

2019



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

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BusinessLine



1. Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve In Andhra Pradesh

Why in News?

The number of tigers in the Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve (NSTR) in **Andhra Pradesh** has increased due to concerted efforts by the Tiger Conservation Foundation (TCF).

- This has helped in reversing the steady decline in the number of the endangered species over a period.

About Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve (NSTR)

- The NSTR is the **largest Tiger Reserve in India** spread over Guntur, Prakasam & Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh and Nalgonda & Mahabubnagar in Telangana.
- The reserve is situated in the **Nallamalais** - an offshoot of Southern Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.
- The Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Wildlife Sanctuary was notified in 1978 and declared a Tiger Reserve in 1983. It was renamed as Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary in 1992.
- The **River Krishna** flows through the reserve over a distance of 130 km.
- There are 24 villages in the core area of the reserve, comprising families with a population of mostly **Chenchu people**.
 - The Chenchus are Adivasi, a designated Scheduled Tribe in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Odisha.
 - They are an aboriginal tribe whose traditional way of life has been based on hunting and gathering.
 - The Chenchus speak the Chenchu language, a member of the Dravidian language family.
- The reserve primarily comprises of southern **tropical dry mixed deciduous** forest.
- Post bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, the northern part of the reserve is vested with **Telangana** state and renamed as **Amrabad Tiger Reserve**.

Tiger Conservation Foundation (TCF)

- Tiger Conservation Foundation is established within the state to facilitate and support their management for conservation of tiger and biodiversity.
- It will have administrative autonomy as delegated by the State Government for fund generation to foster eco-tourism, eco-development and related activities involving the local people.

2. Western Ghats - Home to Butterflies

Why in News?

A three-day survey was done jointly in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary by the Forest and Wildlife Department in association with the Ferns Nature Conservation Society (FNCS).

- The survey was aimed at assessing the butterfly diversity in the forest areas of the region, which is vulnerable to climatic changes.
- The diversity of butterflies was very low in the forest areas where alien invasive plants such as *Senna spectabilis* invade other endemic plants.
- It found 191 species, 12 of which are endemic to the biodiversity-rich region.

Key Findings

- First-time sighting of:
 - **Silver Forget Me Not**
 - **Common Three Ring**
 - **Brown Onyx**
- **Silver forget me not** was sighted from the **Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary** in Idukki district of Kerala.
- The diversity was very rich in areas where plants such as *Mikania micrantha* and *Lantana camara* remained dominant.

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

- Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1973 is an animal sanctuary in Wayanad, Kerala, India.
- It has four ranges namely-Sulthan Bathery, Muthanga, Kurichiat and Tholpetty.
- It is contiguous to the protected areas of Nagarhole and Bandipur of Karnataka on the north-east and Mudumalai of Tamil nadu on the south-east.
- Rich in biodiversity, the sanctuary is an integral part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
- **Biodiversity:**
 - **Flora** - *Tectona grandis*, *Terminalia* sp, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Grewia*.
 - **Fauna** - Gaur, Sambar, Spotted deer, Barking deer, Wild boar, Sloth bear, Nilgiri langur, Bonnet macaque.

Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

- Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary established in 1984, is located in Idukki district of Kerala.
- It shares boundary with Eravikulam National Park to the south, Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary to the north and Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary is to the east.
- It is a rehabilitation centre for Indian star tortoise in India.
- The dominant vegetation is dry deciduous forest followed by scrub forest.
- It is home to the Great Grizzled Squirrel.
- *Albizia lathamii*, a critically endangered species has been reported from the dry forests of Chinnar.

3. Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar River Link Project

Why in News?

The Kerala government is opposing the implementation of the Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar river link project.

- It envisages diversion of water from Pamba and Achankovil rivers in Kerala to the Vaippar basin in Tamil Nadu.
- The project envisages irrigation in Tirunelveli, Virudhunagar and Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, generation of 500 MW and regulated release of water during lean periods to Kerala.

Pamba

- It originates from Pulachimalai and is the third longest river of Kerala.
- Kakkiyar, Arudai, Kakkadar, Kallar, Pambi, Pambiar are its tributaries.
- Sabarimala temple, dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, is located on the banks of the river Pamba.
- It empties into the Vembanad Lake.
- The Pamba basin is bounded on the east by the Western Ghats.
- The river shares its northern boundary with the Manimala River basin, while it shares the southern boundary with the Achankovil River basin.

Achankovil

- Achankovil is the name of the forest area, which is the catchment area for this river.
- It is a river in Kerala formed by the confluence of the Rishimala, Pasukidamettu, and Ramakkaltheri Rivers.
- It joins with the Pamba River at Veeyapuram, in Alappuzha.

Vaippar

- It originates from the Varusanadu hills bordering the state of Kerala.
- It runs from Sivagiri and flows through Virudhunagar and Tuticorin districts of Tamil Nadu.
- It flows into Gulf of Mannar.

4. Olive Ridley Turtle

Why in News?

The Odisha government will compensate fishermen families who bear losses due to the fishing ban imposed for the protection of the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles.

- The fishermen families would be paid a compensation of ₹7,500 per month.
- The annual fishing ban would be in force from November, 2019 to May, 2020 - during which lakhs of turtles would arrive at the Odisha coast for mass nesting.

Olive Ridley Turtles

- The Olive Ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- An enormous number of Olive Ridleys nest in Odisha
 - Namely at three river mouths of:
 - Dhamara
 - Devi
 - Rushikulya
- The Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in India is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive Ridley, followed by the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica.
 - Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary extends from Dhamra River mouth in the north to Brahmani river mouth in the south.
- The species is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, Appendix 1 in CITES, and Schedule 1 in Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- They are best known for their unique mass nesting event called Arribada, when thousands of turtles come ashore at the same time to lay eggs on the same beach.

5. Geochemical Baseline Atlas of India

Why in News?

‘Geochemical Baseline Atlas of India’ was developed by CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI).

- The atlas, released for the first time, can be used by policymakers to assess environmental damage.
- This is the third map among the series of maps published by NGRI. Earlier, The Gravity Map of India and the Seismic Map of India were released by the research institute.

Geochemical Baseline Atlas of India

- The atlas consists of 45 maps of metals, oxides and elements present in top and bottom soils across India.
- To develop the maps, the globe was divided into 5,000 cells of 160 km by 160 km each. Of these, India has 122 cells.
- CSIR started this work in 2007 from cell number 1 which is in Kanyakumari. The last cell is in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It will be given to International Union of Global Sciences (IUGS), which is preparing global maps.

Advantages of the Atlas

- Serve as a reference against which future generations of the country would be able to assess the chemical compositional changes on Earth’s surface.

- Help in finding out future contamination caused by industries or other bodies which cause pollution.
- The government and policymakers will get to know regions with high and low concentrations of metal with one glance on the map.
- Earlier, there was no way to prove if polluters denied causing damage to the environment. Now, the baseline maps atlas helps show evidence of it.
- Help in planning the land use in different parts of the country by determining the present abundance & spatial distribution of chemical elements across the earth's surface.

6. Golden Leaf Award

Why in News?

Tobacco Board of India has been awarded the Golden Leaf Award in the Most Impressive Public Service Initiative category for the year 2019.

It has been awarded for its efforts to initiate various sustainability (green) initiatives in Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco cultivation in India.

Golden Leaf Award

- The Golden Leaf Awards were created to recognise professional excellence and dedication in the tobacco industry by Tobacco Reporter, an international magazine in the year 2006.
- Awards are granted on an annual basis in five categories:
 - Most impressive public service initiative
 - Most promising new product introduction
 - Most exciting newcomer to the industry
 - Most outstanding service to the industry
 - Quality Award
- India is the world's fourth largest producer of FCV tobacco.
- Tobacco Board is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



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