remaining unnoticed for long.

What is EIA?

- EIA is an important process for evaluating the likely environmental impact of a proposed project. It is a process whereby people’s views are taken into



consideration for granting final approval to any developmental project or activity. It is basically, a decision-making tool to decide whether the project should be approved or not.

The EIA process involves:

- Screening: this stage decides which projects need a full or partial assessment study.
- Scoping: this stage decides which impacts are necessary to be assessed. This is done based on legal requirements, international conventions, expert knowledge and public engagement. This stage also finds out alternate solutions.
- Assessment & evaluation of impacts and development of alternatives: this stage predicts and identifies the environmental impacts of the proposed project and also elaborates on the alternatives.
- EIA Report: in this reporting stage, an environmental management plan (EMP) and also a non-technical summary of the project's impact is prepared for the general public. This report is also called the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Decision making: the decision on whether the project is to be given approval or not and if it is to be given, under what conditions.
- Monitoring, compliance, enforcement and environmental auditing: monitoring whether the predicted impacts and the mitigation efforts happen as per the EMP.

What is polluter pays principle?

- The 'polluter pays' principle is the commonly accepted practice that those who produce pollution should bear the costs of managing it to prevent damage to human health or the environment.
- For instance, a factory that produces a potentially poisonous substance as a byproduct of its activities is usually held responsible for its safe disposal
- It is regarded as a regional custom because of the strong support it has received in most Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Community (EC) countries



- The Polluter Pays principle was propounded in the OECD Guiding Principles Concerning International Economic Aspects of Environmental Policies, 1972.
- India has time and again vouched for the implementation of 'Polluter Pays' principle on international carbon emissions.
- Further, Ex-Chief Justice of India Thakur had said that an international framework should be evolved to apply the polluter pays principle to advanced economies like the U.S.

Basmati battle boils over as Chouhan joins issue

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday termed "politically motivated" his Punjab counterpart Amarinder Singh's appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene against the State's claim for **geographical indication (GI) tag** for basmati rice.
- Capt. Singh had said GI tagging of Madhya Pradesh basmati rice would negatively impact Punjab's agriculture and India's exports. Further, he said any dilution of registration might give advantage to Pakistan.

Value Added Information

GI (Geographical Indicator) Tags:

- GI status is an indication that identifies goods as produced from a particular area, which has special quality or reputation attributable to its geographical origin.
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003
- The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name.
- In India, a GI's registry operates in Chennai in accordance with the provisions of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999, which came into effect in September 2003.



Japan marks 75 years of atomic bombing

- Japan on Thursday marked 75 years since the world's first atomic bomb attack, with the coronavirus pandemic forcing a scaling back of ceremonies to remember the victims.

Value Added Information

Background:

- **Hiroshima and Nagasaki** have been the last two cities to be destroyed by nuclear weapons. On August 6, 1945, the US dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, and three days later, on August 9, **another atomic bomb named Fat Man** was **dropped on Nagasaki**.
- The two bombs killed over 2,00,000 people, some of them instantaneously, and others within five months.
- Around 2,00,000 people or more who survived the bombings of these two cities, most of them injured, have been called the hibakusha.
- Due to the long-lasting effects of radiation exposure as well as the mental trauma they underwent, the plight of these survivors has been difficult.

Current Nuclear Threats:

- Since 1945, the US, the Soviet Union/Russia, the UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea have armed themselves with nuclear weapons. These modern weapons are much more destructive in comparison to those that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Over 1,26,000 nuclear weapons have been built since the beginning of the atomic age and over 2,000 of them have been used in nuclear tests, above and below the ground, causing grave and long-lasting damage to the environment and public health.
- An appreciation of the scale of the potential damage and a realisation that **nuclear weapons could be launched at any moment against any target** around the world should instil a sense of vulnerability in all of us.
- There is **no realistic way to protect ourselves against nuclear weapons**, whether they are used deliberately, inadvertently, or accidentally.
- The **invention of ballistic missiles** and their great speed of delivery has made it impossible to intercept nuclear weapons once they are launched. Neither



fallout shelters nor ballistic missile defence systems have succeeded in negating this vulnerability.

Idea of deterrence:

- The use of nuclear weapons is impossible because of deterrence. The **idea of deterrence** implies that nuclear weapons are so destructive that no country would use them because **such use would invite retaliation in kind**, and no political leader would be willing to risk the possible death of millions of their citizens.
- Deterrence enthusiasts claim that **nuclear weapons do not just protect countries against the use of nuclear weapons by others**, but even **prevent war and promote stability**.
- The apparent efficacy of deterrence in some cases may have been due to the more credible prospect of retaliation with conventional weapons.
- Strategic planners routinely use worst-case assumptions about the intentions and capabilities of other countries to argue for the acquisition of greater destructive capabilities, driving endless upgrades of nuclear arsenals, and offering a rationale for new countries to acquire nuclear weapons.
- In several historical instances, what prevented the use of nuclear weapons was not control practices but **either their failure or factors outside institutional control**. The most famous of these cases is the **1962 Cuban Missile Crisis**.

Need for Nuclear Disarmament:

- Most nations having nuclear weapons are **making a strategic excuse** for using it for defensive purpose as they are vulnerable to various attacks without these destructive weapons which are not true in the multipolar world.
- **Economically, nuclear weapons programs divert public funds** from health care, education, disaster relief and other vital services.
- **Environmentally**, nuclear weapons are the only devices ever created that have the capacity to destroy all complex life forms on Earth.
- **Nuclear weapons pose a direct** and constant threat to people everywhere.
- The humanitarian issue, the abolition of nuclear weapons is an urgent humanitarian necessity as their uses cause most catastrophic consequences.



- It can lead to **nuclear terrorism**, nuclear weapons can be used by the insurgents or terrorist groups.

India's stand on Disarmament:

- India has always been an **ardent supporter of multilateral nuclear disarmament** and non-proliferation efforts.
- India proposed a **comprehensive proposal for "complete and universal nuclear disarmament"** to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament in 1988.
- In 1996, India, one amongst the "Group of 21", submitted a Programme of Action calling for "phased elimination of nuclear weapons" to the Conference of Disarmament.
- India reiterated its commitment to a Nuclear Weapons Convention calling for a verifiable and non-discriminatory elimination of all nuclear weapons.
- India's decision to not sign the **1968 "discriminatory" nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT)** and, a few years later, to conduct a "**peaceful nuclear test**", questions its credibility as a serious proponent of nuclear disarmament but India always claims complete disarmament and not in favour of partial disarmament which NPT defines.

Inflation to stay elevated: RBI

- India's GDP will shrink in 2020-21, while inflation will continue to stay elevated in the coming months, the Reserve Bank of India said on Thursday. However, the RBI refrained from projecting an estimate for the contraction, with an early containment of the COVID-19 pandemic being the only hope for a positive surprise.
- The RBI is hopeful of inflation easing during the second half of 2020-21. Headline inflation had gone up from 5.8% in March to 6.1% in June 2020, with price pressures evident across items, including food. A good monsoon and a bumper kharif crop could ease food prices, especially those of protein-based food items and vegetables that are propping up food inflation, the central bank noted.