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# CURRENT AFFAIRS



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## The sovereign right to taxation

### Context:

- The government has decided to repeal the retrospective taxes amendment to the I-T Act that was proposed in March 2012.
- While eliminating the retrospective levy is thought to offer investors clarity by removing a key source of misunderstanding in taxation rules, the government has underlined the importance of establishing its “sovereign right to taxation.”

### About:

#### ‘sovereign right to taxation’ in India:

- The Indian Constitution grants the government the jurisdiction to levy taxes on persons and organizations, but it also states that no one has the authority to levy or collect taxes unless they are authorized by law. Any tax imposed must be supported by legislation passed by the legislature or Parliament.
- According to a document on the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation’s website, a tax is a “pecuniary burden imposed on individuals or property owners to support the government, a payment exacted by legislative authority,” and a tax “is not a voluntary payment or donation, but an imposed contribution exacted pursuant to legislative authority.”
- India has a three-tier tax system based on the central, state, and local governments, with separate heads of taxation under the Union and State lists in the Constitution’s Seventh Schedule. According to the document, there is no specific head under the Concurrent list, indicating that the Union and the States do not have concurrent taxation powers.

Source: PIB

Syllabus: GS 3 (Taxation)

## **‘SonChiraiya’ – for Urban SHG products:**

### **Context:**

- The Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched ‘SonChiraiya’ (a brand and logo) for the sale of items from urban Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

### **About:**

### **Background:**

- Under the auspices of MoHUA, DAY-NULM has focused on providing necessary skills and opportunities to urban disadvantaged women in order to enable them to promote sustainable microenterprises.
- It brings women from low-income urban households together in SHGs and associated federations to form a support structure.
- Over 5.7 lakh SHGs with nearly 60 lakh members have been constituted across various States/UTs. Many of these SHGs work to support themselves by manufacturing handicrafts, textiles, toys, food, and other items.
- These were mostly marketed in local neighborhood markets, where they typically struggled to get exposure and market access.
- Despite the hurdles created by the COVID-19 epidemic, this alliance has successfully boarded over 2,000 items of over 5,000 SHG members across 25 States/UTs on the e-Commerce Portal, with an underlying narrative of women empowerment. SHGs have been provided with innovative online training methods to enable them to work efficiently on e-portals.

- In partnership with the e-portals and State Urban Livelihoods Missions, live demonstrations for account registration, pricing, packaging, and re-branding were also held.

## **Significance of ‘SonChiraiya’:**

- The project will undoubtedly contribute to improved visibility and global availability for urban SHG women’s items. Many more SHG members are expected to be linked to a variety of professionally packed, hand-crafted ethnic items that will reach customers’ doorsteps around the world, according to the Ministry.
- This will assist women in being financially self-sufficient and living a decent life.

**Source: PIB**

**Syllabus: GS 2 (SHG)**

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## **Elephant census**

**Context:**

- The ministry of environment, Forest, and climate change will launch an elephant population assessment and estimating initiative next year, similar to the tiger population assessment and estimation.

- For the first time, it will involve the identification of each elephant, its clusters, as well as the health and nutrition levels of each elephant, which will be carried out in collaboration with the ministry's partners, such as the wildlife institute of India.
- The Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Minister revealed the population estimation protocol to be used for the project on World Elephant Day. According to ministry officials, this will be the first time tigers, leopards, and elephants would be counted together.
- The minister emphasized the importance of local communities and indigenous peoples in elephant conservation, stating that a bottom-up approach is a way forward in reducing human-elephant conflict.

About:

Methodology of the census:

- According to ministry officials, the technique for next year's assessment entails "rigorous statistical assessments of ground data on animal signs, human influences, habitat features, and absolute density; it is significantly more accurate than previous procedures."
- Ground surveys, analysis of remotely sensed data, and camera traps will all be part of the

assessment's three phases. While this technology has long been used to assess tigers and leopards, it will be utilized for the first time to estimate elephant populations.

- Human footprint indicators, landscape characteristics, and habitat quality will all be evaluated by the agencies. A panel of microsatellite markers derived from dung DNA will be used to identify individual elephants.
- Trained biologists and department officials will sample elephant groups for demographic data and bodily conditions as part of Phase III. Elephants will be classified as young or old depending on their size and bodily features such as ears and tusks. The nutritional status of the animals will be determined depending on their bodily state.

#### Asian elephants:

- The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), also known as the Asiatic elephant, is the continent's largest living land animal and may be found across the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, from India to Nepal in the north, Sumatra in the south, and Borneo in the east.
- IUCN Status: Due to a population reduction of at least 50% in the last three elephant generations

(60–75 years), the Asian elephant has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 1986.

- Threat: Loss of habitat, habitat degradation, fragmentation, and poaching are the main threats.
- In 2019, the wild population was predicted to number 48,323-51,680 persons. Female captive elephants have lived to be over 60 years old when kept in semi-natural environments like forest camps. In zoos, Asian elephants die at a younger age, and captive populations are declining due to low birth and high mortality rates.

Source: The Indian Express

Syllabus: GS 3 (Environment)