



# CURRENT AFFAIRS



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## ECOCIDE

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs," and the Topic details "ECOCIDE". The Topic "ECOCIDE" has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

### **For Prelims:**

*Understanding Ecocide?*

### **For Mains:**

*GS 3: Environment*

*Global Status of Ecocide Laws?*

*Status in India:*

### **Why in the news:**

Mexico is contemplating enacting a law that would classify ecocide as a criminal offense.

### **Understanding Ecocide:**

- Ecocide signifies the detrimental impact of human actions on the environment, leading to extensive destruction.

### **Examples of Ecocide:**

- **Environmental Destruction:** Acts of ecocide encompass a wide range of activities, including port expansion projects, deforestation, illegal sand mining, river pollution, and the release of untreated sewage. These actions harm delicate ecosystems and disrupt local livelihoods.
- **Notable Instances:** Prominent instances of ecocide include deforestation during the Vietnam War, environmental damage during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, deforestation in Indonesia and the Amazon rainforest, oil pollution in the Niger Delta, and the Chernobyl disaster.

### **Historical Context:**

- **Olof Palme's Influence:** The term "ecocide" gained prominence when Swedish politician Olof Palme accused the United States of committing ecocide at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment.

### **Environmental Crisis:**

- **Species Extinction Threat:** Predictions suggest that over a third of the world's plant and animal species could face extinction by 2050, signaling a severe ecological crisis.
- **Extreme Weather Events:** Unprecedented heatwaves have shattered records globally, exacerbating climate-related challenges.

- **Disrupted Climate Patterns:** Changing rainfall patterns have disrupted natural flood and drought cycles, intensifying environmental hazards.

#### **Preventative Potential:**

- **Avoiding Environmental Catastrophes:** The implementation of ecocide laws could have averted environmental catastrophes such as Amazon deforestation, deep-sea trawling, and the tragic 1984 Bhopal gas disaster.
- **Environmental Justice:** Ecocide laws also serve as instruments of justice, particularly for low- and middle-income countries disproportionately affected by climate change, providing them with legal recourse.

#### **Global Status of Ecocide Laws:**

- **Criminalization in 11 Countries:** Currently, ecocide is recognized as a crime in 11 countries, reflecting the growing recognition of the need to protect the environment.
- **27 Countries in Consideration:** An additional 27 countries are contemplating the introduction of laws to criminalize environmentally destructive activities that deliberately harm humans, animals, and plants.
- **Examples of Legislation:** Countries like Vietnam, Ukraine, and Russia have already criminalized ecocide. Furthermore, the European Parliament penalizes actions including “mass destruction of flora and fauna,” “atmosphere or water resource poisoning,” and “deliberate acts capable of causing ecological disasters.”

#### **Status in India:**

##### **Legal Recognition of Nature:**

- **Rivers as Legal Entities:** Indian courts have affirmed the legal personhood of nature by recognizing rivers as legal entities with intrinsic rights, including the right to preserve their essence, identity, and integrity.
- **The inception of the Concept:** While not yet a mainstream legal doctrine, the concept of recognizing nature’s rights is gaining traction in India’s legal landscape.

##### **Notable Judgments and Legal References:**

- **Chandra CFS and Terminal Operators Pvt. Ltd. v. The Commissioner of Customs and Ors (2015):** The Madras High Court acknowledged the ongoing activities that could be categorised as ecocide, particularly the uncontrolled removal of valuable timber resources.
- **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs Union of India & Ors (Ongoing Case):** The Supreme Court, in an ongoing case, criticized the “anthropogenic bias” in environmental considerations. It argued for a shift from an anthropocentric perspective to an ecocentric one, highlighting the need for environmental justice.

##### **Environmental Laws in India:**

- **Environmental (Protection) Act 1986:** This act serves as a foundational piece of environmental legislation in India, focusing on protecting and improving the environment.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972** safeguards wildlife and their habitats.
- **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA) 2016:** CAMPA addresses afforestation and forest conservation issues.
- **Rules for Pollution Prevention:** India has established separate rules to combat air and water pollution, emphasizing the importance of environmental preservation.

**SOURCES:**

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/video/environment/the-global-push-to-criminalise-ecocide-91570>

**Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding ecocide:**

1. Ecocide refers to the deliberate actions causing substantial and lasting harm to the environment.
2. India has fully incorporated the concept of ecocide into its legal framework.
3. The term “ecocide” gained prominence at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment.

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**ANSWER: B**

**Q.2 Who among the following has popularised the term ‘ecocide’?**

- (a) Olof Palme
- (b) Greta Thunberg
- (c) David Brower
- (d) M. S. Swaminathan

**ANSWER: A**

**Q.3 Discuss the concept of ecocide and its significance in the context of environmental protection and justice. Evaluate the existing legal frameworks and international perspectives on ecocide.**

**Rishabh**

## **INDIA, THAT IS BHARAT**

*This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “INDIA, THAT IS BHARAT”. The Topic “INDIA, THAT IS BHARAT”*

*” has relevance in the Culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*About the different names?*

**For Mains:**

*GS 1: Culture*

*History, Significance and Etymology ?*

**Why in the news:**

There is ongoing speculation regarding a potential official Change in the country’s name from “India” to “Bharat.”

## About the different names:

The Indian subcontinent has long been known by two names: India and Bharat. Article 1 of the Constitution of India acknowledges this duality, referring to the nation as “India, that is Bharat.” This dual nomenclature has historical roots, with “Bharat” tracing its origins to ancient texts such as the Mahabharata.

- **Historical Significance of Bharat:** The name “Bharat,” or “Bharata,” has deep historical and cultural significance in India. It is derived from Puranic literature and is prominently featured in the epic Mahabharata. According to the Puranas, Bharata refers to the land between the southern sea and the northern abode of snow.
- **Bharat in the Constitution:** Article 1 of the Indian Constitution recognizes both “India” and “Bharat” as names for the nation. It states, “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States.” This constitutional provision reflects the nation’s dual identity, acknowledging both its modern and ancient names.
- **Hindi Variants:** Several government institutions and organizations in India already incorporate the name “Bharatiya” in their Hindi variants. Examples include the Reserve Bank of India and the Indian Railways, which highlight the coexistence of both names.

The name “**Bharat**” has deep historical and cultural roots in India, tracing its origins to ancient texts and legends.

- **Puranic Literature and the Mahabharata:** The name “Bharat,” along with variations like “Bharata” and “Bharatvarsha,” finds its earliest references in Puranic literature, a body of ancient Hindu texts. It is also prominently featured in the epic Mahabharata, one of the most important and revered texts in Indian literature.
- **Geographical Description:** The Puranas describe “Bharata” as the land situated between the southern sea and the northern abode of snow. This geographical reference is one of the earliest associations with the name.
- **Religious and Socio-cultural Significance:** Social scientists have explained “Bharata” in the context of a religious and socio-cultural entity rather than a purely political or geographical one. It refers to a “supraregional and subcontinental territory where the Brahmanical system of society prevails.” This highlights the cultural and religious significance of the name.
- **Ancient King Bharata:** “Bharata” is also the name of an ancient king from legend who is considered the ancestor of the Rig Vedic tribe of the Bharatas. Consequently, he is seen as the progenitor of all the peoples of the Indian subcontinent.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru’s Perspective:** In January 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, emphasized the “fundamental unity of India” that has existed from the “remote past.” He saw this unity as a result of a common faith and culture. According to him, India was synonymous with “Bharata,” the holy land of the Hindus. Nehru pointed out that significant Hindu pilgrimage sites were located in various corners of India, reinforcing the unity of the land.

## Hindustan:

- **Etymology:** The term “Hindustan” is believed to have originated from the Persian word “Hindu,” which is the cognate form of the Sanskrit word “Sindhu,” meaning the Indus River. This term gained currency during the Achaemenid Persian conquest of the Indus Valley, which began in the 6th century BC. During this time, it referred to the northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent.

- **Evolution:** The Achaemenids initially used “Hindu” to identify the lower Indus basin. Over time, the suffix “-stan” was added to create “Hindustan.”
- **Mughal Era:** During the early Mughal period in the 16th century, “Hindustan” came to describe the entire Indo-Gangetic plain. It was used to refer to the territories of the Mughal emperor, which encompassed a significant part of South Asia.

## India:

- **Etymology:** The Greeks, who learned of “Hind” from the Achaemenids, transliterated it as “Indus.” By the 3rd century BC, “India” had come to be associated with the region beyond the Indus River.
- **Usage:** The name “India” became more prominent from the late 18th century onwards, particularly during British colonial rule. British maps increasingly used the name “India,” and “Hindustan” began to lose its association with the entire South Asian region.
- **Reasons for Adoption:** The adoption of the name “India” by the British may have been influenced by its Graeco-Roman associations, its long history of use in Europe, and its adoption by scientific and bureaucratic organizations like the Survey of India. It signalled a shift in perspective and helped establish the subcontinent as a single, bounded British political territory.

The inclusion of both “Bharat” and “India” in the Constitution of India was the result of significant deliberations and discussions during the Constituent Assembly debates:

- **Deliberations in the Constituent Assembly:** The discussion regarding the name and territory of the Union took place in the Constituent Assembly on September 17, 1949. This was crucial in determining how the nation would be officially referred to in the Constitution.
- **Reference to “India, that is Bharat”:** The phrase “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States” was included in Article 1 of the Indian Constitution. This reflects the decision to officially recognize both names, “India” and “Bharat,” as being synonymous and representative of the nation.
- **Division among Constituent Assembly Members:** During these discussions, there were differing opinions among the members of the Constituent Assembly. Some members expressed reservations about using the name “India” because they believed it reminded them of the colonial past and British rule. This sentiment was rooted in the desire to move away from colonial associations and establish a distinct national identity.
- **Incorporation of Both Names:** Ultimately, the Constituent Assembly chose to incorporate both names, “Bharat” and “India,” in Article 1 of the Constitution. This decision aimed to respect the historical and cultural significance of “Bharat” while acknowledging the more modern and widely recognized name, “India.” The phrase “that is Bharat” was included to emphasize the dual identity and cultural heritage of the nation.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru’s Perspective:** Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister and a prominent member of the Constituent Assembly, had referred to “India,” “Bharata,” and “Hindustan” in his book “The Discovery of India.” However, when it came to the Constitution, “Hindustan” was dropped, and both “Bharat” and “India” were retained.

**SOURCE:**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-history/india-bharat-name-history-8925757/>



**Q.1 Consider the following statements:**

1. Preamble of the Indian Constitution acknowledges the dual name for India as “India, that is Bharat.”
2. “Bharata” referred to the entire Indian subcontinent in Puranic literature.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**ANSWER: A**

**Q.2 Consider the following statements:**

1. The term “Hindustan” originated from the Persian word “Hindu,” associated with the Indus River.
2. “Bharat” is associated with an ancient king who is considered the ancestor of the Rig Vedic tribe of the Dasayu.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**ANSWER: A**

**Q.3 Discuss the historical and constitutional significance of the dual nomenclature “India, that is Bharat” in the Indian Constitution.**

**Gaurav Nikumbh**