

NEXT IAS

DAILY NEWS

ANALYSIS



14 July

Explained

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1. Who are qualified as ordinarily residents

Who are qualified as 'ordinarily resident'?

What does Section 20 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 state? Why are migrant workers vulnerable when it comes to classifying themselves as ordinarily resident in a particular constituency? Are NRIs allowed to vote? What does the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 govern?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

The Election Commission of India (EC) has initiated a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar. This has kindled the debate around the term 'ordinarily resident' for the purpose of being included in the electoral rolls of a constituency.

Who is 'ordinarily resident'?

The electoral rolls are prepared by the EC as per the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RP Act). Section 19 of the RP Act requires that a person is 'ordinarily resident' in a constituency for inclusion in its electoral roll.

Section 20 provides the meaning of the term 'ordinarily resident'. It specifies that a person shall not be deemed to be 'ordinarily resident' in a constituency only because he/she owns or possesses a dwelling house therein. However, a person temporarily absent from his/her place of residence shall continue to be 'ordinarily resident' therein. Persons who are (a) members of armed forces of the Union, (b) armed police force of a State serving outside that State, (c) employed by the Government of India in a post outside India or (d) holding a constitutional office declared by the President in consultation with the EC are considered, along with their spouse, to be 'ordinarily resident' in the constituency where they would have been 'ordinarily resident' but for such posting. Section 20A was added in 2010 to enable non-resident Indians who have shifted out of India, even for long term, to register and vote in the constituency in which their address as per passport is located.

The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 (REER), notified by the Central government in consultation with the EC, governs the preparation of, and



On a roll: An advertisement van for the SIR in Patna, Bihar on July 3. (PHOTO: SHREKHA KASHYAP)

inclusion/exclusion of names in the electoral rolls as per the provisions of the RP Act.

What are potential issues?

The requirement of being 'ordinarily resident' for inclusion in the electoral roll of a constituency is to ensure that the voter maintains real ties with the constituency that preserves representative accountability. It is also aimed at preventing fraudulent registrations.

The Gauhati High Court in the Manmohan Singh case (1999), indicated that the term 'ordinarily resident' shall mean a habitual resident of that place. It must be permanent in character and not temporary or casual. It must be a place where the person has the intention to

dwell permanently. A reasonable man must accept him/her as a resident of that place.

The issue arises when it comes to migrant labourers. The Periodic Labour Force Survey of 2020-21 estimated that around 11% of our population migrated due to employment related reasons. This translates to close to 15 crore voters being migrant labourers within or outside their States. Some of these migrations are seasonal in nature where the labourers return to their ordinary residence for some months of a year. Many migrant construction and security workers live in temporary shacks/residences at their place of work. They move from one location to another, within a State or even in different States, as part of their work. They return to the ordinary residence in

their home State at regular intervals. They exercise their right to vote in that place where their families and children live and where their properties exist. While they may not be residing permanently in such residence, the philosophy behind being 'ordinarily resident' as opted by the courts is broadly fulfilled with respect to that residence for such migrant workers.

Any migrant has the right to shift his/her vote to their new place of residence anywhere in India if they so desire. However, removal of migrant voters from the electoral roll of their original residence by following a strict interpretation of the term 'ordinarily resident' can vitiate the democratic process. It may result in their disenfranchisement as most of them would not be keen, and neither welcome, to register as voters in their temporary place of work.

What can be the way forward?

The RP Act provides the option to service voters, persons holding a declared office and NRIs to retain the vote in their constituency even though they may not be permanently residing in such place. While it may not be an apple-to-apple comparison, it must be noted that most labourers, short-term or long-term, migrate on account of lack of opportunities in their region. They continue to have close connections with their original residence and choose to retain their right to vote in such constituency. The RP Act or the REER may be suitably amended to preserve the choice of migrant labourers. Suitable mechanisms, acceptable to all stakeholders, to enable participation of migrant labourers in the elections should be explored. The issue of migrants enrolling more than once in different constituencies should be addressed separately through Aadhaar seeding.

Rangarajan R. is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. He currently trains at Officers IAS Academy. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

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The RP Act provides the option to service voters, persons holding a declared office and NRIs to retain the vote in their constituency even though they may not be permanently residing in such place.

Backdrop: Election Commission of India (EC) has initiated a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar.

Relevance: GS 2- Elections

The Election Commission of India has initiated a **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls in **Bihar**, sparking a debate on the interpretation of the term '**ordinarily resident**' for voter registration under the **Representation of the People Act, 1950**.

Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 (RER)

- Notified by the Central Government in consultation with the Election Commission.
- Governs **inclusion and exclusion** in electoral rolls.

- Defined under **Section 19** of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.
 - Section 19 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, defines the term "ordinarily resident" as it applies to the preparation of electoral rolls. It clarifies that a person is deemed to be ordinarily resident in a constituency if they reside there or intend to reside there, even if they are temporarily absent.

Section 20 of the RP Act, 1950

- Section 20 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, defines the term "ordinarily resident" for the purpose of electoral registration. It clarifies that a person is not considered an ordinary resident solely based on owning or possessing a dwelling house in a constituency. Additionally, temporary absence from one's ordinary residence does not disqualify them from being considered an ordinary resident. The section also addresses how to determine ordinary residence for individuals holding declared offices or having service qualifications.
- Includes those:
 - In **armed forces** or **state police** posted outside their state.
 - **Central government employees** posted abroad.
 - **Constitutional office holders** declared by the President.
- Their spouses are also deemed ordinarily resident at their original place of residence.

- Section 20A of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, deals with special provisions for citizens of India residing outside India to be registered as electors. It allows eligible Indian citizens living abroad to enroll in the electoral roll of their respective constituencies in India.
- Introduced in **2010**.
- **NRIs** can vote in the constituency linked to their **passport address**.

Challenges with Migrant Workers

- **11%** of population are **migrant workers** (~15 crore).
- Many live in **temporary accommodations** and migrate seasonally.
- They often prefer to **vote in their home constituency** where families reside.
- Strict interpretation of 'ordinarily resident' risks **disenfranchising** them.
- They may be **unwilling** or **ineligible** to register at their temporary work locations.

Judicial Interpretation

- Gauhati HC (Manmohan Singh case, 1999):
 - Ordinary residence implies **permanent, habitual, and intended dwelling**.
 - The person must be **reasonably accepted** by others as a resident.

Existing Special Provisions

- **Service voters, NRI voters, and constitutional office holders** can retain voting rights in original constituencies despite absence.

Way Forward

- **Amend RP Act / RER** to protect voting rights of **migrant workers**.
- Explore mechanisms for **remote or absentee voting**.
- Use **Aadhaar seeding** to prevent multiple registrations.
- Ensure inclusivity without compromising electoral integrity



PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1. With reference to the term "Ordinarily Resident" under the Representation of the People Act, 1950, consider the following statements:

1. A person is considered ordinarily resident if they reside or intend to reside in a constituency, even if temporarily absent.
2. Mere ownership of a house in a constituency qualifies a person as an ordinarily resident.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only**
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2 only
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Why must India recognise its open ecosystems?

Why must India recognise its open ecosystems?

Why are lands classified as 'wastelands' important? Are pastoral communities dependent on them?

Abi Tamim Vanak
Anuja Malhotra

The story so far:

Deserts are often imagined as failures of nature, and barren wastelands in need of redemption. This worldview fuels grand ambitions to “green” the desert, through afforestation, irrigation schemes, or even climate engineering. This gives way to the idea that deserts are broken ecosystems. So pervasive is this vilification, that land degradation is also known as “desertification”, and June 17 every year is celebrated as World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.

Are deserts important?

In truth, deserts are ancient, diverse, and resilient biomes, finely tuned to extremes. They occupy nearly one-third of the Earth's terrestrial surface, and are home to uniquely adapted plants, animals, and

human cultures. It is ironic that humans disregard deserts, when several early civilisations were set in desert climates, whether in early Mesopotamia, Egypt, or the Indus valley. Indeed, some historians argue that it is these very harsh desert conditions that prompted humans to develop complex societies and technologies that could invent ingenious ways of irrigation to survive in otherwise inhospitable conditions.

What about other open spaces?

India's relationship with open spaces is full of contradictions. On the one hand, we fetishise them. Real estate ads routinely promise sweeping lawns with names like Savana or Utopia. But when it comes to the country's own vast open natural ecosystems such as grasslands, savannas, scrublands and open woodlands, we have done the opposite. These landscapes have been systematically ignored in policy or worse,

actively erased. On official maps, millions of hectares of these ecosystems are classified as wastelands, a term inherited from colonial land-use categories. In policy terms, a wasteland is land waiting to be fixed, often by planting trees, converting it for agriculture or paving it over for industry. What should be protected and stewarded has instead become a target for transformation. India's deserts, grasslands and savannas are home to species found nowhere else: the Great Indian Bustard, the caracal, the Indian wolf etc. These ecosystems also store carbon, not in big trees above ground but rather, deep in the soil.

Equally important are the communities dependent on them. Millions of pastoral groups such as the Dhangar, Rabari, Kuruba etc. depend on these ecosystems for grazing. When we fence off grasslands or plant “forests” on them, it's not just ecology we damage but also livelihoods, mobility, and local knowledge systems. In

many cases, pastoralist groups are also stewards of biodiversity and ecosystem health. However, Indian grasslands and pastoralist systems have not received the desired protection and management.

What should be the road ahead?

Rather than trying to turn deserts into forests, we should study how life thrives without abundance. This is not to say that land degradation should not be addressed. Reversing degradation in drylands requires careful restoration that respects native vegetation, focuses on soil and moisture conservation, and draws from indigenous knowledge of land management. Low-tech solutions like water harvesting, rotational grazing, and protecting natural regrowth often outperform greenwashing projects that aim to plant millions of trees to “green” the desert. We need policies that recognise ecosystem diversity, reward soil carbon storage, and support pastoralist land use. A functioning desert or savanna, with its intricate food webs, seasonal rhythms, and cultural continuities, is far more alive than a failed monoculture plantation. Perhaps it is time to rename World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought to World Day to Combat Land Degradation, and give deserts their respectable name back.

The authors are with the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment.

Backdrop: Neglect of the Open ecosystem in India.

Relevance: GS 3/ Ecology and Environment

About the news



Deserts are frequently perceived as nature's failures—empty, barren lands awaiting correction. This mindset drives large-scale efforts to "green" them through afforestation, irrigation projects, or climate interventions, reinforcing the misconception that deserts are damaged or incomplete ecosystems

Open ecosystems are non-forested ecosystems characterized by a continuous ground layer of grasses and minimal or low tree cover, like savannas, Deserts, grasslands, and shrublands.

- **Large Coverage:** Deserts cover nearly **one-third of Earth's terrestrial surface**, making them a major global biome.
- **Ecological Importance:** These ecosystems support **unique biodiversity**, including endangered species like the **Great Indian Bustard**, **caracal**, and **Indian wolf**.
- **Carbon Storage:** They **store carbon in the soil**, making them crucial for climate mitigation, even without large trees.
- **Livelihood Support:** Millions of **pastoralist communities** (e.g., Dhangar, Rabari, Kuruba) depend on these landscapes for grazing and survival.
- **Cultural Importance:** Deserts support **distinct human cultures** that have adapted to extreme conditions over centuries.
- **Cradle of Civilisations:** Major early civilisations like **Mesopotamia**, **Egypt**, and the **Indus Valley** flourished in desert climates.
- **Innovation Driver:** Harsh desert environments prompted the development of **complex societies**, including advanced **irrigation and survival technologies**.

- India glorifies manicured open spaces (e.g., in real estate), yet neglects its natural open ecosystems like grasslands, savannas, scrublands, and open woodlands.
- **Mislabelled as Wastelands:** Millions of hectares are officially mapped as "wastelands", a colonial legacy, implying they need to be "fixed" through afforestation, agriculture, or industrial use.
- **Threat from Misguided Interventions:** Converting grasslands into forests or fencing them harms both **ecology and livelihoods**, disrupting **mobility, traditional knowledge**, and **ecosystem stewardship**.
- **Lack of Policy Support:** Despite their ecological and social value, **grasslands and pastoralist systems lack legal protection and policy recognition** in India.

- **Respect Natural Ecosystems:** Stop trying to convert deserts into forests; instead, understand how ecosystems thrive with limited resources.
- **Address Land Degradation Sensibly:** Restoration in drylands should:
 - Respect **native vegetation**
 - Focus on **soil and moisture conservation**
 - Use **indigenous knowledge systems**
- **Promote Low-Tech, Proven Solutions:**
 - Water harvesting
 - Rotational grazing
 - Protection of natural regrowth
- These often outperform mass tree-planting or “greenwashing” projects.

- **Policy Shift Needed:**
 - Recognise the diversity and value of open ecosystems
 - Incentivise soil carbon storage
 - Support pastoralist land-use practices and local stewardship
- **Reframe the Narrative:**
 - Consider renaming *World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought* to *World Day to Combat Land Degradation*
- Restore **respect and legitimacy** to desert ecosystems

| Initiative | Description |
|--|--|
| Desert Development Programme (DDP) | Launched in 1977–78 to combat desertification and drought by promoting soil conservation, water harvesting, afforestation, and livelihood development. |
| National Afforestation Programme (NAP) | Includes afforestation efforts in arid and semi-arid regions, focusing on degraded and open lands; implemented by Joint Forest Management Committees. |
| National Mission on Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) | Aims to conserve fragile ecosystems in the cold desert region of Ladakh, with a focus on climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, and local community participation. |
| National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) | Recognizes open natural ecosystems like deserts and grasslands as critical habitats and emphasizes their conservation through community-led approaches. |

National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCD)



- Launched in **2001** by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- Developed as part of India's commitment to the **UNCCD**, aiming to promote **sustainable land management (SLM)**.
- **Objectives**
 - **Combat desertification and land degradation** in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid regions.
 - Integrate measures for **soil conservation, water management, afforestation, and sustainable agriculture**.
 - Promote **community participation, livelihood generation, and use of indigenous knowledge**.
 - Mainstream desertification concerns into **national development policies**.
- **Key Components**
 - Watershed development and rainwater harvesting
 - Soil fertility and erosion control
 - Afforestation with drought-resistant species
 - Livelihood diversification for vulnerable communities
 - Capacity-building and awareness campaigns
 - Data monitoring and research on land degradation trends

The Thar Desert

Also known as the **Great Indian Desert**, it is located mainly in **Rajasthan** and extends into parts of **Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana**. It is a **subtropical desert** and among the most densely populated desert regions in the world.

Climate Characteristics

| Climate Factor | Details |
|----------------------|---|
| Rainfall | Very low, typically less than 250 mm annually; mostly during monsoon (July–September) |
| Temperature (Summer) | Extremely hot, often exceeding 45°C |
| Temperature (Winter) | Cold, with temperatures dropping below 5°C |
| Humidity | Generally low throughout the year |
| Winds | Frequent dry winds and occasional dust storms |
| Soil Type | Predominantly sandy, nutrient-poor, and with low water retention |

| Plant Species / Type | Characteristics / Role |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Khejri Tree (Prosopis cineraria) | Keystone species; drought-resistant; improves soil fertility |
| Cactus | Xerophytic plant; stores water; adapted to arid climate |
| Acacia and Babul (Acacia nilotica) | Thorny trees; survive in poor, dry soils |
| Ber (Ziziphus mauritiana) | Fruit-bearing shrub; well adapted to arid conditions |

| Animal Species | Status / Adaptation |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Great Indian Bustard | Critically endangered bird; flagship species for desert conservation |
| Indian Fox, Desert Cat, Caracal | Small carnivores adapted to arid ecosystems |
| Indian Wolf | Top predator; adapted to open and dry terrain |
| Chinkara (Indian Gazelle) | Common desert herbivore |
| Blackbuck | Antelope species found in grassland-desert transition zones |

Often referred to as a **cold desert**, it is located in the **Union Territory of Ladakh** in northern India. It is a **high-altitude desert** lying in the **rain shadow of the Himalayas**, making it one of the **coldest and driest regions in India**. It stretches over areas such as **Leh, Kargil, Zaskar**, and the **Nubra Valley**.

Climate Characteristics

| Climate Factor | Details |
|--------------------|---|
| Precipitation | Extremely low, often <100 mm annually, mostly in the form of snow |
| Rainfall Cause | Lies in the rain shadow of the Himalayas, blocking monsoon winds |
| Winter Temperature | Very harsh, often falling below -20°C |
| Summer Temperature | Short and mild; daytime: 20–25°C, but drops sharply at night |
| Humidity | Very low, contributing to aridity |

| Plant Type | Description / Adaptation |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Alpine grasses and shrubs | Drought- and cold-resistant; form the primary ground vegetation |
| Willow and poplar trees | Grown in irrigated valleys and villages; provide shade and wind protection |
| Seabuckthorn (Hippophae rhamnoides) | Hardy shrub with medicinal properties; tolerates poor soils and cold climates |
| Wild rose, edelweiss, caragana | Native herbs and shrubs; adapted to short growing seasons and rocky soils |
| General adaptation | All plants are adapted to extreme cold, low moisture, and thin soils |

| Animal/Bird Species | Description / Significance |
|---|--|
| Snow Leopard | Endangered apex predator; symbol of high-altitude ecosystem conservation |
| Tibetan Wild Ass (Kiang) | Largest wild ass species; found in Changthang plateau |
| Himalayan Blue Sheep (Bharal) | Prey species for snow leopards; found on steep rocky slopes |
| Argali (Great Tibetan Sheep) | Largest wild sheep; rare and adapted to alpine deserts |
| Tibetan Wolf, Red Fox, Lynx | Carnivores adapted to cold climates |
| Black-necked Crane | Vulnerable migratory bird; breeds in high-altitude wetlands |
| Golden Eagle, Himalayan Griffon | Large raptors; part of the desert's aerial ecosystem |
| Wetland Birds at Pangong Tso & Tso Moriri | Support migratory species and wetland biodiversity |



PRACTICE QUESTION

Q2. With reference to India's desert ecosystems, consider the following statements:

1. Thar desert is a subtropical desert with a hot arid climate.
2. Ladakh Desert is characterised by high humidity and low temperature.
3. Seabuckthorn is a key medicinal plant found in both the Thar and Ladakh deserts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only**
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) All of the above

3. Shringla, Nikam, two others nominated to the Rajya Sabha

Shringla, Nikam, two others nominated to the Rajya Sabha

The nominees include C. Sadanandan, BJP leader from Kerala, and the Delhi-based historian Meenakshi Jain; Prime Minister Modi welcomes the move and praises each nominee's contributions to diplomacy, law, history, and social work

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday nominated former Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla; Ujjwal Nikam, Special Public Prosecutor in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks case; C. Sadanandan, BJP leader from Kerala; and the Delhi-based historian Meenakshi Jain to the Rajya Sabha.

The Union Home Ministry notified the nomination. "In exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-Clause (a) of Clause (1) of Article 80 of the Constitution of India, read with Clause (3) of that Article, the President is pleased to nominate to the Council of States the following persons to fill the vacancies caused due to retirement of nominated members: Shri Ujjwal Deorao Nikam, Shri C. Sadanandan Master, Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Dr. Meenakshi Jain," the notification said.

Prime Minister Naren-



To Upper House: (from left) Former Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla; Ujjwal Nikam, Special Public Prosecutor in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks case; C. Sadanandan, BJP leader from Kerala; and Delhi-based historian Meenakshi Jain.

dra Modi welcomed the nominations, posting individual messages for the four nominees.

Mr. Shringla joined the BJP after demitting office and served as the Chief Coordinator for the G20 summit held in New Delhi in 2023, with Mr. Modi praising his work as a diplomat. One of Mr. Shringla's predecessors is the incumbent External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Mr. Nikam was the BJP's candidate for the Mumbai North Central seat, which he lost. De-

scribing Mr. Nikam's contributions to the legal field and to the Constitution as "exemplary", the Prime Minister said that Mr. Nikam had been at the forefront of seeking justice in important cases.

Historian Meenakshi Jain, who was earlier accorded the Padma Shri, is among the Rajya Sabha nominees.

She has served as an academic at the University of Delhi, and authored several books on Indian history and civilisation, and indigenous education and languages during the Brit-

ish rule.

Mr. Sadanandan, a former teacher, lost both his legs in 1994 to violent assault by political rivals who resented his joining the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh despite hailing from a Left background. He was the BJP candidate from Koothuparamba in an Assembly election. The Assembly election in Kerala is due early next year.

Mr. Sadanandan's life is "the epitome of courage and refusal to bow to injustice", the Prime Minister said. "Violence and intimidation couldn't deter his

spirit towards national development. His efforts as a teacher and social worker are also commendable. He is extremely passionate towards youth empowerment. Congratulations to him for being nominated to the Rajya Sabha by Rashtrapati Ji. Best wishes for his role as MP," Mr. Modi said.

Vacancy filled

The President nominates 12 people of eminence from various fields to the Rajya Sabha. Four such seats had fallen vacant and have now been filled.

Backdrop: Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the nominations to Rajya Sabha.

Relevance: GS2 - Parliament

- On **July 13, 2025**, President **Droupadi Murmu** nominated four distinguished individuals to the **Rajya Sabha** to fill vacancies caused by the retirement of nominated members.
- Nominations made under **Article 80(1)(a) and 80(3)** of the Constitution.
- The **Union Home Ministry** issued the official
- notification. The Rajya Sabha has a provision for **12 nominated members** representing fields such as **arts, literature, science, and public service** — **four seats** were vacant.

- Former **Foreign Secretary** of India and **IFS officer (1984 batch)**.
- Served as Ambassador to the **U.S.**, **High Commissioner to Bangladesh**, and Ambassador to **Thailand**.
- Chief Coordinator of the **G-20 Summit 2023**, hosted across Indian cities.

- Special Public Prosecutor in high-profile cases: **26/11 Mumbai attacks, 1991 Bombay blasts**, etc.
- Known for legal work under **TADA** and contributions to national security-related prosecutions.
- Contested **2024 Lok Sabha election** from **Mumbai North Central** on a **BJP ticket** (unsuccessful).
- Recognised by PM Modi for his “exemplary legal service and commitment to justice”.

- Former **Associate Professor** of History at **Gargi College, Delhi University**.
- Fellow of the **Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, ICHR**, and **ICSSR**.
- Author of acclaimed books: *The Battle for Rama, Sati, Flight of Deities*, etc.
- Recipient of the **Padma Shri** for contributions to literature and education.

C. Sadanandan Master – Kerala BJP Leader and Social Worker



- Former **school teacher** and BJP leader from **Kannur**, Kerala.
- Lost both legs in a **politically motivated attack** in **1994**.
- Contested **2021 Kerala Assembly election** from **Koothuparamba**.
- Active with the **Bharatiya Vichara Kendram** (RSS think tank) and **National Teachers' Union**.
- Applauded by PM Modi as a symbol of **courage, resilience**, and **youth empowerment**.

- Constitutional backing:
 - Article 80 of the Constitution (“Composition of the Council of States”) says
 - “The Council of States shall consist of (a) twelve members to be nominated by the President in accordance with the provisions of clause (3); and (b) not more than two hundred and thirty-eight representatives of the States and of the Union territories.
 - Clause 3 of the article lays down the qualifications for the appointment.

- As of now, there are no nominated members in Lok Sabha.
- Before 2020, the President of India used to nominate two members from the Anglo-Indian community if the community was not adequately represented in the Lok Sabha.
- However, the 104th Amendment Act of 2019 discontinued this provision of special representation of the Anglo-Indian community in the Lok Sabha by nomination.
 - Consequently, this provision ceased to have effect on the 25th of January, 2020.
 - It also discontinued nominations in the State Legislative Assembly.

Nominated Members in State Legislative Council

- Article 171 of the Indian Constitution outlines the composition of the State Legislative Council and specifies that the Governor can nominate one-sixth of its members. These nominated members are chosen for their expertise in fields like literature, science, arts, social service, or cooperative movement



PRACTICE QUESTION

Q3. With reference to the nomination of members to the Rajya Sabha, consider the following statements:

1. The President of India nominates 12 members to the Rajya Sabha.
2. The power to nominate members is provided under Article 80 of the Constitution.
3. Only individuals with political experience are eligible for nomination.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only**
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

4. India Participates in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025



India joins military exercise Talisman Sabre in Australia

India, along with 18 other nations, is participating in Talisman Sabre 2025, a major bilateral military drill led by Australia that commenced on Sunday. Now in its 11th iteration, the Talisman Sabre is the largest and most sophisticated warfighting exercise ever conducted in the continent, the Department of Defence, Australia, said in a statement. "More than 35,000 military personnel from Australia and partnering nations will deploy across Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales and Christmas Island. Activities will also be conducted outside Australia in Papua New Guinea," it added.

Backdrop: Australia may extend a formal invitation for India to join 'Talisman Sabre 2023' during the Defence Minister's expected visit to India.

Relevance: GS3 - Defence Exercises

- India joins **Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025**, hosted by **Australia**.
 - *Exercise Talisman Sabre* is a multilateral military exercise primarily led by Australia and the United States.
- This is the **11th edition** of the biennial military exercise.
- It is the **largest and most complex** warfighting drill ever conducted on Australian soil.
- Over **35,000 military personnel** from **19 nations** are participating.

Locations & Duration

- Conducted over **three weeks** starting **July 13, 2025**.
- Activities span **Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales**, and **Christmas Island**.
- For the **first time**, exercises also extend to **Papua New Guinea**.

Participating Nations



- **19 active participants:** Australia, India, U.S., Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, U.K.
- **Observers:** Malaysia and Vietnam.

Key Activities

- Live-fire drills
- Amphibious landings
- Ground force maneuvers
- Air combat and maritime operations
- Field training and force preparation exercises

Exercise PITCH BLACK



- Type: Multilateral air combat exercise
- Host: Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)
- Frequency: Biennial (every two years)
- Indian Participation: Indian Air Force (IAF) regularly takes part
- Objective: Enhance air combat interoperability and coordination among participant nations

AUSTRAHIND

The India–Australia joint military exercise *AUSTRAHIND* was conducted in Maharashtra in November 2024 to enhance interoperability and tactical coordination between the two armies.

Other Exercise

| Exercise Name | Type & Description | Frequency | Participants |
|------------------------|---|-----------|---|
| AUSINDEX | Bilateral naval exercise to improve interoperability between Indian and Australian navies. | Biennial | Indian Navy, Royal Australian Navy |
| AUSTRAHIND | Bilateral army exercise focused on joint training, tactical drills, and counter-insurgency operations. | Annual | Indian Army, Australian Army |
| SINGAEX | Trilateral army exercise focused on peacekeeping and humanitarian cooperation. | Periodic | Indian Army, Singapore Army, Australian Army |
| INDO-PACIFIC ENDEAVOUR | Australian-led multilateral exercise aimed at promoting regional security through humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and military cooperation. | Annual | Australia, India, and other Indo-Pacific partners |

Other Exercise

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------------|---|
| Malabar | Naval exercise enhancing maritime cooperation in Indo-Pacific. | Annual | India, Australia, Japan, USA |
| Exercise Sea Dragon | Multilateral anti-submarine warfare drill enhancing undersea detection capabilities. | Annual | Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, USA |
| Tarang Shakti | India's first multinational air combat exercise, with Australia among the participating nations. | Biennial (planned) | Indian Air Force, Australia, and other invited air forces |



PRACTICE QUESTION

Q4. Which of the following military exercises involve both India and Australia as participants?

1. Exercise Talisman Sabre
2. AUSINDEX
3. AUSTRAHIND
4. Malabar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4**

5. Assessing India's carbon credit trading scheme targets

Assessing India's carbon credit trading scheme targets

The Indian government recently announced greenhouse gas emissions intensity of production targets for entities (such as a steel plant) operating within eight of the nine heavy industrial sectors covered in India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme's (CCTS) compliance mechanism. The eight sectors are aluminium, cement, paper and pulp, chlor-alkali, iron and steel, textile, petrochemicals and petro refineries. So, is there a way to understand whether these are ambitious targets or not?

The first question one needs to ask is this: should we measure ambition at the entity level, or at the sector level or the level of the economy? Our analysis shows that the ambition of India's carbon market targets should be assessed at the aggregate economy-wide level, and not at the level of individual entities or sectors.

An economy-wide lens is more important

We can look at the Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme, which is India's flagship energy efficiency programme for large industries. Under PAT, energy-intensive industries are given targets to reduce their energy use; those which exceed their targets can trade the excess savings with others. We analysed performance data from four sectors under the PAT Cycle I (2012-14) and found a mixed but interesting picture. In some entities, the energy used per unit of production (energy intensity) increased but decreased in others. At the sector level, energy intensity rose in two sectors (paper and chlor alkali) and fell in the other two (aluminium and cement). However, when we combined emissions, output and price data from all four sectors and adjusted for inflation, less energy was used, overall, to produce the same amount of economic output.

This shows that even if energy efficiency rises or falls in some entities or sectors, India's overall energy use can still become more efficient. We



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The ambition of carbon market targets should be assessed at the aggregate economy-wide level, and not at the level of individual entities or sectors

found similar behaviour across other PAT cycles and sectors. These observations give us a useful insight – India's PAT scheme was able to effectively use market mechanisms to achieve energy intensity reduction at an aggregate level. The decrease in overall energy intensity, even as it rose for some entities, shows that the market mechanism worked; those companies were able to buy energy efficiency certificates instead of undertaking costly in-house changes.

But, this in itself does not tell us if the aggregate energy intensity reduction was aggressive or business-as-usual. This does, however, tell us that one should only analyse the aggregate target to infer whether it was aggressive or not. That is, for an externality-driven market, achieving reduction at an aggregate level is far more important than achieving the same at the entity level for 'all' entities. An emissions trading scheme does not bother about individual entities or sectors. It bothers about the economy-level aggregate effect, which is where, ideally, the ambition should be evaluated.

But are not entity or sector-level targets important to reduce emissions as well? A research paper by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) shows that entity or sector-level targets only determine financial transfers across entities and sectors, and not the overall emission intensity decline.

Comparing the new CCTS targets with historical sector-level performance under the PAT scheme also is not the most meaningful approach to assess ambition. Just because the reduction in emissions in the past has been modest at the industry level, it cannot be the case for the future. Our mitigation actions have to progressively become more ambitious than in the past. Therefore, only a comparison with a future trajectory aligned with a pathway towards India's stated Nationally Determined Contributions

(NDC) and a 2070 net-zero future is relevant. While the industry sector-specific CCTS targets cannot be directly compared with the economy-wide NDC target, economy-wide modelling assessments can give useful information in this regard.

Emissions intensity to decline

According to our recent modelling of a 2030 NDC-aligned emissions reduction scenario for India, the carbon dioxide emissions intensity of India's energy sector (per unit of GDP) is expected to decline at an average annual rate of 3.44% between 2025 and 2030. In comparison, the emissions intensity of value added (EIVA) in India's manufacturing sector is projected to decline by at least 2.53% annually over the same period. This suggests that in the near-term, industry may decarbonise at a slower pace than other sectors – particularly the power sector, which has more low-cost mitigation opportunities.

Against this backdrop, the combined average annual EIVA reduction for the eight sectors based on current CCTS targets – indicative of sector-specific commodity price data (a rough proxy for value added), and projected production growth rates – is estimated at 1.68% between 2023-24 and 2026-27. Early signs suggest that the industrial targets under CCTS may not be ambitious enough.

While this is not directly comparable since entities covered under the carbon trading scheme represent only a portion of India's overall manufacturing base, it is still the most relevant benchmark available until detailed modelling is done for all sectors. Ultimately, it is the aggregate decline that will determine whether India's effort is truly ambitious.

The views expressed are personal

Backdrop: The Indian government recently announced GHG emissions intensity of production targets for entities.

Relevance: GS 3/Economy

The Indian government recently announced greenhouse gas emissions intensity of production targets for entities (such as a steel plant) operating within **eight of the nine heavy industrial sectors** covered in India's **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme's** (CCTS) compliance mechanism. The eight sectors are **aluminium, cement, paper and pulp, chlor-alkali, iron and steel, textile, petrochemicals, and petro refineries.**

India's **CCTS** is a **market-based mechanism** to promote cost-effective greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction across key sectors. It enables trading of **carbon credits** between entities that **overachieve or underachieve** emission targets.

It was **notified in 2023** under the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (as amended in 2022)**.

Sectors covered:

CCTS initially focuses on nine energy-intensive sectors that were previously part of the Perform Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme. These sectors are:

1. Aluminium,
2. Chlor-Alkali,
3. Cement,
4. Fertilizers,
5. Iron & Steel,
6. Pulp & Paper,
7. Petrochemicals,
8. Petroleum Refinery
9. Textiles.

- **Compliance Mechanism**

- **Mandatory** for specific energy-intensive sectors such as aluminium, cement, iron & steel, and fertilizers.
- Entities that surpass their emission reduction targets are rewarded with Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs), while those that fall short must purchase credits.

- **Offset Mechanism**

- Open to voluntary participants from non-mandated sectors.
- Allows them to earn tradable carbon credits by undertaking verifiable emission-reducing activities.

Shift from PAT to CCTS

| Feature | PAT Scheme | CCTS (Carbon Credit Trading Scheme) |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Objective | Improve energy efficiency in high-energy consuming industries | Reduce GHG emission intensity and promote carbon market |
| Focus Area | Energy Intensity (energy consumed per unit of output) | GHG Emission Intensity (GHG emissions per unit of output) |
| Instrument Used | Energy Saving Certificates (ESCerts) | Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs) |
| Unit of Credit | 1 ESCert = 1 tonne of oil equivalent saved | 1 CCC = 1 tonne of CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e) reduced |
| Type of Scheme | Market-based energy efficiency improvement | Market-based carbon emission reduction and trading system |
| Mandatory Participation | Designated Consumers (DCs) in energy-intensive sectors | Entities in energy-intensive sectors under the compliance mechanism |
| Voluntary Component | Not applicable | Available under the offset mechanism for entities outside compliance to voluntarily reduce emissions |
| Sectors Covered | Aluminium, Cement, Chlor-Alkali, Fertilizers, Iron & Steel, Pulp & Paper, etc. | Iron & Steel, Aluminium, Cement, Fertilizers, Petroleum Refineries, Pulp & Paper, Textiles |

- **Focus on Entity or Sector-Level Metrics:**
 - Evaluating targets at the level of individual entities or sectors can be misleading.
 - These targets primarily govern **financial transactions** (e.g., trading certificates) rather than actual emission reductions.
- **Inadequate Benchmarking:**
 - Comparisons are often made with **historical performance** under schemes like PAT.
 - Past modest reductions don't offer a useful reference for **future decarbonisation needs**.
- **Slower Industrial Decarbonisation:**
 - Industrial sectors under CCTS are projected to decarbonise at **only 1.68% annually**, compared to higher rates in the energy sector.
 - This suggests a **sectoral imbalance** in target ambition.

- **Limited Scope of Coverage:**
 - The current assessment covers **only a portion** of India's manufacturing base.
 - Without **economy-wide modelling**, it's difficult to determine whether current targets are sufficiently comprehensive.
- **Potential Misinterpretation of PAT Success:**
 - While PAT led to aggregate improvements, it's unclear if these were due to **ambitious targets** or just **market efficiency**.
 - There is a risk of **overestimating effectiveness** if ambition is not separately evaluated.
- **Inadequate Modelling and Data Availability:**
 - Current assessments rely on **proxy indicators** (e.g., commodity price data, growth projections), which may not capture the full picture.

- **Energy sector emissions intensity** (CO₂ per unit of GDP) is projected to decline by **3.44% annually** between **2025–2030** under a 2030 NDC-aligned scenario.
- **The manufacturing sector's emissions intensity of value added (EIVA)** is expected to decline by **at least 2.53% annually** in the same period.
 - **Industry is likely to decarbonise slower** than sectors like power, which have more low-cost mitigation options.
- Under current **CCTS targets**, the combined average annual **EIVA reduction** across eight industrial sectors is only **1.68% (2023–24 to 2026–27)**.
 - This indicates that **CCTS industrial targets may lack sufficient ambition** compared to broader NDC-aligned trajectories.
- Though not fully representative of all manufacturing entities, the CCTS reduction rate is the **best available benchmark** until detailed sector-wide modelling is completed.
- Ultimately, **ambition must be judged by aggregate emissions intensity decline**, not just individual sector targets.

- **Adopt an Economy-Wide Evaluation Approach:**
 - Focus on **aggregate emissions intensity** reduction across the entire economy rather than just entity- or sector-level performance.
 - Use **macro-level indicators** aligned with India's NDCs and net-zero goals.
- **Align Targets with Future Climate Pathways:**
 - Set and evaluate targets based on **forward-looking trajectories**, consistent with **India's 2070 net-zero pathway** and **2030 NDC commitments**.
 - Avoid relying solely on **past performance trends** for setting benchmarks.
- **Improve Sectoral Modelling and Data Granularity:**
 - Develop **detailed emissions modelling** for all sectors covered under the carbon market.
 - Include better estimates of **value-added**, emissions, and growth projections to assess target ambition more accurately.
- **Regularly Update and Calibrate Targets:**
 - Use **dynamic baselines** and adjust targets periodically based on **technological progress**, economic changes, and new climate commitments.

- **Include More Sectors and Entities in Scope:**
 - Expand coverage beyond a limited set of large industries to include **more sectors** and **smaller enterprises**, for a **more representative assessment**.
- **Benchmark Against International Best Practices:**
 - Compare India's target-setting and assessment frameworks with **leading carbon markets** (e.g., EU Emissions Trading System, California cap-and-trade) for **learning and adaptation**.
- **Independent Oversight and Review Mechanisms:**
 - Establish an **independent evaluation body** to assess the effectiveness, fairness, and ambition of carbon market targets.
- **Integrate with Broader Climate and Energy Policy:**
 - Align carbon market assessments with national policies on renewables, energy efficiency, green hydrogen, etc., to create a cohesive mitigation strategy.

Conclusion

Improving the assessment of India's carbon market targets is essential to ensure that the country remains on track to meet its climate commitments, including its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and 2070 net-zero goal.



PRACTICE QUESTION



Q.5 “Assess the effectiveness of India’s carbon market mechanisms in achieving its climate goals. What steps are necessary to improve the assessment and ambition of carbon market targets in alignment with India’s net-zero commitments?”

(15 marks, 250 words)