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20 February 2024

National and International News

Supreme Court Upholds Broad Definition of Forest

Verdict on woods

Some of the observations made by the SC over the pleas challenging the 2023 amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980



- The “all-encompassing” dictionary meaning will continue to hold field until the States and Union Territories prepare a consolidated record of forest lands

- Environment Ministry should issue a circular in this regard to the States and Union Territories

- Establishment of “zoos or safaris” must have the final approval of the top court

Context:

- The Supreme Court has instructed the Central government to adhere to the **broad definition of 'forest' for now, as per a 1996 order.**
- This decision will lead to **1.97 lakh square km of undeclared forest land** being included in the definition of 'forest'.

Key points:

- A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, issued this directive while hearing petitions challenging the 2023 amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- The Act was originally **enacted to prevent further deforestation and ecological imbalance.**

Recommendations:

- The 2023 amendments had narrowed the definition of forest to include only declared forests and lands recorded as forests in government records after 1980.
- However, the court emphasized the need to follow the **dictionary meaning of 'forest', as established in the T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad case.**
- The court clarified that 'forest' should not be limited to lands recorded as forests in government records.
- It directed States and Union Territories to compile a **consolidated record of all lands recorded as 'forest'** in government records, and instructed the **Environment Ministry to publish these records on its website by April 15, 2024.**
- Additionally, the court mandated that the **establishment of zoos or safaris by any government or authority must receive final approval from the Supreme Court.**
- The case is set to be heard again in **July 2024.**



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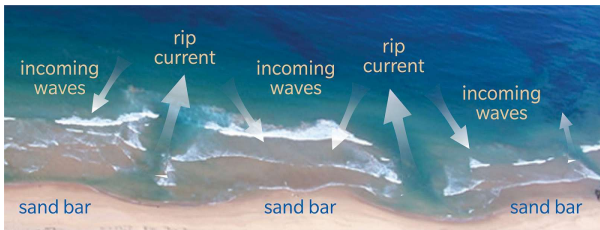
Morodharo

- Archaeologists recently uncovered a **fortified Harappan settlement called Morodharo in the Kutch District, Gujarat.**
- Dating back to **2600-1900 BCE**, it features a **102m by 58m** fortification wall averaging **3.3m in thickness.**
- The settlement includes a **10x10m platform and a well.**
- Burial cairns and Harappan pottery were found, resembling items from **Dholavira.**

Key features of IVC:

- The Harappan civilization was the **first urban civilization in South Asia**, covering approximately **800,000 sq km.**
- Major Harappan cities included **Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Dholavira, Lothal, Surkotada, Kalibangan, Banawali, and Rakhigarhi.**
- The civilization's town planning featured a rectangular grid pattern, planned streets and alleyways, fortifications, and division into an upraised citadel and lower town.
- Harappans extensively used **burnt bricks** and had well-developed residential areas with multiple-story houses, courtyards, and sophisticated drainage systems.

RIP Currents



Context:

- The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad** and the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** are collaborating on a project to continually monitor and issue operational forecast alerts regarding **rip currents.**

About:

- Rip currents are powerful water flows **moving from a beach towards the open ocean, sea, or lake.**
- They can exceed 45 meters (150 feet) in width but are usually less than 9 meters (30 feet) wide, with speeds up to 8 kilometers (5 miles) per hour.
- Rip currents are considered one of the most **dangerous natural hazards globally.**

How are they formed?

- Rip currents form when **waves break near the shoreline, piling up water** between the breaking waves and the beach.
- One of the ways this **water returns to sea is to form a rip current, a narrow stream** of water moving swiftly away from shore, often perpendicular to the shoreline.

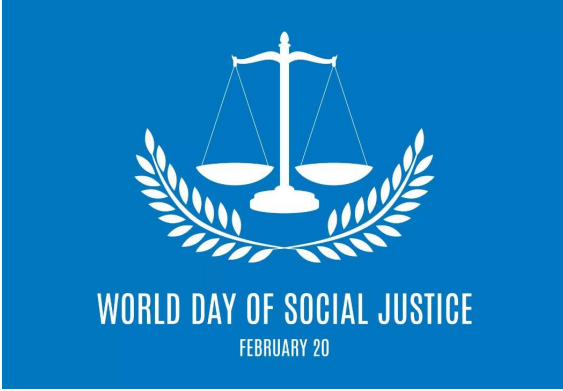


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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

World Day of Social Justice



Context:

- The **United Nations General Assembly** designated February 20th as the annual World Day of Social Justice, starting from the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, in a declaration made on November 26, 2007.
- The theme of **World Day of Social Justice 2024** is **"Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances"**.

Social Justice in Indian Scenario

- In India, **social justice is a multifaceted concept** that encompasses a wide range of issues, **including casteism, discrimination against women, and economic inequality.**
- The Indian Constitution adopts this concept in various provisions, including the **preamble in the form of 'Socialist', 'Social and Economic Justice', 'Equality', etc.**, which clearly states that the state is extensively involved in the social welfare of people and endeavors to establish an equal society.

Govt Schemes that aid Social justice:

- **MGNREGA**
- **Skill India Mission**
- **ICDS**
- **PM Awas Yojana**
- **Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)**
- **PM-JANMAN**

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