



14 February 2024

National and International News

Dzuds



Context:

- Dzuds are a specific type of **disaster unique to Mongolia**.
- They are characterized by **extreme winters with freezing temperatures, heavy snowfall, and frozen ground, making it difficult for animals to reach pasture.**

Causes of Dzuds

- Dzuds are often preceded by **dry summers** with minimal grazing, leaving livestock without enough **fat reserves for winter**.
- The **UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)** attributes the increasing frequency and intensity of dzuds since 2015 to climate change and poor environmental governance.

The Dual "White" and "Iron" Dzud

- This winter, Mongolia is experiencing a dual dzud, characterized by two phases:
- The **"white dzud"** features deep snow cover, preventing animals from accessing grass.
- The **"iron dzud"** follows a short thaw and subsequent hard freeze, locking up pastures in ice.

Impact of Dzuds

- Dzuds freeze the soil, making it impossible for animals to access pasture.
- Livestock are left without adequate food sources, forcing them to resort to unconventional food, such as tree bark, for survival.

World Government Summit 2024

Context:

- The **World Government Summit (WGS)** is an **annual global event** that brings together world leaders, policymakers, experts, and thought leaders from various fields to discuss and tackle pressing global issues.
- **Established in 2013** under the leadership of the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, the summit **takes place annually in Dubai, UAE.**



- Through its various activities, the **summit explores the agenda of the next generation of governments, emphasizing the use of innovation and technology to address universal challenges.**
- Since its inception, the summit has aimed to shape future governments and create a better future for humanity.

In 2024, the World Government Summit will focus on the theme **"Shaping Future Governments"** and will delve into six main themes:

- Government Acceleration and Transformation
- Artificial Intelligence and The Next Frontiers
- Reimagining Development and Future Economies
- Future Societies and Education
- Sustainability and The New Global Shifts
- Urbanization and Global Health Priorities

Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry(GROW) Portal

GROW Portal

- **"Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW)-Suitability Mapping" portal launched on 'Bhuvan'.**
- Provides universal access to state and district-level data.
- Expected to boost promotion of agroforestry initiatives by government bodies.

Context:

- Recently, **NITI Aayog launched the Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal,** aiming to bolster efforts in environmental conservation and sustainable land use across India.

Report

- Utilizes **cutting-edge remote sensing and GIS technologies.**
- Offers comprehensive state-wise and district-wise analysis.
- Provides crucial insights for government departments and industries engaged in greening and restoration projects.

Initiative Overview

- Led by NITI Aayog.
- Employs remote sensing and GIS techniques for evaluation.
- Introduces Agroforestry Suitability Index (ASI) for national-level prioritization.
- Highlights the potential of converting wastelands into productive agroforestry zones.

Current Status

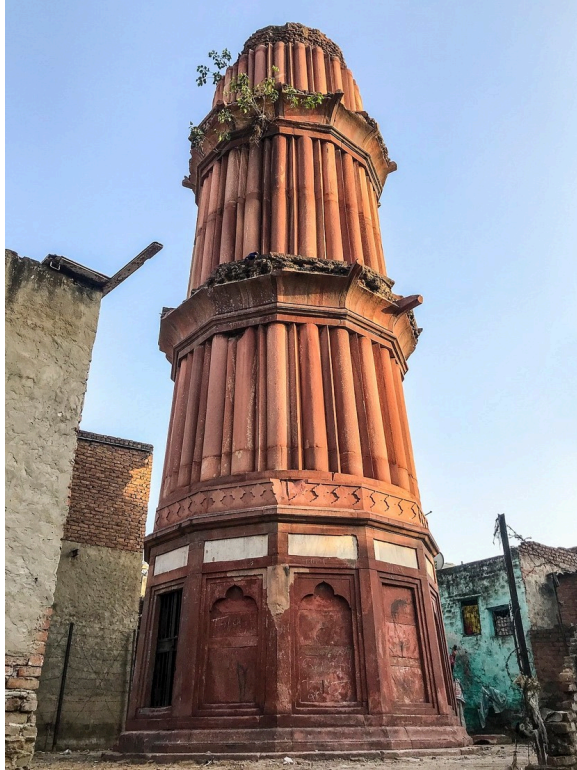
- Agroforestry covers 8.65% of India's total



geographical area.

- Encompasses approximately 28.42 million hectares.

Hastsal Minar: A Forgotten Gem in West Delhi



Context:

- The Mini Qutub Minar, a Grade A listed protected heritage monument, serves as a reminder of Shah Jahan's presence in Hastsal and is in urgent need of conservation to preserve its historical significance.

History

- Constructed in **1650 by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan** near his hunting lodge in Hasthal.
- Originally a **5-storeyed tower with a domed Chhatri pavilion for Shah Jahan's entertainment.**
- Legends suggest a tunnel existed from the tower to the royal hunting lodge.
- Upper two storeys and the domed pavilion collapsed in the **18th century.**
- Abandoned and forgotten, surrounded by urbanization at present.

Architecture

- Resembles **Qutub Minar in Delhi**, built with Lakhori bricks and red sandstone
- Originally had five storeys with a narrowing diameter, accessed by a narrow staircase
- Each storey surrounded by an **octagonal ring with overhanging eaves (Chhajja) like the Qutub Minar**

Threats

- Endangered due to decades of neglect and lack of conservation
- Threatened by natural elements and encroachment of new constructions in Hastsal
- Completely surrounded by haphazardly built houses and buildings, with new constructions encroaching upon the lower platform



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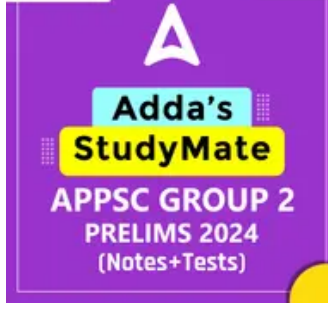
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