

## Environmental cost of Russia-Ukraine War

### Why in news?

*The environmental costs of the conflict are likely to far outlive the fighting itself.*

### How the Russia-Ukraine war induced destruction?

- **Destruction** - The conflict has seen many damages with incidents involving nuclear power plants, energy infrastructure, mines and industrial sites.
- It resulted in air pollution and contamination of ground and surface waters.
- More than 2 million hectares of forest have been destroyed putting the rare endemic species at risk.

*According to claims by the Ukraine's environment ministry, altogether the losses from land, water and air pollution amounted to \$51.4 billion.*

- **Carbon footprint** - Emission from the conflict was estimated to be around 33 mn tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and 23 mn tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from fires.
- The reconstruction could emit 49 mn tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- **Leopard 2 Tanks** - The state-of-the-art Leopard 2 tanks have a fuel capacity of 1200 litres.
- This roughly consumes between 3.5-5.5 litres of fuel per km.
- **Radioactive exposure** - Russian troops dug up deep trenches in the protected Chernobyl sanctuary, an area largely untouched since the nuclear disaster in 1986.
- This could have dug up dangerous radioactive material.

### What is the way forward?

- Even when the conflict ends, the immediate efforts of reconstruction will focus only on housing and building infrastructure.
- Restoration of environment should not be given priority.
- World Nations should take immediate actions to stop the war and its deleterious impact on environment.
- Restoration of ecosystem should be given equal priority as reconstruction of infrastructure.

### References

1. [Indian Express | Environmental costs of Russia-Ukraine War](#)
2. [BBC | The toxic legacy of the Ukraine war](#)



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