

## The State of the World's Mangroves 2024 Report

- The **Global Mangrove Alliance** released "**The State of the World's Mangroves 2024**" report on **World Mangrove Day**, observed annually on **July 26th**.
- **Key Highlights**
  - **Southeast Asia** holds nearly **one-third of the world's mangroves**, with Indonesia alone accounting for **21%**. West and Central Africa follow.
  - Half of the world's mangrove areas are considered threatened according to the IUCN Red List of Mangrove Ecosystems.
  - Mangroves in the **Lakshadweep** archipelago and along **the Tamil Nadu** coast are **critically endangered**.
- **Drivers of Mangrove Loss**
  - Climate change, including sea-level rise and increased storm intensity.
  - Expansion of industrial shrimp farming in **Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Gujarat**.
  - Conversion of mangroves to oil palm plantations and rice fields, leading to a **43% loss between 2000 and 2020**.
- **Benefits of Mangroves**
  - Support a diverse range of species, with over 5,700 plant and animal species recorded in Indian mangroves.
  - Act as carbon sinks, storing an average of 394 tonnes of carbon per hectare.
  - Protect coastal regions from disasters by reducing flood depths by 15-20%, and over 70% in some areas.
  - Provide fish and seafood rich in essential nutrients like protein, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins D and B12, and minerals such as iron and zinc.
  - Improve water quality by filtering pollutants and trapping sediments.
- **About Mangroves**
  - Mangroves grow along coasts in salt marshes, tidal creeks, mudflats, and estuaries.
  - These salt-tolerant plant communities are found in tropical and subtropical intertidal regions with high rainfall (1,000-3,000 mm) and temperatures ranging from **26°C to 35°C**.
  - **West Bengal** has the largest mangrove cover in India, according to the **India State of Forest Report, 2021**.
- **Initiatives for Mangroves**
  - **India:**
    - **Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)**.
    - **Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystem (SAIME)**.
  - **Global:**
    - **Mangrove Breakthrough by the Global Mangrove Alliance**.
    - **Mangrove Alliance for Climate, led by the UAE in partnership with Indonesia**.

## RBI's Proposed LCR Norms May Impact Credit Growth and NIM

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has proposed new norms for the **Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR)**, which may lead to a short-term slowdown in credit growth and a reduction in **Net Interest Margins (NIM)**, according to two credit rating agencies.
- **Key Points:**
  - **Changes in LCR Requirements:** The new norms will lower the LCR, which refers to the maximum limit of **high-quality liquid assets (HQLA)** banks must hold to pay off short-term liabilities.
    - The LCR in Q4 FY24 was **130%**. This is expected to drop to **113% to 116%** when the new norms take effect from **April 1, 2025**, as observed by ICRA.
  - **Short-Term Impacts:** Credit growth and NIM may decrease in the short term as banks will need to increase their reserves to make up for the reduction in deposits, according to Crisil.
  - **Long-Term Benefits:** In the long run, these norms are expected to enhance the resilience of banks.
  - **Impact on Private Sector Banks:** The new rules are likely to have a greater impact on private sector banks, which will need to adjust their business strategies to compensate for the losses, as noted by ICRA.

## RBI's New Guidelines on Wilful Defaulters

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued final guidelines on the classification of **wilful defaulters**, directing lenders to complete identifying and tagging such a borrower **within six months of it turning bad**.
- **The guidelines will be applicable** to banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), and financial institutions such as the Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard).
- According to the data on suit-filed accounts from credit bureau TransUnion Cibil, the total outstanding wilful default as of **31 March stood at ₹3.6 trillion**
- **Criteria for Wilful Default:**
  - Default on a loan despite having the capacity to repay.
  - Diverting or siphoning off funds from the credit facility.
  - Identification based on the borrower's track record, not isolated incidents.
- **Process and Timeframe:**
  - Lenders to check all bad loans of **₹25 lakh** and above for wilful default.
  - Entire process of categorizing a borrower as wilful defaulter to be completed **within six months** if preliminary screening indicates wilful default.
- **Committee and Review Process:**
  - An identification committee to examine evidence and issue a show-cause notice.
  - Review committee to provide a personal hearing and classify as wilful defaulter if satisfied.
  - The committee will also call for submissions from them within **21 days of the notice**.
- **Objective and Significance:**
  - Enhance credit discipline and deter deliberate defaults.
  - Standardize and ensure a transparent and non-discriminatory approach in identifying wilful defaulters.
- **Internal Investigations:**
  - Lenders must conduct a comprehensive investigation for loans of **₹25 lakh** or more before transferring to other lenders or **asset reconstruction companies**.

## Indian Army Launches E-SeHAT Tele-Consultancy for Veterans

- The **Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS)** introduced the **E-SeHAT Tele-consultancy** module on July 30, 2024.
  - The service allows ECHS beneficiaries to obtain online medical consultations from their homes without visiting ECHS Polyclinics.
- **Scope and Implementation:**
  - The pilot project was launched at 12 ECHS Polyclinics, including remote locations like Baramulla, Imphal, Churachandpur, Dimapur, and Aizawl.
  - The module will be rolled out nationwide in **November 2024**.
- The module follows telemedicine guidelines issued by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in consultation with **NITI AAYOG (March 2020)**.
- **Alignment with Digital India Vision:**
  - The **E-SeHAT** initiative supports the Government of **India's Digital India vision**, promoting digital inclusivity and efficiency in public services.

## Central Water Commission (CWC) Wins Global WaterTech Award

- **CWC** received the **GEEF Global WaterTech Award** for '**Water Department of the Year**' for excellence in hydro-meteorological data collection and flood forecasting.
- **About CWC:**
  - **Location:** Headquarters in New Delhi
  - **Established:** 1945, advised by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
  - **Leadership:** Chaired by an Ex-officio Secretary to the Government of India
  - **Function:** Premier technical organization under the Ministry of Jal Shakti
- **Structure:**
  - **Technical Wings:** Designs and Research, Water Planning and Projects, River Management
- **Mission:** Promote integrated, sustainable water resource development and management using advanced technology and coordination among stakeholders.