

Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) - UPSC Notes

With more than 7000 kilometres of coastline, India ranks 20 in the world among the countries with the longest coastline. In order to protect coastal ecology and conserve the coastal environment, the Government of India issued the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) in 1991.

Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) is an important topic with respect to the *Environment & Ecology* section of General Studies paper 3 in the [UPSC Syllabus](#). The reforms from the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification make it relevant to *Government Policies/Indian Polity* from the General Studies paper-2. In the article, we will discuss all the relevant topics and issues of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) concerning the [IAS Exam](#).

Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)

In 1991, the Government of India issued a notification under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 administered by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to protect and conserve the environment and ecosystem on the coastline of the country.

Accordingly to the notification, the coastal land up to 500m from the High Tide Line (HTL) and a stage of 100m along banks of creeks, estuaries, backwaters and rivers subject to tidal fluctuations, is called the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ).

Tides and Tide Lines

Understanding Tide Lines is important in order to learn about the Coastal Regulation Zone. First let us understand Spring Tides.

- **Spring Tide:** It is an exceptionally high tide generated by the complementary factor played by the Sun with respect to the Moon.
- It should be noted that when Sun, Moon and Earth are in the same line, the position is known as a Syzygy.
- They occur twice a month, one on the full moon period and another during the new moon period.

High Tide Lines (HTL)	Low Tide Lines (LTL)
HTL is defined as the line on the land up to which the highest water line reaches during the Spring Tides.	LTL is defined as the line on the land up to which the lowest water line reaches during the Spring Tides.

Classification of Coastal Regulation Zone

Coastal Regulation Zone along the country has been placed in four categories as per the CRZ Notification of 1991 until 2003. They are listed and described in the table below:

Category	Description
CRZ 1	<p>Areas that are ecologically sensitive and essential for maintaining the ecosystem on the coast.</p> <p>Permissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of Natural Gas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extraction of Salt
CRZ 2	<p>Areas that are developed up to the shoreline of the coast.</p> <p>Permissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some construction as per the guidelines only. Reconstruction of the authorized building without a change in the existing use.
CRZ 3	<p>Urban and Rural Areas that don't fall under CRZ- 1 and CRZ- 2 come under CRZ- 3. They are areas allocated to the municipality but are not substantially built up.</p> <p>Permission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only certain activities related to agriculture, horticulture, gardens, pastures, parks, playfields, forestry and salt manufacture from seawater. No construction shall be permitted in this zone except for repairs of existing authorized structures. Construction of only public facilities.
CRZ 4	<p>Coastal stretches in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and small islands, except those designated as CRZ I, CRZ II and CRZ III. Solid waste should be let off in this zone.</p> <p>Permissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corals and sand from the beaches and coastal waters shall not be used for construction and purposes. Dredging and underwater blasting in and around coral formations shall not be permitted.

Coastal Regulation Zone Notifications

With the objective of conservation and protection of the coastal environment, the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change notified the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification in 1991, which was subsequently revised in 2011. The notification has been amended from time to time based on representations received.

Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2011

The Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2011 considered the issues of the 1991 notification and recommended amendments accordingly. The reforms of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2011 are as follows:

Category	Reforms
CRZ 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptions on new construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of roads and trans-harbour sea links that don't affect the tidal flow, are between HTL & LTL, etc. Projects related to the Department of Atomic Energy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other permissions granted for activities between HTL & LTL are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Natural Gas Exploration & Extraction ○ Salt manufacturing ○ Desalination plants ○ Storage Facilities (non-hazardous cargo) within notified ports.
CRZ 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permissions for building construction on the landward part of the hazardous line. • Other permissions granted for activities between HTL & LTL are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Desalination plans, etc. ○ Some construction is permitted only as per guidelines specified by the notification.
CRZ 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptions on new construction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Construction of roads and trans-harbour sea links that don't affect the tidal flow, are between HTL & LTL, etc. ○ Projects related to the Department of Atomic Energy, petroleum products, salt manufacture & other public facility projects. • Construction of houses for local communities in some areas.
CRZ 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no restriction on the traditional fishing undertaken by local communities. • No untreated sewage or solid waste shall be let off or dumped in these areas.

In June 2014, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Shailesh Nayak to examine the various issues and concerns of Coastal States/UTs and other stakeholders for recommending appropriate changes in the CRZ Notification, 2011.

The Shailesh Nayak Committee held wide-ranging consultations with State Governments and other stakeholders and submitted its recommendations in 2015.

In December 2018, the Union Cabinet accorded approval to that draft notification. The MoEFCC then notified new CRZ norms in January 2019.

Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2018 & 2019

The new CRZ Notification, issued under Section 3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, seeks

“to promote sustainable development based on scientific principles taking into account the dangers of natural hazards, sea-level rise due to global warming” and

“to conserve and protect the unique environment of coastal stretches and marine areas, besides livelihood security to the fisher communities and other local communities in the coastal area”.

New reforms under Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2018 & 2019 are as follows:

- **Development Projects**
 - No Development Zones (NDZ) reduced.
- **New CRZ Categories**
 - For CRZ-III (Rural) areas, two separate categories have now been stipulated as below:

CRZ-III A	CRZ-III B
<p>Rural Areas that are densely populated with a population density of 2161/km².</p> <p>They will have NDZ of 50 meters from HTL.</p> <p>Earlier it was 200m from HTL according to CRZ Notification of 2011.</p>	<p>Rural Areas that are densely populated with a population density of 2161/km².</p> <p>They will have NDZ of 200m from HTL.</p>

- **Tourism Infrastructure**
- **FSI Norms Eased**
 1. As per CRZ, 2011 Notification, for CRZ-II (Urban) areas, Floor Space Index (FSI) or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) had been frozen as per 1991 Development Control Regulation (DCR) levels.
 2. In the CRZ, 2019 Notification, it has been decided to de-freeze the same and permit FSI for construction projects, as prevailing on the date of the new Notification.
- **Pollution Abatement**
- **Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA):**
 1. Sundarban region of West Bengal and other ecologically sensitive areas identified as under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
 2. They are managed with the involvement of coastal communities including fisherfolk who depend on coastal resources for their sustainable livelihood.

CRZ related Issues in News

The Supreme Court has ordered the demolition of five apartments in Ernakulam's Maradu municipality for violation of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules.

Read more about the issue here: [CNA 9th May 2019](#).

Blue Flag Programme

The 'Blue Flag' beach is an 'eco-tourism model' and marks out beaches for providing tourists and beach-goers clean and hygienic bathing water, facilities/amenities, a safe and healthy environment, and involves sustainable development of the area.

The Environment Ministry has relaxed Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules that restrict construction near beaches to help States construct infrastructure and enable them to receive

'Blue Flag' certification.

- 13 beaches were selected by the Ministry for the certification.
- If a beach meets thirty-three criteria classified under four major heads, the certification is given.
 - Environmental Education And Information
 - Bathing Water Quality
 - Environmental Management Conservation
 - Safety And Services.

Click here to know more about [Blue Flag Certification](#).

Shailesh Nayak Committee Report on CRZ

The six-member committee was formed in June 2014 and had submitted the report to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEF&CC) in January 2015. As per the report, it proposes the decentralization of powers to state and union territory governments along with local authorities as required by several states.

- The Shailesh Nayak Committee report has planned for permitting housing infrastructure and slum redevelopment activities, tourism, ports and harbour and fisheries-related activities in coastal regulation zones as a way to relax the present restrictions on expansion in coastal areas.
- Based on the recommendations of Shailesh Nayak committee, the suggestions were given by the coastal states and union territories, and the **CRZ 2018** notifications were issued.

