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**8 NOVEMBER 2025**

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**SATURDAY, 8th NOVEMBER 2025**

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## 1. Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

- **Prelims** - Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)
- **Mains** - GS 2 - Polity

### Why in the news?

- The CAG of India has granted permission to initiate two new cadres for more centralisation.

### Comptroller and Auditor General of India

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
  - Article 148 to Article 151 deal with the provisions related to Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).
- **Functions of CAG:**
  - CAG is the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department.
  - She/He is the **custodian of the public purse** and oversees the whole financial system of the country at both the federal and state levels.
  - His/her duty is to maintain the Indian Constitution and the legislation of Parliament in the sphere of financial administration.
  - CAG audits all expenditures from the Consolidated Fund of India, each state's consolidated fund, and each union territory with a Legislative Assembly's consolidated fund.
  - She/He audits all expenditures from the Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India, as well as each state's contingency fund and public account.
- **Reports by CAG:**
  - The CAG submits three audit reports to the President— on appropriation accounts, on finance accounts, and on public undertakings.
  - These reports are presented to both houses of Parliament by the President. The PAC investigates these reports and provides its findings to Parliament.



## 2. State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, 2025

- **Prelims** - State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, 2025
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

### Why in the news?

- The Food and Agricultural Organization published the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, 2025.

### State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, 2025

- **What is it?:** The SOFA Report is a flagship FAO publication that examines key issues in agriculture, food systems, land use and production.
- **Key Findings:**
  - Approximately **1.7 billion people** live in regions where yields are falling due to **human-induced land degradation**.
  - **Agricultural expansion** remains the primary driver of deforestation globally, causing about **90 % of forest loss**.
  - **Cropland abandonment** is significant- about **3.6 million hectares** annually, largely because of degradation processes.
  - **Yield gaps** (difference between actual yields and potential) are particularly high in regions with dense population and degraded land- especially eastern & southern Asia.
  - Degraded land undermines not just production, but rural livelihoods, ecosystem services and food security- making it a “silent crisis”.
- **Relevance for India:**
  - India is highlighted as facing among the highest yield losses from land degradation.
  - Considering India's goals like doubling farmers' incomes, increasing cropping intensity, depth of irrigation and crop diversification, degradation-driven yield loss represents both a constraint and policy risk.
- **Recommendations:**
  - **Sustainable Land Management (SLM):** Practices such as conservation agriculture, agroforestry, soil organic matter enhancement, improved irrigation, crop rotation and cover-crops.

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- **Incentive & regulatory mix:** Design policy instruments like subsidies, credits and payments for ecosystem services tailored to farm size, agro-ecology, land-user type.
- Focus on small-scale farms and vulnerable populations.
- Strengthen data, monitoring and early warning by investing in mapping land-degradation hotspots, yield-gap analytics, remote sensing, farmer-level data.
- Link productivity, sustainability and equity.
- Cross-sectoral coordination between agriculture, forestry, water, environment and land-planning.
- **Rehabilitation & restoration:** Restoration of degraded lands should become part of national agriculture/land-use strategy.



### 3. Geothermal Energy

- **Prelims** - Geothermal Energy
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

#### Why in the news?

- The Energy Efficiency Services Limited(ESSL) is preparing to set up the largest Geothermal Energy technology pilot project in Andhra Pradesh.

#### Geothermal Energy

- What is it?:
  - Geothermal energy is the heat derived from the Earth's interior that can be harnessed for electricity generation, heating, and other applications.
  - It originates from the radioactive decay of elements and the residual heat from the planet's formation.
- Global Scenario:
  - **Major producers:** USA, Indonesia, Philippines, New Zealand, Iceland, and Kenya.
  - **Iceland** gets over 25% of its energy from geothermal sources.
  - FAO and IRENA promote geothermal for low-carbon development.
- Indian Scenario:
  - **Estimated potential:**  $\approx 10$  GW as per Geological Survey of India.
  - Major Geothermal Provinces:
    - ★ Himalayan belt – Puga (Ladakh), Chhumathang
    - ★ Son-Narmada-Tapi (SONATA) belt – Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat
    - ★ Cambay Graben – Gujarat
    - ★ Godavari and Mahanadi basins – Andhra Pradesh, Odisha
    - ★ West coast & Andaman-Nicobar Islands
- Advantages:
  - Renewable: Unlimited heat from Earth's core.
  - Clean Energy: Low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to fossil fuels.
  - Cost-Efficient in Some Areas: Used for heating homes, baths, and generating electricity.

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→ High Energy Yield: Modular expansion possible; competitive electricity costs.

- **Challenges:**

- High upfront exploration and drilling costs.
- Site-specific resource availability.
- Technological gaps and lack of skilled manpower.
- Seismic risks and groundwater contamination if not managed properly.
- Limited public/private investment and data in India.

- **Policy Initiatives of India:**

- **MNRE's National Geothermal Energy Policy (Draft):** promotes exploration, R&D, and private investment.
- **Puga Geothermal Project (Ladakh):** India's first geothermal power plant (piloted by ONGC Energy Centre & Ladakh UT Administration).
- **The National Clean Energy Fund** can support geothermal research.

## 4. Emissions Gap Report, 2025

- **Prelims** - Emissions Gap Report, 2025
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

### Why in the news?

- The Emission Gap Report 2025 edition was released by UNEP.

### Emissions Gap Report, 2025

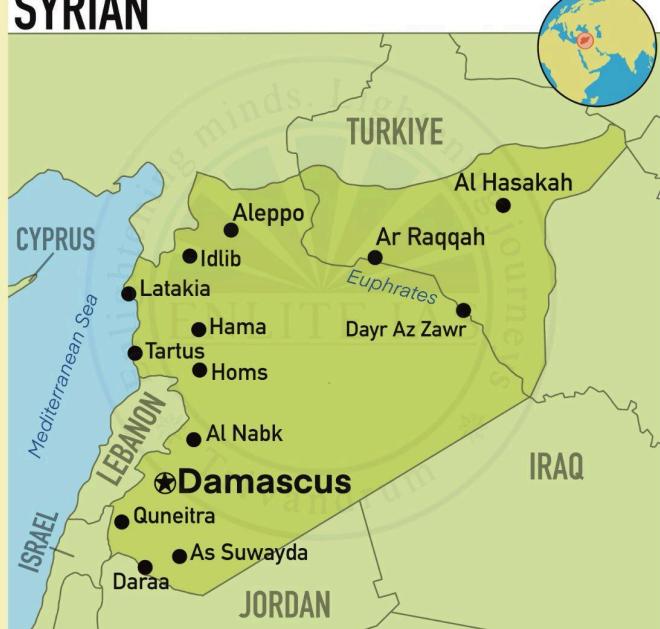
- **What is it?:** The Emissions Gap Report 2025 assesses the gap between current global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions trajectories and the emission levels needed to meet the Paris Agreement goals.
- **Released by:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- **Key Findings:**
  - Global GHG emissions are at an all-time high and still rising, despite pledged emissions reductions.
  - To remain on a “least-cost pathway” for 1.5 °C warming, global emissions must fall by ~42 % by 2030 (from 2019 levels) and ~57 % by 2035.
  - Current national pledges and policies would likely lead to warming of ~2.3-2.6 °C by the end of the century.
  - The report calls for a “quantum leap” in ambition in the next round of national contributions (NDCs) and immediate operationalisation of mitigation actions.
  - Delays in action increase costs, risks and reduce available options to stay within 1.5 °C.
- **Challenges Identified:**
  - Many national climate targets (NDCs) are still **not sufficient** to meet global pathways aligned with 1.5 °C.
  - Implementation gaps in policies
  - Higher cost, stranded assets and locked-in carbon infrastructure.
  - Capacity, finance and technology barriers remain especially for developing countries, raising issues of equity, just transition and support.
  - There is a risk of overshooting 1.5 °C, closing many options for safe transitions, increasing climate-risk exposure.

## 5. Syria

- **Prelims** - Location of Syria
- **Mains** - GS 2 - International Relations

## Syria

**SYRIAN**



Why in the news?

- Following the United Nations, US and Britain removed the sanctions on Syrian President.

**Syria**

- **Location:** Syria is a Western Asian country located in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant.
- **Capital:** Damascus
- **Borders Countries:** Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon.
- **Maritime Border Countries:** Cyprus lies to the west across the Mediterranean Sea
- **Major Rivers in Syria:** Euphrates, Tigris
- **Disputed Territories:** Golan heights with Israel

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## 6. Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980

- **Prelims** - Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

### Why in the news?

- The Union Environment Ministry's Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has suggested streamlining and standardising the penal provisions imposed for violations under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.

### Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980

- **What is it?:** It was passed under the Article 252 of the Indian Constitution to curb deforestation and ensure judicious use of forest land for non-forest purposes.
- **Key Provisions:**
  - Defines Forest land as well as Non-Forest Use:
    - ★ **Forest land** includes reserved, protected, and any area recorded as forest in government records.
    - ★ **Non-forest purposes** include cultivation, mining, or any construction activity unrelated to forest conservation.
  - Prior **approval of the Central Government** is mandatory for:
    - ★ De-reservation of reserved forests.
    - ★ Use of forest land for non-forest purposes.
    - ★ Assignment of forest land to private persons or corporations.
    - ★ Clearing of naturally grown trees for reforestation.
  - An Advisory Committee is constituted by the Central govt-
    - ★ Grant of approval for forest land diversion.
    - ★ Measures for forest conservation and regeneration.
  - **Penalties:** Violation of provisions may lead to **imprisonment up to 15 days** or **fine**, or both.
- **Latest FAC Recommendations:**
  - **Rationalisation and uniformity** in the penal provisions applied for violations of the Act, to reduce inconsistency in how different cases are penalised.

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- **Penal compensatory afforestation (CA)** should be charged in addition to monetary penalties (under the Act/Rules) and in a manner proportional to the area of forest land involved in the violation.
- When no other penal provisions apply, the FAC suggested that penal CA equivalent to **twice the area of forest land** used in violation could be appropriate.
- In cases of violations, the state government should submit a **detailed violation report** to the regional ministry office, including the nature of the violation, names of responsible persons, and actions taken.

## 7. Rhesus Macaque

- **Prelims** - Rhesus Macaque
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

### Why in the news?

- The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has proposed re-listing the Rhesus Macaque species of monkeys under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in order to restore their statutory protection.

### Rhesus Macaque

- **Distribution:**
  - Found across northern and central India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and parts of China and Afghanistan.
  - **In India**, they are commonly seen in urban areas, temples, forests, and agricultural fields.
- **Features:**
  - One of the **most widespread primate species** and **highly adaptable** to various ecological conditions.
  - **Social animals**- Live in multi-male, multi-female groups led by dominant females.
  - **High intelligence** and ability to **learn through imitation**.
  - Omnivorous diet
- **Scientific Importance:**
  - The Rhesus Macaque has been **instrumental in medical research**, including vaccine development (e.g., polio, COVID-19), and studies on genetics, neuroscience, and behaviour.
  - The **Rhesus factor (Rh factor)** in human blood was first identified through research on this species — giving rise to the *Rh-positive* and *Rh-negative* blood group classification.
- **Conservation Challenges:**
  - Habitat loss and fragmentation.
  - Overpopulation in urban areas due to food availability.
  - Human feeding practices leading to behavioural change and aggression.

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- Ethical issues in biomedical research.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern (LC)- Due to its wide distribution and large population.
  - **CITES:** Appendix II- Trade is controlled to prevent over-exploitation.
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (India):** Schedule II- Provides legal protection.