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IMPORTANT INSIGHTS

India–China Corps Commander Talks in Arunachal Pradesh Mark Expansion of Border Dialogue Beyond the Ladakh Sector

Recent Developments:

- India and China recently held their **first-ever Corps Commander-level talks in the Eastern Sector** at the **Wacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point** in Arunachal Pradesh's Kibithoo sector.
- The dialogue focused on reviewing the situation along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** and maintaining **peace and tranquillity** in the border areas.
- The Indian side was represented by **Lieutenant General Girish Kalia**, Commander of the **3 Corps (Spear Corps)**, while the engagement marked a significant expansion of the high-level military dialogue mechanism beyond its earlier concentration in **Eastern Ladakh**.
- The talks followed the **25th round of India-China Special Representatives' talks** and came amid reports of heightened activity and tensions in the **Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district**.

Significance of the Corps Commander-Level Talks:

Expansion of the Military Dialogue Architecture:

- Corps Commander-level engagement had become primarily associated with managing the post-2020 situation in **Eastern Ladakh**, particularly after the **Galwan Valley clashes**.
- Extending this mechanism to Arunachal Pradesh creates an additional high-level channel for addressing sector-specific concerns in the **Eastern Sector**.
- It reflects recognition that India-China border management requires **multi-sector communication mechanisms**, rather than concentrating major military dialogue only on Ladakh.
- The development can improve the ability of local and operational commanders to communicate during periods of tension, thereby reducing the risks of **miscalculation, accidental escalation and prolonged face-offs**.

Shift from Crisis Management to Wider Institutional Engagement:

- The new engagement indicates an attempt to institutionalise military communication across different sectors of the disputed frontier.
- Such mechanisms are particularly important because India and China have **differing perceptions of the alignment of the LAC**, and both sides patrol according to their respective perceptions.
- The Government of India has previously acknowledged that the absence of a commonly delineated LAC can result in transgressions and local face-offs.
- Therefore, direct communication between senior commanders complements diplomatic negotiations and helps address operational situations before they develop into larger crises.

Location and Military Context:

Wacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point:

- The meeting was held at the **Wacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point**, situated in the **Kibithoo sector of Arunachal Pradesh**.

- Border Personnel Meeting Points provide an institutional framework for interaction between military personnel and support communication, confidence-building and local border management.
- The present meeting elevated engagement in the Eastern Sector from routine border-management interaction to the **Corps Commander level**, underlining the strategic importance of the region.

Indian Army Formations in Arunachal Pradesh:

- The Indian Army has two major Corps formations associated with the Arunachal Pradesh frontier, namely the **3 Corps**, headquartered at **Rangapahar near Dimapur**, and the **4 Corps**, headquartered at **Tezpur**.
- The 3 Corps, also known as the **Spear Corps**, was represented by its commander, Lieutenant General Girish Kalia, during the latest dialogue.

Immediate Security Context:

Taksing and Upper Subansiri Tensions:

- The talks occurred amid reports of increased Chinese military activity and tensions in the **Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district**.
- Such localised tensions demonstrate that the restoration of broader diplomatic engagement does not automatically eliminate operational differences on the ground.
- They also highlight the importance of **continuous surveillance, adequate force preparedness, reliable communication channels and rapid de-escalation mechanisms**.
- The Corps Commander-level dialogue can therefore be viewed as both a **confidence-building instrument** and a practical mechanism for preventing a local incident from escalating into a wider confrontation.

India-China Border Management Framework:

Line of Actual Control:

- The **LAC** is the effective boundary separating areas under Indian and Chinese control pending a final settlement of the boundary question.
- It is not mutually and commonly delineated throughout its length, resulting in **differing perceptions** in certain areas.
- Consequently, activities such as patrolling and infrastructure development can generate friction when either side operates up to its own perceived alignment.
- The unresolved nature of the boundary question remains the fundamental structural challenge underlying recurrent border tensions.

Major Bilateral Agreements:

- **1993 Agreement**, focused on maintaining **peace and tranquillity along the LAC** and affirmed that the boundary question should be resolved through peaceful consultations.
- **1996 Agreement**, introduced **confidence-building measures in the military field**, including commitments aimed at preventing the use or threat of force and enhancing military restraint.
- **2005 Protocol**, laid down modalities for implementing military confidence-building measures, while the same year also saw the agreement on **Political Parameters and Guiding Principles** for settlement of the boundary question.
- **2012 Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC)**, created a diplomatic-military framework for consultation and coordination on border affairs.
- **2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA)**, strengthened procedures for communication and cooperation between border defence forces where differing perceptions of the LAC exist.

Link with Recent Diplomatic Engagements:

Special Representatives' Mechanism:

- The latest military dialogue followed the **25th round of Special Representatives' talks** on the India-China Boundary Question.
- The Special Representatives' mechanism represents the highest-level dedicated framework for addressing the political dimensions of the unresolved boundary dispute.
- The recent sequence demonstrates the need for **vertical coordination**, with strategic political engagement at the SR level supported by diplomatic consultations and operational communication between military commanders.
- A sustainable border-management architecture requires all these channels to function simultaneously because **political settlement, diplomatic consultation and on-ground military stability address different dimensions of the dispute**.

Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination:

- The **WMCC** operates as an important institutional mechanism for addressing border-related issues before or alongside higher-level political engagement.
- Its continued use demonstrates the importance of maintaining communication even when the boundary dispute itself remains unresolved.
- The coexistence of the **SR mechanism, WMCC, Border Personnel Meetings, hotlines and Corps Commander-level talks** creates a layered framework for crisis prevention and border management.

Broader Significance for India-China Relations:

Restoration of Communication after the 2020 Crisis:

- India-China relations deteriorated sharply following the **2020 military standoff in Eastern Ladakh** and the violent Galwan Valley clash.
- Since then, disengagement, de-escalation and restoration of normal border management have remained central concerns in bilateral relations.
- The extension of Corps Commander-level dialogue to Arunachal Pradesh suggests that bilateral efforts are increasingly addressing border stability through a **broader geographical and institutional framework**.
- However, dialogue should not be equated with a final settlement because the **boundary question, differing LAC perceptions and military deployments** continue to pose serious challenges.

Strategic Importance of the Eastern Sector:

- Arunachal Pradesh forms part of the **Eastern Sector** of the India-China boundary dispute and possesses substantial strategic, political and military significance.
- The region's difficult terrain, border infrastructure requirements and proximity to strategically sensitive areas make effective military preparedness essential.
- The latest dialogue therefore reinforces the need to combine **credible deterrence and infrastructure development** with diplomatic engagement and confidence-building measures.

BRICS and the Diplomatic Environment:

- The military engagement also occurred shortly before India was scheduled to host the **18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi**.

- Continued India-China dialogue before major multilateral engagements can help prevent bilateral tensions from overshadowing broader cooperation on issues involving the **Global South, multilateral reform, development and international economic governance**.
- Nevertheless, multilateral cooperation and bilateral competition can coexist; progress in one domain does not automatically resolve fundamental security differences in another.

Challenges to Durable Border Stability:

Unresolved Boundary Question:

- The absence of a mutually accepted final boundary settlement remains the principal source of strategic uncertainty.
- Temporary border-management arrangements can reduce tensions but cannot fully remove the consequences of competing territorial claims.

Differing LAC Perceptions:

- India and China continue to have differing perceptions in several areas, creating the possibility of patrol confrontations and competing assertions of territorial control.
- Effective crisis management requires clarity, communication and adherence to mutually accepted protocols.

Infrastructure and Force Posture:

- Border infrastructure improves connectivity, logistics and operational preparedness but may simultaneously intensify strategic competition if either side perceives changes as altering the local military balance.
- Sustained military deployments and improved capabilities increase deterrence but also make **confidence-building and transparency mechanisms** more important.

Gap Between Agreements and Ground Implementation:

- India and China possess an extensive framework of agreements and mechanisms, yet recurring incidents demonstrate that institutional arrangements require **consistent implementation, operational discipline and political commitment**.
- The key challenge is therefore not merely creating additional dialogue mechanisms but ensuring their **credibility, responsiveness and effective use during crises**.

Way Forward:

Strengthening Multi-Level Communication:

- India and China should maintain regular interaction through the **SR mechanism, WMCC, military hotlines, Border Personnel Meetings and senior commander-level talks**.
- Communication mechanisms should operate preventively and not only after a major face-off has already occurred.

Pursuing Predictable Border Management:

- Both sides should strengthen protocols for patrolling, temporary face-offs and local disengagement while working towards greater clarity on areas of differing LAC perceptions.

- Existing confidence-building arrangements must be updated where necessary to reflect changing **technology, infrastructure, force mobility and surveillance capabilities.**

Combining Diplomacy with Credible Preparedness:

- India needs sustained investment in **border infrastructure, logistics, surveillance, intelligence, air mobility and all-weather connectivity.**
- Diplomatic engagement is most effective when supported by adequate operational preparedness and the ability to manage escalation without compromising national security interests.

Separating Immediate Stability from Final Settlement:

- Maintaining peace along the LAC and resolving the boundary question are related but distinct objectives.
- Both countries should prevent local incidents from damaging wider engagement while continuing negotiations for a **fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement.**

Conclusion:

- The first **Corps Commander-level talks in Arunachal Pradesh** represent an important expansion of India-China military dialogue into the Eastern Sector and strengthen the broader architecture for managing tensions along the LAC.
- The development is significant because it adds a high-level operational communication channel beyond Eastern Ladakh at a time when local tensions, differing LAC perceptions and the unresolved boundary question continue to create risks.
- However, **dialogue is a mechanism for managing differences, not a substitute for resolving them.** Durable stability will require the simultaneous pursuit of **credible deterrence, effective confidence-building measures, robust communication and sustained political negotiations.**

Value Addition for UPSC:

Possible UPSC Mains Question: “The expansion of India-China Corps Commander-level dialogue to the Eastern Sector reflects the need for a multi-layered approach to managing an unsettled boundary. Examine.”

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

India Completes a Decade of Inflation Targeting as Supply Shocks and a Flat Phillips Curve Test Monetary Policy Effectiveness

Recent Developments:

- India's **Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework has completed a decade of operation in 2026**, marking ten years since the statutory framework was institutionalised and the first Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was constituted in 2016. The framework gave **price stability** a formal primacy while requiring monetary policy to remain mindful of economic growth.
- The framework was introduced through amendments to the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**, following the recommendations of the **Urjit Patel Committee**, and shifted monetary policy from a largely discretionary approach towards a transparent, committee-based and rule-oriented framework.

- The Government initially notified a **4% CPI inflation target**, with a **2% lower tolerance limit** and **6% upper tolerance limit**, for August 2016–March 2021 and subsequently retained the same framework for April 2021–March 2026.
- RBI's assessment of the initial FIT period found that headline inflation averaged around **3.9%**, while inflation volatility declined substantially, indicating improved price stability and greater monetary-policy credibility.
- However, the decade has also highlighted structural limitations because **food-price shocks, crude-oil movements, climate events, supply-chain disruptions and imported inflation** can raise consumer prices even when domestic demand remains weak.

India's Inflation Targeting Framework:

Evolution and Legal Basis:

- India moved towards formal **Flexible Inflation Targeting** after the **2015 Monetary Policy Framework Agreement** between the Government and the RBI, followed by amendments to the RBI Act in 2016 that provided the framework with a statutory basis.
- The framework was based substantially on the recommendations of the **Expert Committee to Revise and Strengthen the Monetary Policy Framework**, chaired by **Dr. Urjit Patel**, which favoured an explicit inflation target and greater institutional accountability.
- **Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934** empowers the Central Government, in consultation with the RBI, to determine the inflation target once every five years in terms of the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**.
- The choice of **CPI** is significant because it reflects changes in the prices paid by consumers and therefore provides a direct measure of retail inflation.

Inflation Target and Tolerance Band:

- The framework established **4% CPI inflation as the central target**, with a **2–6% tolerance band**, thereby combining a numerical nominal anchor with flexibility to accommodate temporary economic shocks.
- The framework is termed **flexible** because the RBI is not expected to mechanically eliminate every temporary deviation from 4%; instead, it seeks to bring inflation back towards the target over the medium term while considering growth conditions.
- A formal **failure to maintain the inflation target** occurs when average inflation remains above the upper tolerance level or below the lower tolerance level for **three consecutive quarters**. In such a situation, the RBI must explain the reasons for the deviation, specify remedial measures and indicate the expected period for returning inflation to the target.

Monetary Policy Committee and Institutional Architecture:

Role and Composition of MPC:

- The **Monetary Policy Committee** determines the policy rate required to achieve the inflation target and replaced the earlier system in which monetary policy decisions were primarily associated with the RBI Governor.
- The MPC consists of **six members**, with three members from the RBI and three external members appointed by the Central Government.
- The committee-based mechanism improves **transparency, accountability and collective decision-making**, because individual members record their votes and statements after every meeting.
- The MPC is required to meet at least **four times a year**, while its decisions and voting records are publicly disclosed.

Primary Objective:

- The statutory framework establishes **price stability as the primary objective of monetary policy while keeping the objective of growth in mind.**
- This creates a **flexible hierarchy rather than a rigid trade-off**, because the RBI can give greater attention to growth when inflation is under control but must prioritise disinflation when persistent inflation threatens macroeconomic stability.

How Inflation Targeting Works:***Demand Channel:***

- When inflation is driven by excessive aggregate demand, the RBI can **raise the repo rate**, increasing borrowing costs for banks, households and firms.
- Higher interest rates can reduce **consumption, housing demand and private investment**, thereby moderating aggregate demand and easing demand-driven inflation.
- Conversely, lower policy rates can stimulate borrowing, investment and consumption when weak demand and low inflation threaten economic activity.

Expectations Channel:

- Inflation targeting attempts to **anchor inflation expectations** around the official target so that households and firms do not permanently anticipate high inflation.
- Well-anchored expectations can reduce the possibility of a **wage-price spiral**, because workers and firms are less likely to incorporate persistently high expected inflation into wage and price decisions.
- RBI research indicates that the FIT framework improved the anchoring of inflation expectations, although repeated supply shocks after the pandemic created renewed risks of de-anchoring.

Monetary Transmission Channel:

- Changes in the **repo rate** influence money-market rates, bank lending rates and financial conditions, which eventually affect aggregate demand and inflation.
- Effective transmission is therefore essential because a change in the policy rate does not immediately translate into equivalent changes in borrowing costs throughout the economy.

New Keynesian Phillips Curve and Inflation Dynamics:***Concept of NKPC:***

- The **New Keynesian Phillips Curve (NKPC)** explains inflation through the interaction of **expected future inflation, economic activity and supply-side costs.**
- A simplified relationship suggests that current inflation rises when expected inflation increases or when economic activity exceeds productive capacity.
- Stronger demand can increase employment, wages and production costs, which may subsequently translate into higher prices.

Relevance to India:

- RBI monetary-policy models incorporate the **output gap, inflation expectations, exchange-rate movements and supply-side factors** to understand inflation dynamics.

- However, the Phillips Curve relationship may not be stable or equally strong across all economic conditions because India experiences substantial **food, fuel, weather and external commodity shocks**.

Concerns Regarding the Effectiveness of Inflation Targeting:

Flat Phillips Curve:

- Evidence from recent analysis of Indian industrial output and CPI inflation suggests that the **Phillips Curve has become relatively flat**, implying a weaker relationship between changes in economic activity and inflation.
- A flatter curve means that changes in output or employment may generate only a limited inflation response, reducing the effectiveness of demand compression as a tool against certain forms of inflation.
- RBI research also recognises that the Phillips Curve can be **non-linear**, remaining relatively flat at negative output gaps but becoming steeper when economic activity generates significant excess demand.

Weak Wage-Output-Inflation Link:

- A large informal workforce and relatively weak **collective wage-bargaining power** can weaken the conventional transmission from higher employment to higher wages and subsequently to consumer prices.
- Consequently, stronger output does not always produce the wage pressures predicted by a conventional Phillips Curve.

Supply-Side Nature of Inflation:

- Indian inflation frequently originates from **food-price shocks, adverse weather, climatic events, supply-chain disruptions, crude-oil prices and imported commodity costs**.
- Monetary tightening cannot directly increase agricultural production, repair disrupted supply chains or reduce international crude-oil prices.
- Excessive reliance on interest-rate increases against supply-driven inflation can therefore impose **output and employment costs without adequately addressing the original source of inflation**.
- RBI research similarly highlights the importance of supply-side shocks, particularly food and energy shocks, in shaping India's inflation trajectory.

Inflation Expectations and Measurement Challenges:

- Household inflation expectations can differ considerably from official CPI inflation because households give greater weight to **frequently purchased items**, particularly food and fuel.
- RBI research finds that household expectations contain significant biases but can still provide useful information for forecasting inflation after appropriate adjustments.
- Persistent supply shocks can nevertheless cause temporary inflation to become embedded in expectations, creating **second-round effects** that monetary policy must address.

Risk to Economic Growth:

- Persistent monetary tightening raises borrowing costs and can discourage **private investment, housing demand and household credit**, thereby slowing economic activity.
- If inflation remains high because of supply constraints rather than excess demand, the economy may face a difficult combination of **high inflation and lower growth**, often described as a stagflationary risk.
- Therefore, monetary tightening must be calibrated according to the **source, persistence and second-round effects of inflation**, rather than relying solely on headline inflation.

Way Forward:

Strengthening the Inflation Targeting Regime:

- Monetary policy should distinguish between **temporary first-round supply shocks** and persistent inflation generated through expectations, wages and broader demand pressures.
- The RBI should continue strengthening **forward guidance, communication and expectation management** because credibility is central to the success of inflation targeting.
- Government policy should complement monetary policy through **food-stock management, supply-chain improvements, climate-resilient agriculture, energy diversification and targeted fiscal measures**.
- Better coordination between monetary and supply-side policies can reduce the burden placed on interest rates while preserving the RBI's operational independence.
- Improving the quality and timeliness of **price, employment, wage and output data** can help policymakers identify whether inflation originates from demand, supply or expectations.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Conceptual Takeaway:

- **Inflation targeting is not merely an interest-rate mechanism; it is a framework for establishing a credible nominal anchor for the economy.**
- The Indian experience demonstrates that **monetary credibility can reduce inflation volatility and improve expectations**, but monetary policy alone cannot permanently resolve structurally supply-driven inflation.
- A balanced UPSC assessment should therefore recognise the **success of FIT in improving price stability and institutional transparency** while highlighting the constraints created by **food inflation, climate shocks, imported inflation, weak wage-transmission and a potentially flat Phillips Curve**.
- The ideal policy approach is **"credible monetary policy + resilient supply chains + prudent fiscal policy + anchored expectations"**, rather than excessive dependence on any single instrument.

India Advances Geothermal Energy with New Policy and First Wells at Ladakh's Puga Valley for Clean Energy Transition

Recent Developments:

- **India has moved from geothermal resource assessment towards field-level implementation**, following the notification of the **National Policy on Geothermal Energy** in September 2025 and the commissioning of the country's first 2 geothermal wells at **Puga Valley, Ladakh**, in July 2026.
- The 2 wells, commissioned by the **ONGC Energy Centre**, are located at an altitude of more than **14,000 feet** and are approximately **1,000 metres deep**, supporting geothermal reservoir assessment and laying the foundation for India's proposed **1 MW demonstration geothermal power project**.
- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** is the nodal ministry for implementing the National Policy on Geothermal Energy, which seeks to create a systematic framework for exploration, technology development, resource utilisation and private-sector participation.
- India possesses an estimated **theoretical geothermal resource potential of approximately 10,600 MW**, while the Geological Survey of India has documented **381 hot springs** and identified **42 geothermal manifestations** as promising for electricity generation and direct-heat applications.

Understanding Geothermal Energy:

Meaning and Characteristics:

- **Geothermal energy** is renewable energy obtained from the **natural heat present inside the Earth**, which can be used for electricity generation as well as direct heating and cooling.
- It is a **steady, low-carbon and weather-independent energy source**, making it different from variable renewable sources such as solar and wind.
- Geothermal resources can therefore provide **round-the-clock energy**, improve renewable-energy reliability and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- The resource is particularly significant in regions where geological structures allow underground heat to accumulate near the surface in the form of **hot water, steam or heated rocks**.

Origin of Earth's Internal Heat:

- Earth's internal heat originates mainly from **radioactive decay of elements such as uranium, thorium and potassium**, along with residual heat retained from the planet's formation.
- This internal heat drives **mantle convection**, which contributes to major geological processes including tectonic activity, volcanism, earthquakes and mountain building.
- In tectonically active regions, **faults and fractures** can provide pathways through which underground heat and fluids move towards the surface, creating exploitable geothermal reservoirs.

How Geothermal Energy is Harnessed:

Electricity Generation:

- Geothermal power plants use **deep wells to access hot water and steam**, which can be used to drive turbines connected to electricity generators.
- After heat extraction, the cooled geothermal fluid can be **reinjecting into underground reservoirs**, helping maintain reservoir pressure and supporting long-term resource utilisation.
- Depending on resource temperature and geological conditions, geothermal systems can employ different technologies, including **dry-steam, flash-steam and binary-cycle systems**.

Direct-Heat Applications:

- Geothermal heat can be directly used for **district heating, agriculture, aquaculture, space heating and cooling**, thereby reducing the need to convert thermal energy into electricity.
- **Ground Source Heat Pumps** can use relatively shallow geothermal heat for efficient heating and cooling of buildings.
- Such applications can be particularly useful in cold regions and for agricultural activities requiring controlled temperatures.

India's Geothermal Energy Potential:

Resource Base:

- India has considerable geothermal potential because of its **diverse geological and tectonic characteristics**, although commercial exploitation remains at an early stage.
- The **Geological Survey of India** has mapped and studied **381 geothermal or thermally anomalous areas**, forming an important scientific basis for future exploration.

- The estimated theoretical potential of approximately **10,600 MW** indicates a substantial resource base, although theoretical potential should not be equated with immediately commercially exploitable capacity.
- Among the identified resources, **42 geothermal manifestations** have been considered promising for further development of power generation and direct-heat applications.

Major Geothermal Regions:

- Important geothermal provinces include the **Himalayan Geothermal Province, Naga-Lusai Province, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Son-Narmada-Tapi Province, West Coast, Cambay Graben, Aravalli, Mahanadi, Godavari and South Indian Cratonic regions.**
- These regions differ in geological structure, reservoir temperature, accessibility and resource quality, requiring **location-specific exploration and technology selection.**

Puga Valley, Ladakh:

- **Puga Valley** is among India's most promising geothermal locations because of its abundant hot springs and favourable underground thermal conditions.
- The commissioning of the first 2 geothermal wells represents a shift from **resource identification to experimental utilisation** and provides an opportunity to evaluate reservoir characteristics under Indian high-altitude conditions.
- The proposed **1 MW demonstration project** can provide valuable information regarding drilling, reservoir management, operating costs and the technical feasibility of geothermal power generation in India.

National Policy Framework for Geothermal Energy:

National Policy on Geothermal Energy, 2025:-

- The Government notified the **National Policy on Geothermal Energy on 15 September 2025** to establish a framework for the exploration, development and utilisation of geothermal resources.
- The policy promotes **systematic exploration, drilling, technology development, reservoir management, direct-use applications, pilot projects, Ground Source Heat Pumps, Centres of Excellence and a national geothermal data repository.**
- It also seeks to create conditions for **public and private-sector participation**, thereby enabling geothermal development beyond government-funded exploration.
- The policy explicitly recognises the possibility of **repurposing abandoned oil and gas wells** for geothermal energy recovery, subject to technical and economic feasibility.

Research and Technology Development:

- The **Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development Programme** of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy supports research institutions and industry in developing **indigenous and cost-effective renewable-energy technologies**, including geothermal applications.
- Advanced technologies such as **Enhanced Geothermal Systems** and other engineered geothermal approaches can potentially expand geothermal utilisation beyond naturally occurring high-temperature reservoirs.
- Repurposing existing oil and gas wells can reduce some exploration and drilling requirements by utilising **existing well data, drilling expertise and infrastructure**, although reservoir conditions must first be technically assessed.

Importance of Geothermal Energy for India:

Energy Security and Clean Energy Transition:

- Geothermal energy can diversify India's renewable-energy portfolio by adding a **firm and continuously available renewable source** alongside variable solar and wind power.
- Its domestic availability can strengthen **energy security**, reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and support India's transition towards a low-carbon economy.
- Geothermal power can also complement variable renewable energy by providing **stable electricity generation**, potentially reducing pressure on energy-storage systems.

Regional and Socio-Economic Benefits:

- Geothermal resources can support **heating, agriculture, aquaculture and tourism**, creating opportunities beyond electricity generation.
- Remote and geographically isolated regions can potentially benefit from locally available geothermal resources, particularly where conventional fuel supply is costly or difficult.
- Development of geothermal projects can promote **local employment, specialised skills, scientific research and clean-energy infrastructure**.

Challenges in Geothermal Development:

High Exploration and Drilling Risk:

- Geothermal development requires substantial **upfront exploration and drilling expenditure**, while the quality and quantity of underground resources may remain uncertain until wells are drilled.
- Unsuccessful drilling can therefore create significant financial risk during the early stages of a project.

Technological and Geological Constraints:

- India requires greater domestic capability in **deep drilling, reservoir characterisation, geothermal modelling, corrosion control and reinjection technologies**.
- Different geological conditions across geothermal provinces make standardised deployment difficult and require location-specific technological solutions.

Environmental and Social Considerations:

- Geothermal projects can involve **land-use requirements, induced seismicity, mineral-rich fluid management and possible contamination risks** if geothermal fluids are not properly handled.
- Sustainable development therefore requires appropriate environmental assessment, reservoir monitoring and responsible reinjection practices.

Economic Competitiveness:

- Geothermal projects may face higher initial costs than mature solar and wind technologies because India has limited commercial-scale geothermal deployment experience.
- Achieving cost competitiveness will require **demonstration projects, technology learning, domestic manufacturing, concessional finance and risk-sharing mechanisms**.

Way Forward:

Building a Geothermal Ecosystem:

- India should strengthen **resource mapping, exploratory drilling and geothermal data sharing** to reduce uncertainty and improve investor confidence.
- Demonstration projects such as Puga Valley should be used to generate domestic knowledge on **reservoir behaviour, drilling economics, plant performance and environmental management**.
- Public funding can initially absorb part of the exploration risk, while successful projects can progressively attract **private investment and technology partnerships**.
- International cooperation with countries having advanced geothermal capabilities, including **Australia, Iceland, Saudi Arabia and the United States**, can accelerate technology transfer, knowledge sharing and joint research.
- India should integrate geothermal development with its broader **Net Zero 2070 strategy**, particularly in regions where geothermal resources can provide firm renewable power or direct thermal applications.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Analytical Takeaway:

- **Geothermal energy represents a firm renewable-energy source that can complement variable solar and wind power**, thereby strengthening the reliability and diversity of India's clean-energy system.
- The Indian case illustrates the transition from **resource assessment → policy support → demonstration projects → commercial-scale deployment**.
- **Puga Valley** is strategically important because it provides India with an opportunity to develop indigenous expertise in high-altitude geothermal exploration and reservoir management.
- The central policy challenge is to convert India's **theoretical geothermal potential into commercially viable and environmentally sustainable capacity** through risk-sharing, technological development, accurate resource assessment and private-sector participation.

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BRICS 'POWER' Framework Signals a Broader Global South Agenda amid India-China Coordination and the 18th Summit

Recent Developments:

- Ahead of the **18th BRICS Summit**, scheduled in New Delhi on 12–13 September 2026, Chinese Ambassador to India **Xu Feihong** proposed a '**POWER**' framework for strengthening cooperation within an expanded BRICS and giving greater institutional weight to the **Global South**.
- The proposal is particularly significant because **India holds the BRICS Chairship in 2026**, while **China is scheduled to assume the rotating presidency in 2027**, creating an opportunity for policy continuity but also placing India-China relations at the centre of the grouping's future trajectory.
- India's 2026 BRICS Chairship is guided by the overarching theme "**Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability**", with the agenda increasingly focusing on development, energy security, technology, trade, digital cooperation and institutional reform.
- The proposed framework should be understood as a **Chinese diplomatic vision rather than an officially adopted BRICS doctrine**. Its importance lies in the debate it generates over whether BRICS should

primarily function as a development-oriented Global South platform or as a counterweight to Western influence.

Understanding the BRICS 'POWER' Framework:

BRICS as a Global South Platform:

- BRICS has evolved from a grouping of Brazil, Russia, India and China into a broader coordination mechanism representing major emerging economies and developing countries.
- The grouping currently has **11 full members** — **Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia** — while a separate **partner-country** category has also been developed.
- BRICS is an **informal political and diplomatic coordination mechanism**, rather than a treaty-based international organisation; it has no constitutive treaty, permanent secretariat or independent budget.
- Its principal significance lies in strengthening **South-South cooperation**, increasing the representation of emerging economies in global governance and advocating reforms of institutions such as the **United Nations, IMF, World Bank and WTO**.

Five Pillars of the POWER Framework:

- The proposed **POWER** architecture uses five pillars — **Principle, Openness, Win-Win, Engine and Responsibility** — to outline a broad agenda covering political, economic, technological and developmental cooperation.

P — Principle: Sovereign Equality and International Law:

- The **Principle** pillar emphasises **sovereign equality, non-interference and peaceful settlement of disputes**, drawing upon the principles of the **UN Charter**.
- It seeks to strengthen a multipolar international order in which developing countries exercise greater agency rather than remaining dependent on established centres of global power.
- For India, this principle is relevant because its foreign policy emphasises **strategic autonomy, sovereignty, territorial integrity and a rules-based international order**.

O — Openness: Multilateral Trade and Connectivity:

- The **Openness** pillar calls for preservation of a **rules-based multilateral trading system** centred on the **WTO**, including the principle of non-discriminatory **Most-Favoured-Nation treatment**.
- It advocates resistance to excessive **geopolitical decoupling, protectionism and punitive tariff barriers**, while promoting cooperation in infrastructure, energy and critical-mineral supply chains.
- India can use this approach to advocate **open but fair trade**, greater market access and resilient global value chains while protecting sensitive domestic sectors.

W — Win-Win: Development-Centred Cooperation:

- The **Win-Win** pillar places **socioeconomic development** at the centre of multilateral cooperation and links BRICS priorities with the **Sustainable Development Goals** and the post-2030 development agenda.
- It proposes greater use of **local-currency settlements, interoperable cross-border payment systems and reciprocal credit arrangements** to reduce exposure to exchange-rate volatility and external financial pressures.
- Such cooperation could complement existing BRICS financial mechanisms without requiring the immediate creation of a common currency.

E — Engine: Growth, Industrialisation and Technology:

- The **Engine** pillar seeks to position BRICS as a driver of global growth through cooperation in **digital public infrastructure, green technologies, advanced manufacturing and Artificial Intelligence**.
- The technology agenda is particularly relevant for India because its experience with **UPI, Digital Public Infrastructure and digital governance** provides potential areas for South-South technology cooperation.
- India's BRICS Chairship has already promoted technology-oriented cooperation, including discussions on **resilient digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital skills, innovation and startups**.
- Cooperation in Artificial Intelligence can help developing countries address the **digital divide**, develop locally relevant technologies and establish common principles for trustworthy and human-centric AI governance.

R — Responsibility: Continuity and Global South Leadership:

- The **Responsibility** pillar seeks to use the consecutive presidencies of **India in 2026 and China in 2027** to maintain policy continuity and strengthen the institutional effectiveness of the expanded BRICS.
- It also supports greater representation of developing countries through reforms of the **Bretton Woods institutions** and the **UN Security Council**.
- However, continuity will depend upon whether India and China can separate areas of multilateral cooperation from unresolved bilateral disagreements.

Strategic Significance for India:***India-China Coordination within BRICS:***

- The POWER proposal arrives during a period in which India-China engagement has shown signs of stabilisation, creating space for cooperation in areas of common interest while bilateral differences remain unresolved.
- India can use BRICS to pursue **functional cooperation without compromising strategic autonomy**, particularly in development finance, climate action, technology, trade and Global South representation.
- India should nevertheless avoid allowing BRICS to become an explicitly **anti-Western coalition**, because India maintains extensive strategic, economic and technological partnerships with the United States, Europe, Japan, Australia and other partners.

Economic and Financial Opportunities:

- BRICS provides a platform for strengthening **local-currency financing, development finance and payment interoperability**.
- The **New Development Bank** is particularly important because it finances infrastructure and sustainable-development projects and has expanded its use of local-currency financing. Its current strategy includes a substantial role for local currencies, while its recent operations demonstrate continued diversification of funding sources.
- The NDB has also demonstrated practical relevance to India through infrastructure financing, including projects in transport and urban development.

Technology, Energy and Supply Chains:

- BRICS cooperation can help diversify supply chains for **critical minerals, renewable-energy equipment, semiconductors, fertilisers and strategic technologies**.
- India's 2026 BRICS Energy agenda has already promoted cooperation in **renewable energy, hydrogen, energy storage, critical minerals, carbon capture, digitalisation and energy efficiency**.

- Such cooperation can strengthen **strategic resilience** while reducing excessive dependence on geographically concentrated production networks.

Key Challenges:

Divergent Strategic Visions:

- India generally views BRICS as a platform for **strategic autonomy, development cooperation and reform of global governance**, whereas some members may seek to position it more explicitly as a counterweight to Western influence.
- This divergence can make consensus difficult on contentious geopolitical issues.

India-China Economic Asymmetry:

- Despite calls for greater trade openness, India faces a persistent and substantial **trade deficit with China**, alongside concerns regarding market access, non-tariff barriers and dependence on Chinese inputs.
- Therefore, deeper BRICS trade integration must be accompanied by **supply-chain diversification and domestic manufacturing capacity**.

Geopolitical and Security Frictions:

- BRICS includes countries with competing geopolitical interests, bilateral disputes and different positions on major international conflicts.
- India-China border tensions demonstrate that economic and multilateral cooperation cannot automatically eliminate strategic competition.

Financial and Monetary Constraints:

- Greater use of local currencies faces challenges arising from **currency convertibility, exchange-rate volatility, capital-account restrictions, liquidity constraints and unequal financial-market depth**.
- A common BRICS currency is therefore considerably more difficult than improving bilateral or multilateral settlement mechanisms.

Institutional Cohesion:

- The rapid expansion of BRICS has increased its demographic and economic weight but has also increased the diversity of its political systems, foreign-policy priorities and economic structures.
- Maintaining **consensus-based decision-making** while pursuing ambitious institutional reforms will remain a major challenge.

Way Ahead:

- India should promote a **development-oriented and inclusive BRICS** that cooperates with both Western and non-Western institutions instead of defining itself primarily through opposition to the West.
- India and China should use their successive presidencies to build practical cooperation in **trade, development finance, climate action, digital public infrastructure, Artificial Intelligence, energy and critical supply chains**, while maintaining bilateral disputes on a separate diplomatic track.
- BRICS should strengthen the **New Development Bank**, expand local-currency financing and improve interoperability among national payment systems rather than prematurely pursuing a common currency.

- The grouping should develop **transparent and human-centric AI governance frameworks** that promote innovation while addressing algorithmic concentration, data governance, cybersecurity and the digital divide.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on **implementation-oriented cooperation**, including measurable projects in infrastructure, health, education, food security, renewable energy and digital connectivity.
- BRICS should continue advocating **reform of the UN Security Council, IMF and World Bank**, while ensuring that institutional reform remains consistent with wider multilateral cooperation.

Conclusion:

- The proposed **POWER framework** reflects the growing ambition of BRICS to shape the global economic and political order rather than merely participate in existing institutions.
- Its success, however, will depend less on rhetorical declarations and more on the ability of members to convert their considerable demographic and economic weight into **practical cooperation, institutional capacity and development outcomes**.
- For India, the optimal approach is to make BRICS a platform for **strategic autonomy, Global South leadership, economic resilience and multilateral reform**, while avoiding its transformation into an exclusive anti-Western bloc.
- If India and China can combine **sovereign equality, economic pragmatism and issue-based cooperation**, BRICS can contribute to a more representative, multipolar and development-oriented international order.

Value Addition for UPSC:

- **Essay:** *"The rise of the Global South is reshaping the architecture of global governance."*
- **Key analytical theme:** BRICS should be viewed not simply as an **anti-Western coalition**, but as a contested platform where development cooperation, strategic autonomy, economic diversification and competing geopolitical visions intersect.
- **Important factual correction:** BRICS currently consists of **11 full members**, while the **POWER framework remains a proposed diplomatic framework and is not an officially adopted BRICS institutional framework**.

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Forest Rights Act Dispute Raises Questions over Gram Sabha Consent, Tribal Rights and Delays in Critical Infrastructure Projects

Recent Developments:

- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** has clarified that the **Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)** and its Rules do not contain a specific provision requiring **Gram Sabha consent for Stage-II forest clearance**, and stated that matters concerning such consent do not fall within its purview. The clarification followed discussions with the Ministry of Power over delays affecting infrastructure projects.
- The issue emerged after the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Undertakings** examined delays faced by **NHPC Limited**. The Committee recorded that forest clearance for under-construction hydropower projects takes an average of **106 months**, and identified the requirement for consent from all concerned Gram Sabhas as a major bottleneck.
- The Committee examined NHPC's proposal for a **70–75% qualified super-majority** of affected Gram Sabhas for large hydropower projects of national importance, while also recommending safeguards for Gram Sabha interests and earlier FRA compliance during the project-preparation stage.

Understanding the Forest Rights Act, 2006:

Objectives and Significance:

- The **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** was enacted to address the historical injustice faced by forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers whose customary rights had not been adequately recognised under earlier forest governance regimes.
- The Act recognises a range of **individual and community forest rights**, including rights relating to self-cultivation, habitation, grazing, fishing, access to water bodies, biodiversity, traditional knowledge and **Community Forest Resource management**. It also seeks to strengthen the participation of rights-holders in forest conservation.
- The **Gram Sabha** occupies a central position because it initiates the process of determining the nature and extent of individual and community forest rights and performs important functions in verification, recognition and protection of such rights.

Nodal Ministry and Implementation:

- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** is the nodal Union Ministry for the implementation framework of the FRA, while actual implementation is substantially undertaken by **State Governments and Union Territory administrations**.
- The Ministry has itself stated that implementation of the FRA lies with States and Union Territories, which creates an important distinction between **Union-level policy coordination** and **ground-level implementation**.

Gram Sabha Consent and Forest Diversion:

The Legal Distinction:

- A crucial distinction must be maintained between the **FRA, 2006**, which primarily recognises forest rights, and the statutory regime governing **diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes**, historically associated with the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** and its subsequent regulatory framework.
- The FRA does not expressly state that every forest-diversion proposal requires Gram Sabha consent as a standalone statutory condition for Stage-II forest clearance. However, Government procedures and guidelines concerning forest diversion have linked forest clearance with completion of the FRA-related process.

How the Consent Procedure Emerged:

- The relevant administrative framework has required authorities to establish that FRA processes have been addressed before forest land is diverted. This has involved:
 - Identification of potential **FRA rights-holders**;
 - Recognition of eligible forest rights;
 - Vesting of recognised rights; and
 - Obtaining the required **Gram Sabha certification or no-objection** in the applicable diversion process.
- Consequently, the practical requirement of Gram Sabha consent became closely associated with forest-diversion clearances even though the precise legal source of the requirement is distinct from the substantive provisions of the FRA itself. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs maintains that the FRA and its Rules do not themselves prescribe such consent for Stage-II clearance.

Why the Issue Matters for Hydropower Development:

Infrastructure and Development Concerns:

- The Parliamentary Committee's finding of an average **106-month forest-clearance period** highlights the substantial economic consequences of prolonged regulatory processes, including cost escalation, delayed power generation, inefficient utilisation of public capital and uncertainty for project planning.
- Hydropower projects frequently operate in ecologically sensitive and forested regions, particularly in the **Himalayan and North-Eastern areas**, where forest rights, tribal livelihoods, biodiversity and infrastructure development often overlap.
- The **Teesta-IV Hydroelectric Project** has been cited in the parliamentary deliberations as an example of a project affected by pending Gram Sabha-related consent issues. Government records also identify Teesta-IV as a 520 MW NHPC project in Sikkim whose forest clearance had remained an important issue.

Super-Majority Proposal:

- The proposed **70–75% qualified super-majority** would represent a major shift from an arrangement in which objections from individual affected Gram Sabhas can potentially prevent project progression.
- Supporters may argue that such a threshold could prevent nationally important projects from being indefinitely stalled by limited dissent while retaining a significant degree of community participation.
- Critics, however, argue that **majority voting cannot automatically extinguish legally recognised individual or community rights**. Affected rights-holders may belong to vulnerable communities for whom loss of land or forest resources can have irreversible livelihood and cultural consequences.

Constitutional and Legal Context:

PESA and Constitutional Safeguards:

- The **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)** strengthens the role of Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas and reflects the constitutional commitment to participatory tribal self-governance.
- The **Fifth Schedule** provides a special administrative framework for Scheduled Areas, while the **Sixth Schedule** provides autonomous institutional arrangements for specified tribal areas in the North-Eastern States.
- These provisions demonstrate that tribal governance is not merely an administrative question but is linked to **constitutional protection, decentralisation, community participation and socio-economic justice**.

Judicial Recognition of Community Rights:

- The Supreme Court's **Samatha judgment, 1997**, emphasised constitutional safeguards against exploitation of tribal communities and recognised the protective significance of the Fifth Schedule in relation to tribal land and resources.
- In the **Orissa Mining Corporation v. Ministry of Environment and Forests judgment, 2013**, concerning the **Niyamgiri Hills**, the Supreme Court recognised the central role of Gram Sabhas in determining questions affecting the religious, cultural and community rights of tribal communities.
- Therefore, any reform of the consent framework must be assessed against the wider constitutional and judicial architecture rather than through the text of the FRA alone.

Core Governance Challenges:

Rights versus Development:

- The controversy represents a broader governance dilemma between **rapid infrastructure development** and **rights-based environmental governance**.
- Delayed clearances can undermine energy security and infrastructure creation, but weakening community participation can produce displacement, livelihood insecurity, social conflict and litigation.

Institutional Ambiguity:

- The latest inter-ministerial disagreement also exposes a potential **institutional coordination gap**. If the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal ministry for FRA implementation but disputes concerning Gram Sabha consent are treated as outside its jurisdiction, responsibility for resolving such disputes requires clearer allocation.
- Such ambiguity can increase administrative delays because project authorities may be uncertain about the appropriate ministry, legal instrument or procedure through which disputes should be resolved.

Way Forward:

Complete FRA Processes at the Initial Stage:

- FRA-related verification and recognition should begin during the **pre-feasibility and project-planning stage**, rather than becoming a late-stage clearance requirement. The parliamentary recommendations have also supported initiating FRA compliance earlier in the project cycle.

Strengthen State-Level Capacity:

- Since implementation substantially rests with States and Union Territories, dedicated personnel, digital records, training and time-bound procedures should be developed for **forest-right recognition and Gram Sabha processes**.

Improve Quality of Consultation:

- Genuine consultation should involve **prior information, accessible project details, participation of affected rights-holders, transparent documentation and credible rehabilitation and benefit-sharing mechanisms**.

Protect Rights while Reducing Delay:

- Instead of mechanically replacing unanimity with a super-majority, the Government could consider safeguards such as **project-specific social-impact assessment, protection of individual recognised rights, independent review of objections and enhanced rehabilitation measures**.
- A differentiated framework could also be examined for nationally important projects, provided that constitutional protections and legally recognised forest rights are not diluted.

Clarify the Legal Framework:

- The Union Government should clearly distinguish between the **substantive rights recognised under the FRA** and the **procedural requirements governing forest diversion**, thereby eliminating ambiguity regarding the legal basis of Gram Sabha certification or consent.

Conclusion:

- The Forest Rights Act represents a shift from a purely administrative model of forest governance towards a **rights-based and participatory framework**. The present controversy should therefore not be reduced to a choice between development and tribal rights.
- The objective should be to create a **predictable, time-bound and legally coherent clearance system** in which infrastructure projects can proceed efficiently while recognised forest rights, constitutional protections and meaningful Gram Sabha participation remain safeguarded.

Value Addition for UPSC:***Prelims Pointers:***

- **FRA, 2006:** Recognises individual and community forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.
- **Gram Sabha:** Central authority in initiating the process for determining forest rights under the FRA.
- **PESA, 1996:** Extends Panchayati Raj provisions to Scheduled Areas with enhanced Gram Sabha powers.
- **Fifth Schedule:** Constitutional framework for administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Provides autonomous governance arrangements for specified tribal areas in the North-East.
- **Samatha judgment, 1997:** Important for constitutional protection of tribal land and resources.
- **Orissa Mining Corporation judgment, 2013:** Significant for Gram Sabha authority concerning tribal cultural and community rights in the Niyamgiri context.

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QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following military infrastructure and administrative units in North-East India:

- (1) Rangapahar Headquarters
- (2) Tezpur Headquarters
- (3) Taksing Area
- (4) Kibithoo Sector

How many of the above locations are directly situated within the state of Arunachal Pradesh?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) Only three
- (D) All four

2. Consider the following statements:

Statement 1: Monetary policy tightening through repo rate hikes has limited direct efficacy in curbing headline inflation originating primarily from domestic agricultural supply shocks and imported crude oil prices.

Statement 2: Raising benchmark interest rates does not expand physical crop production, repair supply chain bottlenecks, or lower international commodity prices.

Which one of the following options is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (A) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct and Statement 2 is the correct explanation for Statement 1
- (B) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct but Statement 2 is NOT the correct explanation for Statement 1
- (C) Statement 1 is correct but Statement 2 is incorrect
- (D) Statement 1 is incorrect but Statement 2 is correct

3. Consider the following pairs of Geothermal System Types and their primary functional characteristics:

- (1) Dry-Steam System — Utilizes underground steam directly from the reservoir to drive power turbines.
- (2) Flash-Steam System — Pulls high-pressure hot water into low-pressure tanks to flash it into steam for turbines.
- (3) Binary-Cycle System — Passes geothermal fluid through a heat exchanger to vaporize a secondary fluid with a lower boiling point.
- (4) Direct-Heat Application — Converts high-temperature steam into electricity before supplying municipal heat.

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (A) Only one pair
- (B) Only two pairs

- (C) Only three pairs
- (D) All four pairs

4. Consider the following statements:

Statement 1: The transition toward local-currency cross-border trade settlements among BRICS nations faces operational friction and implementation challenges.

Statement 2: Major structural disparities in capital account convertibility, exchange-rate volatility, and trade balance asymmetries exist among the currencies of member states.

Which one of the following options is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (A) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct and Statement 2 is the correct explanation for Statement 1
- (B) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct but Statement 2 is NOT the correct explanation for Statement 1
- (C) Statement 1 is correct but Statement 2 is incorrect
- (D) Statement 1 is incorrect but Statement 2 is correct

5. Consider the following forest-related rights:

- (1) Individual land cultivation and habitation rights
- (2) Rights over minor forest produce including ownership, access, and disposal
- (3) Community rights to water bodies, grazing grounds, and traditional fishing
- (4) Right of ownership over commercial timber and major mineral deposits for a legal time
- (5) Right to protect, regenerate, conserve, or manage Community Forest Resources

How many of the above rights are legally recognized under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006?

- (A) Only two
- (B) Only three
- (C) Only four
- (D) All five

ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (B), 2 – Answer (A), 3 – Answer (C), 4 – Answer (A), 5 – Answer (C)



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