

# **Economic and Social Development Current Affairs April 2020**

# Ecology and Environment

## Peace Forest Initiative

### Why in the news?

- The **UN Convention to Combat Desertification** and the **Government of the Republic of Korea Forest Service** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to establish the **Peace Forest Initiative**.

### About the Peace Forest Initiative

- It is an initiative of **South Korea** launched in **2019** during the **14th Conference of the Parties** to the **UNCCD in New Delhi, India**.
- It aims to contribute to **land degradation neutrality (LDN)** implementation through partnerships that build peace and security.
- The goal of the PFI is to **offer countries recovering from violent conflict**, an opportunity to **achieve stability and trust** while **re-building livelihoods and economies**.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment

Source- ET

## Heron

### Why in the news?

- Recently at the **Neendakara Coastal station (Kerala)**, some of the herons were **found famished and half-dead due to starvation**.

### About Heron

- It is a **large species of bird that inhabits wetlands** and areas that are **close to lakes, ponds and rivers**.
- It is **commonly found in Europe and North America** along with the **more temperate regions of Africa, Asia and Australia**.
- It is a **carnivorous species of bird**, with the **heron primarily feeding on fish**.



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### Conservation Status

- It is listed as '**Least Concern**' on the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**.

### Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment

Source- The Hindu + A to z animal

### Leatherback Sea turtle

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, Thailand has witnessed the largest number of nests of rare leatherback sea turtles, and many of them hatched to make their way into a sea for the first time at a beach in Phang-nga district. This phenomenon was observed in over two decades.

#### About the Leatherback Sea Turtles

- Leatherbacks sea turtles are the world's most giant sea turtles.
- They are named for their shell, which is leather-like rather than hard, like other turtles.

#### Distribution

- Leatherback turtle is distributed **across the globe with nesting sites on tropical sandy beaches** and **foraging ranges** that extend into **temperate and subpolar latitudes**.



### Conservation Status

- As per the **IUCN Red List**, leatherback populations around the globe are considered **critically endangered** and **vulnerable to extinction**. The **status** also **varies with the region** where the country falls. They are considered **endangered** in Thailand.

### Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment

Source- newaisa.com, The Guardian

### Earth Day 2020

#### Why in the news?

- Every year **World Earth Day** is **celebrated on April 22** and this year its **marks the 50 years of Earth Day**. Each year the Earth Day comes up with a theme, and for the year 2020, the theme chosen is, "**Climate action**."
- Themed on Climate action, Earth Day 2020 has a lot in store: **digital events, performances, and collaborations**.
- With the global lockdown in progress due to the COVID 19 outbreak, the Earth Day celebrations will be predominantly digital this year.



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### Objective

- To increase awareness among common public, especially among youngsters, to get the full effect of the campaign of environmental safety.



### About Earth Day

- Earth Day is celebrated every year on April 22 to raise awareness about our planet that sustains life. Earth Day started as a political movement back in the United States of America.
- It was first celebrated in 1970. On April 22, 1970, millions of people took to the streets to protest the negative impacts of 150 years of industrial development.

### Organization

- **Earth Day Network (EDN)** is the not for profit organization that leads Earth Day worldwide.

### About Earth Day Network

- Earth Day Network is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to diversify, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide.
- The main office is located in **Washington, DC, USA.**

### Some interesting highlights about Earth:

- Earth is not spherical. There is a **bulge like a spare tire** around the equator due to **opposite centrifugal forces** working at it.
- The **age of the Earth** is around **4.54 billion years**, and the findings are based on the dating of old rocks and meteorites discovered on the surface of the planet.
- Every day around 100 tons of interplanetary particles in the form of dust drifts down the earth surface.
- The current configuration of planets was once a single unit or a **supercontinent**. The most recent supercontinent was the **Pangaea** which started breaking apart **200 million years ago** and formed the setup that we see presently.
- There are many **earth-like planets orbiting stars**, although it is **not yet proved whether life exists** on the Earth. The research is underway.
- The world's largest mountain is the **mid-ocean ridge** which is an underwater chain of **volcanoes spanning 65,000 kilometres**.
- There are crater lakes – **Nyos, Monoun and Kivu** present in Cameroon and the **border of Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe** that sit above the volcanic Earth and could explode.



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- There are some spots in the Atacama deserts of Chile and Peru where rainfall has never been recorded since its inception. It is the driest place on the planet.

**Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment**  
**Source- AIR**

**Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary**

**Why in the news?**

- Amid the **countrywide lockdown**, the **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** has recommended **coal mining in a part of an elephant reserve** (Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary) in Assam.

**Panel set up**

- The **NBWL** had in **July 2019** formed a **committee comprising its member R. Sukumar, Assam’s Chief Wildlife Warden** and a **representative of the local wildlife division for assessing the mining area.**

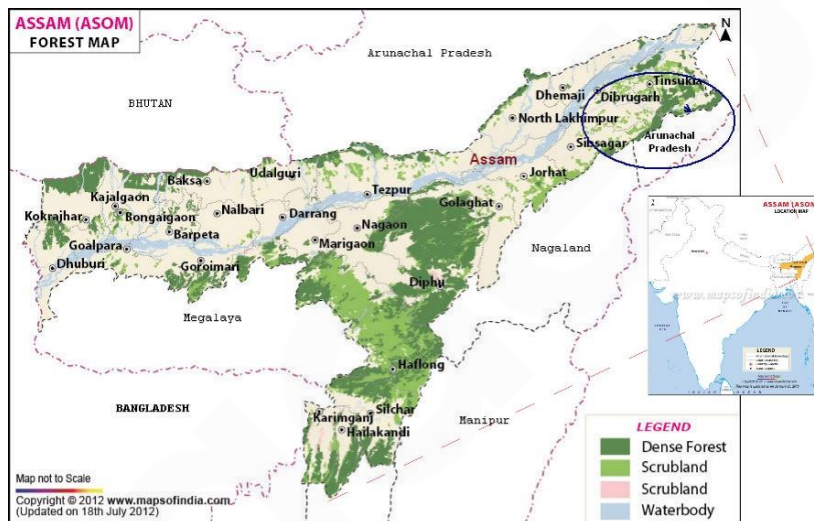


Figure 1. Forest map of Assam depicting the study area (circle).



Image 1. Tirap Reserve Forest (along the Tirap River on Arunachal Pradesh border)



Image 2. Bhorjan Reserve Forest, near Tinsukhia Town - potential site for butterfly inclusive ecotourism

**About Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary**

- It is also known as the **Jeypore Rainforest** which is in the districts of **Dibrugarh and Tinsukia** in **Assam**.

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- **Dehing** is the name of **the river that flows** through this **forest** and **Patkai** is the **hill at the foot** of which the **sanctuary** lies.
- **Vegetation**: It is a **deciduous rainforest interspersed** with **semi-evergreen** and **lush green flora**.

#### **About National Board for Wildlife**

- It is a **statutory body** as it has been **constituted under Section 5 A** the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- It is the **apex body** to review **all wildlife-related matters and approve projects** in and **around national parks and sanctuaries**, i.e. **Protected Areas**.

#### **Composition:**

- It is **chaired by Prime minister** and has a **47-member board** (including the chairman) which **usually meets once a year**.

**Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment**

**Source- Indian Express**



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