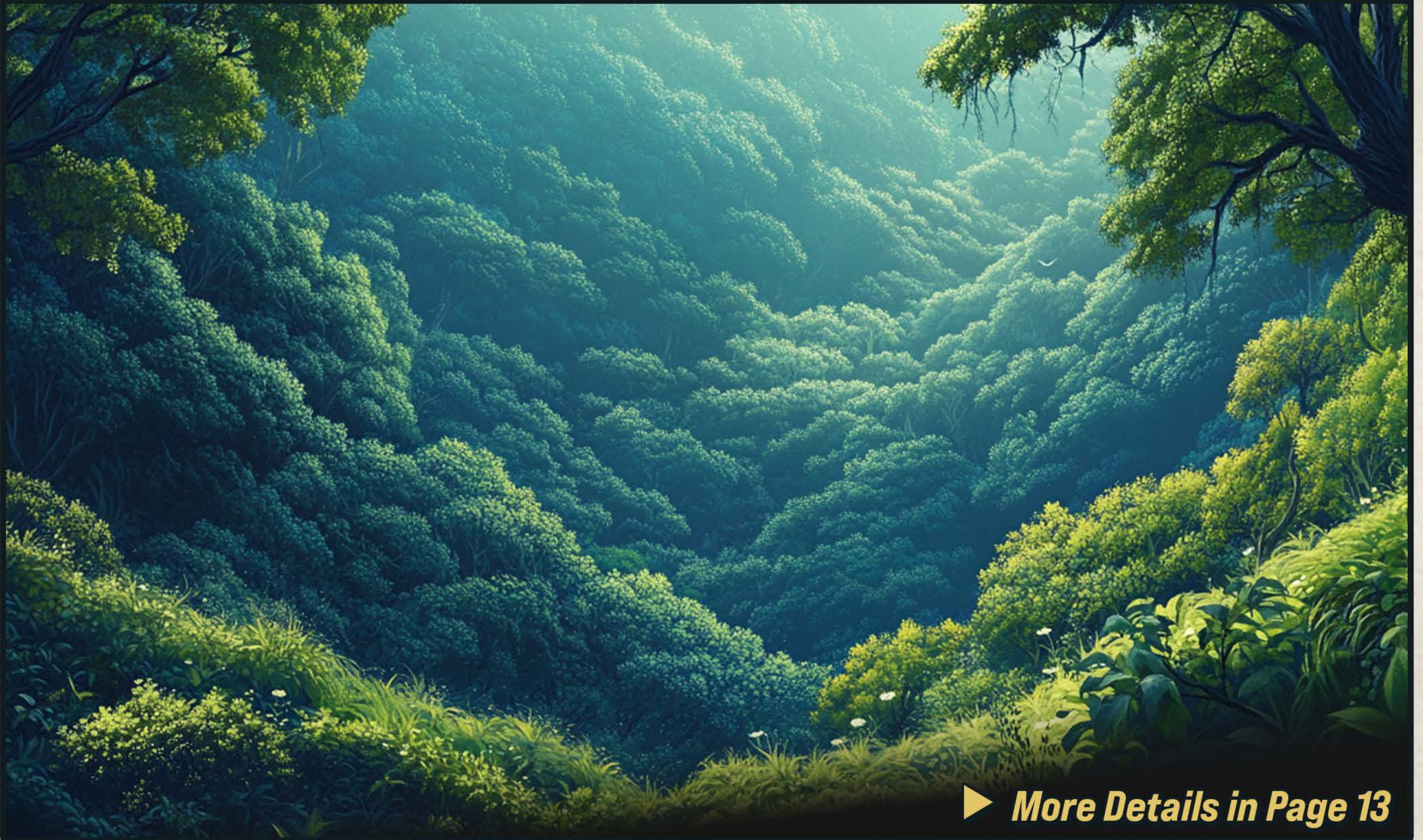


# WEEKLY NEWS

January 01-04, 2025

## Chhattisgarh - Forest Ecosystem to Green GDP



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## India's Fourth Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC




► *More Details in Page 09*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- UDISE+ 2023-24
- Global Remittances 2024 Milestone

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# India's Record Share in Global Remittances: A 2024 Milestone

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ India Secures 14.3% of global remittances in 2024, reaching an all-time high.
- ➡ World Bank reported India's remittances at **\$129 billion**, leading the global rankings.

## ● Global Trends in Remittance Flows

- ➡ Top 5 Recipients in 2024:

1. India
2. Mexico
3. China
4. Philippines
5. Pakistan

- ➡ **Growth in Low- and Middle-Income Countries:** Projected remittances at **\$685 billion**, a growth of **5.8%**.
- ➡ **China's Decline:** Share dropped to 5.3%, its lowest in two decades, due to reduced low-skilled emigration and aging demographics.

## ● Factors Driving High Remittances in India

- ➡ **Largest Diaspora:** Over **18 million Indians** living abroad (UN World Migration Report 2024).
- ➡ **Shift in Migration Patterns:** Increasing migration to high-income countries like the **US, UK, and Australia**.
- ➡ **Skilled and Unskilled Labor:** Diverse migrant base: IT professionals, healthcare workers, semi-skilled, and unskilled laborers.

## ● Significance of High Remittances

- ➡ **For Households:** Directly improve living standards by funding
- ➡ **Essential expenses:** Food, healthcare, education.
- ➡ **For the Economy:** Major foreign exchange source reduces dependence on foreign aid. Addresses current account deficits and fiscal shortfalls.

● **Way Forward**

- ⇒ **Encourage skill development** for enhanced opportunities abroad.
- ⇒ **Facilitate smoother remittance transfers** through policy frameworks.
- ⇒ **Foster ties with Indian diaspora** for mutual economic growth.



# RBI's Financial Stability Report (December 2024)

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the **Financial Stability Report (FSR)** for December 2024.
- ➡ The report provides insights into the **stability of the Indian financial system** and highlights key emerging risks.

## ● Key Highlights

- ➡ **Resilient Indian Economy:** GDP growth projected at 6.6% for **2024-25**, driven by revival in rural consumption, government spending and services exports.
- ➡ **Improved Government Finances:**
  - Central Government's debt-to-GDP ratio** expected to fall from **62.7%** (2020-21) to **56.8%** (2024-25).
  - States' outstanding liabilities** projected to reduce from **31%** to **28.8%** over the same period.
- ➡ **Stable Financial System:**
  - Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) showing improved soundness due to strong profitability, declining non-performing assets (NPAs), and adequate capital and liquidity buffers.

## ● About Financial Stability Report (FSR)

- ➡ **Publication:** Half-yearly report.
- ➡ **Contributors:** Financial sector regulators, including RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, and IRDA.
- ➡ **Purpose:**
  - Represents the collective assessment of the **Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)** subcommittee.
  - Highlights risks to the stability of India's financial ecosystem.

## ● **About FSDC**

- ➡ **Genesis:** Non-statutory body established in **2010** as the apex-level forum for financial stability.
- ➡ **Chairperson:** Union Finance Minister.
- ➡ **Members:**
  - Heads of financial regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDA, etc.).
  - Finance Secretary and other senior officials.
  - Reconstituted in **2018** to include additional members.
- ➡ **Functions:**
  - Focuses on financial stability, sector development, and inter-regulatory coordination.
  - Addresses systemic risks and ensures financial inclusivity.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Strengthen Economic Growth:** Ensure consistent support for rural consumption and exports.
- ➡ **Fiscal Prudence:** Sustain efforts to reduce government debt levels while maintaining essential public spending.
- ➡ **Banking Resilience:** Strengthen banking systems through robust risk management and enhanced liquidity measures.
- ➡ **Focus on Inter-regulatory Coordination:** Promote synergy among financial regulators for comprehensive stability.

# Special Package for DAP Fertilizer Subsidy

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ The Cabinet approved the extension of the **One-Time Special Package** for Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) beyond the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) framework.
- ➡ Initially approved in **July 2024**, the package ensures affordable DAP prices for farmers till **December 31, 2024**.
- ➡ The extension is effective from **January 1, 2025**, until further notice.

## ● About Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP)

- ➡ **Composition:** A widely used fertilizer containing **Phosphorus (P)** and **Nitrogen (N)**.
- ➡ **Benefits:** Essential for root development, flowering, and seed production.
- ➡ **Production:** Manufactured by reacting **phosphoric acid with ammonia** under controlled conditions.

## ● Fertilizer Subsidy in India

### ➡ Key Subsidy Schemes

**Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Fertilizers:** 100% subsidy released to fertilizer companies based on **Aadhaar-authenticated sales**.

**Urea Subsidy:** Farmers receive urea at a **statutory Maximum Retail Price (MRP)**. The subsidy covers the difference between farm gate delivery costs and market price realization.

**Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS):** Fixed subsidy for **Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) Fertilizers**, determined annually or semi-annually based on nutrient content.

### ➡ Recent Measures to Curb Fertilizer Overuse

**Neem-Coated Urea:** Mandatory **100% neem-coating** of urea to prevent misuse.

**Nano Fertilizers:** Introduction of **Nano Urea** by IFFCO.

**PM PRANAM:** Programme to reduce chemical fertilizer use through **awareness and restoration initiatives**.

**Alternative Fertilizers:** Promotion of **organic fertilizers, bio-fertilizers, and natural farming**.

● **Way Forward**

- ➡ Promote sustainable farming practices by increasing awareness about **alternative fertilizers**.
- ➡ Continue incentives for adopting **nano fertilizers** and **natural farming techniques**.
- ➡ Monitor fertilizer usage to balance affordability with environmental sustainability.



# UDISE+ 2023-24: Insights into School Education

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ The **Ministry of Education** released the **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2023-24** report.
- ➡ For the first time, **individual student-wise data** was collected nationwide, a practice introduced in **2022-23**.
- ➡ The report aligns with the recommendations of **NEP 2020**.

## ● Key Findings

### ➡ Student Enrolments

**Overall Decline:** Enrolment dropped from **25.18 crore (2022-23)** to **24.8 crore (2023-24)**.  
A reduction of approximately **1.55 crore students (~6%)** from **2018-19** to **2021-22**.

### ➡ Dropout Rates

**Foundational Level** (Pre-primary to Class 2): Zero dropout rate due to student admissions from Anganwadis and private pre-primary schools.

**Secondary Level** (Classes 9-12): Highest dropout rates recorded.

States with significant enrolment drops: **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra**.

### ➡ Retention and GER

**Retention Rate:** Higher at the **elementary level**.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** Slight dip at most levels, except for the secondary level. GER measures enrolment against the age-appropriate population for a given education level.

### ➡ School Infrastructure

States like **Assam, Odisha, and Karnataka** have **underutilized infrastructure** due to low student-to-school ratios.



## ● **About UDISE+**

- ➡ **Launched:** Developed in **2018-19** by the **Department of School Education & Literacy**.
- ➡ **Purpose:** Transitioned from manual paper-based data collection to an **online system**.
- ➡ **Scope:** Collects information on:
  - Schools:** Infrastructure, teachers, enrolments.
  - Students:** Examination results, retention, and dropout rates.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Address Declining Enrolments:** Develop policies to identify and tackle the reasons behind enrolment drops, especially in affected states.
- ➡ **Improve Secondary Education:** Introduce targeted interventions to reduce dropout rates at the secondary level.
- ➡ **Optimize Infrastructure:** Utilize underused school facilities in states like **Assam, Odisha, and Karnataka**.
- ➡ **Promote GER Improvement:** Strengthen enrolment drives and make education more accessible for all age groups.
- ➡ **Data Accuracy:** Leverage student-wise data to tailor educational strategies for better outcomes.

# India's Fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR-4) to UNFCCC

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ India submitted its Fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR-4) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- ➡ The report updates the Third National Communication (TNC) and provides India's National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory for 2020.
- ➡ Prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India's nodal body for climate reporting under Article 4.1 of UNFCCC.

## ● Key Highlights

### ➡ GHG Emissions

**Overall Decrease:** Reduced by **7.93%** in 2020 compared to 2019.

#### Sector-wise Emissions:

**Energy:** 75.66%

**Agriculture:** 13.72%

**Industrial Processes and Product Use:** 8.06%

**Waste:** 2.56%

- ➡ **Emission Intensity of GDP:** Reduced by **36%** between 2005 and 2020.
- ➡ **Share of Non-Fossil Energy:** Non-fossil energy sources constitute **46.52%** of India's installed electricity generation capacity (as of October 2024).
- ➡ **Carbon Sink Generation**

Additional carbon sink of **2.29 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>** created through **forest and tree cover** (2005-2021).

**Forest and Tree Cover:** Covers **25.17%** of India's total geographical area and has shown consistent growth.

## ● **India's Climate Initiatives**

### ➡ **International Collaborations**

**International Solar Alliance:** Promotes solar energy adoption globally through cooperation and technology sharing.

**Global Biofuel Alliance:** Enhances production and use of biofuels for sustainable energy.

**Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure:** Strengthens infrastructure to withstand disasters and improve resilience.

### ➡ **National Movements and Schemes**

**Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) Movement:** Advocates sustainable living practices to reduce environmental footprints.

**PM – Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana:** Focuses on solar power generation for free electricity.

**National Bio-Energy Programme:** Supports bio-energy production and use.

**National E-Bus Programme:** Promotes adoption of electric buses for sustainable urban transport.

## ● **Way Forward**

➡ **Expand Renewable Energy:** Increase investments in non-fossil energy to further reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

➡ **Enhance Carbon Sequestration:** Scale up forest and tree cover programs to boost carbon sinks.

➡ **Focus on Low-Emission Technologies:** Support industries in adopting low-emission processes.

➡ **Strengthen International Cooperation:** Lead global efforts in renewable energy, biofuel production, and climate-resilient infrastructure.

➡ **Promote Behavioral Change:** Amplify awareness campaigns under the **LiFE Movement** to encourage sustainable lifestyle choices.

# ***NPCIL Opens Doors for Private Sector Participation in Nuclear Sector***

## ● **Why in News?**

- ⇒ **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** has issued a **Request for Proposal (RFP)** to invite Indian users for the **220MWe Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs)** in both **Brown/Green fields**.
- ⇒ BSRs are based on **India's PHWR technology**, with a capacity of up to **220 MWe**, aligning with global trends of **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**, which range from **30 MWe to 300+ MWe**.

## ● **Significance of Private Sector Participation**

### ⇒ **Resource Mobilization**

Private sector participation could attract substantial investments in India's **nuclear infrastructure**.

This collaboration can bring **economies of scale**, with India aiming to raise **\$26 billion** for nuclear energy development.

### ⇒ **Technological Advancements and Innovations**

**Private sector involvement** can drive investment in **cutting-edge nuclear technologies**, such as **SMRs** and **advanced cooling systems**.

### ⇒ **Energy Transition Goals**

Private participation can help meet **India's energy transition targets**:

**500 GW** from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

Achieve **net-zero emissions by 2070**.

## ● **Challenges for Private Sector Participation**

- ⇒ **Legal Restrictions:** The **Atomic Energy Act of 1962** limits private sector involvement, particularly regarding **nuclear plant licensing**.
- ⇒ **Uncertainty in Liability Laws:** The **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010**, is under legal challenge, causing **regulatory uncertainty** for private sector engagement.
- ⇒ **Other Challenges:** **High initial costs** of nuclear projects due to their **capital-intensive nature**. **Public trust** in private nuclear operations needs to be built through **transparency** and **consistent performance**.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Reform Legal Framework:** Amend the **Atomic Energy Act** to facilitate greater private sector involvement.
- ➔ **Clear Liability Framework:** Address uncertainties surrounding the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act** to ensure smoother participation.
- ➔ **Foster Innovation:** Encourage private sector investment in **SMRs, advanced cooling technologies**, and other innovations.
- ➔ **Boost Public Trust:** Implement strong governance and transparency measures to build confidence in private nuclear operations.
- ➔ **Collaborate for Sustainable Growth:** Align private participation with **India's clean energy goals** and support long-term nuclear energy development.



# Chhattisgarh Links Forest Ecosystem to Green GDP

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ Chhattisgarh becomes the **first state** in India to **link its forest ecosystem** with **Green GDP**.
- ➡ The initiative emphasizes the contribution of forests to **environmental sustainability** and their role in the state's **economic progress**.
- ➡ **44% of Chhattisgarh's land** is covered by forests, which help mitigate climate change and provide **valuable forest products** like **tendu leaves, lac, honey, and medicinal plants**.

## ● Understanding Green GDP

### ➡ Definition and Genesis

**Green GDP** was coined in the late **1980s** to better reflect the impact of economic activities on the environment.

**Green GDP** is calculated as:

**Green GDP = Net Domestic Product - (Cost of Depletion of Natural Resources + Cost of Ecosystem Degradation).**

### ➡ Need for Green GDP

**Traditional GDP** overlooks the negative impacts of environmental depletion and degradation, often treating them as **economic gains**.

For example, cutting a forest and selling the timber increases GDP but harms long-term sustainability.

## ● Initiatives for Green GDP Accounting

- ➡ **SEEA**: The **System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA)**, introduced by the UN in 1993, standardizes concepts and methods to produce **internationally comparable** environmental statistics.
- ➡ **WAVES**: The **Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES)** initiative by the World Bank aims to integrate **natural capital** into national economic accounts for **sustainable development**.



## ● **Challenges in Implementing Green GDP**

- ➡ **Inconsistent Valuation:** Non-market techniques used to assess **environmental depletion** may lack consistency and reliability.
- ➡ **Lower GDP Figures:** Deducting **natural resource depletion** from GDP often results in lower figures, which may face resistance from policymakers and economists.
- ➡ **Political Resistance:** In some regions, such as the **U.S.**, **Green GDP** initiatives have faced resistance, possibly due to **political opposition** and **environmental politics**.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Standardize Valuation Techniques:** Develop more consistent and accurate methods for valuing **ecosystem services and natural resources**.
- ➡ **Policy Advocacy:** Increase awareness of the long-term benefits of Green GDP to overcome political resistance.
- ➡ **Global Cooperation:** Promote international standards and frameworks like **SEEA** and **WAVES** for better integration of **natural capital** in economic accounting.
- ➡ **State-Level Initiatives:** Encourage other states to adopt similar models to integrate **environmental accounting** into their economic strategies.



# Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** released the **Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025** for public consultation.
- ➡ These rules aim to facilitate the implementation of the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act)**.

## ● About the DPDP Act, 2023

### ➡ Background

**2011:** Justice A.P. Shah Committee recommended privacy legislation.

**2017:** Supreme Court, in the **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India case**, recognized privacy as a fundamental right.

- ➡ **Scope:** Covers **digital personal data processing** in India, whether collected online or offline and later digitized.

## ● Key Provisions - Obligations for Data Fiduciaries

### ➡ User Consent:

Personal data to be processed only after obtaining user consent.

Consent not required for **legitimate uses**, such as voluntary data sharing, government services, or medical emergencies.

**Children's Data:** Requires **verifiable consent** from parents or lawful guardians.

**Significant Data Fiduciaries:** Must appoint a **Data Protection Officer (DPO)** residing in India for grievance redressal.

### ➡ User Rights

Right to receive a summary from the Data Fiduciary on data processing methods and entities accessing their personal data.

### ➡ Data Breach Notification

Notify users and the **Data Protection Board (DPB)** immediately in case of breaches.

Submit a detailed report within **72 hours**.



## ● **Key Provisions - Obligations for Data Fiduciaries**

### ➡ **Data Retention**

Delete data after **3 years of inactivity**, providing a **48-hour prior notice**, unless legally required.

### ➡ **Children's Data**

Verify identity through **reliable IDs or government tokens**.

Parental consent not required for **essential services** like healthcare and education.

### ➡ **Enforcement**

**Data Protection Board (DPB)** to address personal data breach complaints with **civil court powers**.

## ● **Way Forward**

➡ **Strengthen Data Security:** Encourage robust mechanisms to safeguard user data.

➡ **Public Awareness:** Ensure users understand their rights under the Act.

➡ **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engage with industries, experts, and the public for fine-tuning the rules.

➡ **Global Alignment:** Align India's data protection framework with global best practices for seamless cross-border data flows.




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