



STATE PCS CA

(CONSOLIDATION)

UTTARAKHAND

**DECEMBER
2024**

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Misuse of Surveillance Technology at Corbett National Park

Why in News?

According to a study published in the journal **Environment and Planning F**, forest rangers at **Corbett Tiger Reserve** deliberately used **drones to monitor local women** and deter them from **gathering natural resources**, even though they were legally entitled to access these resources.

Key Points

- **Significance of the Study:**
 - The study revealed that **surveillance technologies negatively affect the mental health of local women** who depend on forests for daily activities.
 - This study highlights the intersection of technology, conservation, and social equity, urging stakeholders to adopt more inclusive approaches.
- **Issues Faced by Women:**
 - It was highlighted that while technologies like **camera traps are common in wildlife monitoring**, they can **unintentionally invade privacy and alter human behavior**.
 - These findings underscore the **need to ensure such tools do not harm local communities**.
- **Recommendations:**
 - In northern India, women's identities are deeply tied to their daily forest activities, making it crucial to consider their perspectives in conservation efforts.
 - Conservation strategies must strike a **balance between wildlife monitoring and safeguarding the dignity, safety, and rights of local communities**.

Corbett Tiger Reserve

- **About:**
 - It is located in the **Nainital district of Uttarakhand**. The **Project Tiger** was launched in 1973 in **Corbett National Park (first National Park of India)**, which is part of Corbett Tiger Reserve.
 - The national park was **established in 1936 as Hailey National Park** to protect the endangered **Bengal tiger**.
 - It is named after Jim Corbett who played a key role in its establishment.

- The core area forms the **Corbett National Park while the buffer contains reserve forests** as well as the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The entire area of the reserve is mountainous and falls in the **Shivalik** and Outer Himalaya geological provinces.

➤ Flora:

- Dense moist deciduous forests are found. According to the **Botanical Survey of India**, Corbett has 600 species of plants - trees, shrubs, ferns, grass, climbers, herbs, and bamboo. Sal, Khair, and Sissoo are the most visible trees found in Corbett.

➤ Fauna:

- Apart from tigers, Corbett also has **leopards**. Other mammals such as jungle cats, **barking deer, spotted deer, sambar deer**, sloth etc. are also found there.

Uttarakhand Govt to Build Homes Under PMAY Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, in a significant move to address housing needs, the **Uttarakhand government** has announced the construction of **16,000 affordable homes for low-income families** under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)**.

Key Points

➤ About the Project:

- The project is being spearheaded by the **Uttarakhand Housing Development Council (UHDC)** and the **Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA)**.
 - These bodies are working in collaboration with private investors to ensure the timely and efficient construction of these homes.
- The initiative includes **15 projects** led by private investors, accounting for 12,856 homes, while various development authorities are constructing an additional 3,104 units. The target is to complete all projects by March 2025.

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Note:

➤ **About PMAY:**

- This initiative aims to provide ‘**pucca**’ houses to homeless families, aligning with the broader goal of ‘**Antyodaya**’, uplifting the poorest of the poor.
- The scheme is designed for homeless families with an annual income of less than Rs. 3 lakh.
 - Eligible families must have been residents of Uttarakhand since before **June 15, 2015**.
- The construction of these affordable homes is **expected to significantly improve the living conditions of low-income families** in Uttarakhand.

Growing Glacier in Uttarakhand's Niti Valley

Why in News?

Recently, in a remarkable discovery, scientists have identified a rapidly expanding **glacier** in **Uttarakhand's Niti Valley**.

- The study, titled “**Manifestations of a Glacier Surge in Central Himalaya Using Multi-Temporal Satellite Data**,” utilized **satellite imagery** to observe the glacier’s rapid growth.

Key Points

- This new glacier, which stretches about **10 kilometers** in length and spans approximately **48 square kilometers**, is located near the **Randolph** and **Rekana glaciers** in the remote northern region of the state, close to the **India-Tibet border**.
- The glacier is currently experiencing a “surge” i.e., a **sudden and rapid increase in the size of a glacier, which can be caused by hydrological imbalances**.
 - These imbalances occur when water infiltrates the ice layers, weakening them and causing the ice to slide downward.
- The discovery of this fast-growing glacier has **significant implications for the region’s environment and climate**.
 - Glacial surges can lead to **increased risks of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)**, which pose a threat to downstream communities and infrastructure.

- Understanding the dynamics of such glaciers is crucial for developing effective mitigation strategies.
- As **global temperatures rise**, the behavior of glaciers in this region is becoming increasingly unpredictable, necessitating ongoing monitoring and study.

Green Cess in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the officials, the **Uttarakhand Government** will soon impose a **green cess** on out-of-state vehicles.

- A Green cess is a **form of tax** levied by the government with the **purpose of environmental conservation**.

Key Points

- **Introduction of Green Cess in Uttarakhand:**
 - The cess will **range from Rs 20 to Rs 80** and will apply to both **commercial and private vehicles**.
 - Two-wheelers, **electric vehicles** and **Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)** vehicles, ambulances, fire brigades, and vehicles registered in Uttarakhand **will be exempted**.
- **Implementation and Technology:**
 - The system is targeted to become **operational by the end of December 2024**.
 - Automatic **number plate recognition cameras** will identify vehicles, and cess amounts will be **deducted directly from vehicle owners’ FASTag wallets**.

FASTag

- It is a device that employs **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology** for making toll payments directly while the vehicle is in motion.
- **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** launched **two mobile Apps** – MyFASTag and FASTag Partner to facilitate the availability of FASTags.
- The **tag is valid for 5 years** from the date of issuance and comes in seven different color codes.

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Note:

Landslide Zones Successfully Treated in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**, the **rock bolt technology** is successfully treating **active landslide zones** in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand.

Key Points

- **Landslide Challenges in Uttarakhand:**
 - **Landslides** occur regularly in the hill areas, especially during the **monsoon season**, causing roadblocks and inconveniences for **Chardham pilgrims**.
 - These landslides often **result in loss of lives** and have long been a major concern.
 - Persistent landslide zones on the **Gangotri and Yamunotri highways** have posed significant risks for years.
- **Adoption of Australian Rock Bolt Technology:**
 - The BRO is using **Australian rock bolt technology** to **treat active landslide zones at Raturisera and Bandarkot** on the Gangotri highway in Uttarkashi district.
 - Previously, the technology was **successfully applied at Nalupani and Chungi Badethi landslide zones**.
 - The technology has been instrumental in treating landslide zones active for years as part of the **Chardham road-widening project**.
- **Effectiveness and Techniques:**
 - The technology has been 90% effective in preventing landslides.
 - It **involves soil nailing to stabilize loose soil and rock bolting in bedrock** to strengthen vulnerable areas.

Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- Established in 1960 with only two projects, **Project Tusker (now Vartak) in the East and Project Beacon in North India**, the BRO has grown to become a vibrant organisation with 18 projects operating in 11 States and three Union Territories.
 - It is now recognised as the leading infrastructure construction agency in high-altitude and difficult snow-bound areas.
- In 2023-24, the BRO completed 125 infrastructure projects, including the construction of **the Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh** on Balipara-Chardwar-Tawang Road.

- The BRO will soon start construction on the **4.10-km long Shinkun La Tunnel**, which will become the world's highest tunnel at 15,800 ft once completed, bypassing China's Mila Tunnel at 15,590 ft.
- The BRO is an Indian executive force under the **Ministry of Defence**, to secure India's borders and develop infrastructure in remote areas of the north and north-eastern states.
- It operates under the **Border Roads Development Board (BRDB)** and is responsible for road networks in border areas and neighbouring countries.
 - The **motto of BRO** is "**Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam**", which translates to "**Everything is achievable through hard work.**"

The 6th Capacity Building Program in Mussoorie

Why in News?

Recently, The **6th Capacity Building Program** for the **Civil Servants of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka** commenced at **National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG)** in Mussoorie.

Key Points

- **Program Duration and Participants:**
 - The Program is organized from 9th to 20th December 2024.
 - The program is **hosting 40 mid-career civil servants from Sri Lanka**, including Divisional Secretaries, Assistant Divisional Secretaries, District Secretaries, and officers from key ministries like Public Administration, Home Affairs, Agriculture & Livestock, and Health.
 - Participants also include officials from the **Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA)**.
 - The program aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of **governance and administration**.
- **Sessions will focus on:**
 - Basic administration.
 - Policy frameworks in healthcare and public administration.
 - Technology's role, especially **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, in governance.
 - Successful governance models, including **waste management systems**, with insights into urban and **non-biodegradable waste handling**.

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Note:

- **Topics covered include:**
 - Changing Paradigm of Governance.
 - E-Office, **Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana**.
 - **Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), Climate Change** impacts, **Aadhaar**.
- **Field visits to significant institutions like:**
 - **Forest Research Institute (FRI)**, District Administration Ghaziabad, and **Cyber Security Cell Noida**.
 - Global Robotics Company, **PM Gati Shakti Anubhuti Kendra**, **Bharat Mandap**, and Pradhanmantri Sanghralaya.
 - A visit to the **Taj Mahal**.
- **NCGG's Global Training Role:**
 - NCGG, **established in 2014**, has trained 214 senior Sri Lankan officers.
 - It has **provided governance training to officers from 34 nations**, including Malaysia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Kenya, South Africa, and Fiji.

Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY

- PM-JAY is the **world's largest health insurance scheme** fully financed by the government.
- Launched in February 2018, it offers a sum insured of **Rs. 5 lakh per family for secondary care and tertiary care**.
 - Health Benefit Packages covers surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics.

10th World Ayurveda Congress and Arogya Expo

Why in News?

Recently, the **10th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC 2024)** and **Arogya Expo** were inaugurated in Dehradun. It's a pivotal juncture where various streams of **ideologies, cultures, and innovations converge**.

Key Points

- **Launch of "Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan":**
 - On the occasion of the **9th Ayurveda Day (29 October 2024)**, the Union Ayush Minister launched the nationwide campaign **"Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan"**.

- The objective is to assess the Prakriti of over 1 crore individuals using Ayurveda principles.
 - Citizens are encouraged to actively participate and contribute to this monumental initiative.
- **Ayush Grid and Global Investment:**
 - The **Ayush Grid** is a **project by the Ministry of Ayush** to digitize the **Ayush sector** and promote traditional healthcare systems.
 - Its benefits include revolutionizing healthcare with **innovations, enhancing effectiveness, safety, and affordability**.
 - Over 1.3 billion dollars of investment is in the pipeline from global partners to support Ayurveda-related initiatives.
- **WAC 2024:**
 - Organised by the **World Ayurveda Foundation (WAF)**, an initiative of **Vijnana Bharati**.
 - More than 5500 Indian delegates and over 350 delegates from 54 countries registered for the event.
 - The event features over **150 scientific sessions and 13 associate events**, including plenary discussions.
 - The **theme is "Digital Health: An Ayurveda Perspective"** which focuses on leveraging **modern technologies to advance Ayurveda**.
 - Deliberations on:
 - Enhancing **healthcare delivery through digital tools**.
 - Redefining **research methodologies**.
 - Integrating **Ayurveda into the global health landscape**.
- **Role of the Ministry of Ayush:**
 - **The Ministry of Ayush** is instrumental in organising the World Ayurveda Congress, showcasing India's commitment to **promoting Ayurveda globally**.
 - Contributions:
 - Advancing Ayurveda knowledge, research, and practices through international collaborations.
 - Engaging experts, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss Ayurveda's global relevance and future growth.
- **Significance of WAC 2024:**
 - Celebrates **Ayurveda's rich heritage** and envisions its future in the global healthcare system.
 - **Bridges traditional wisdom with modern technology**, ensuring Ayurveda thrives as a sustainable and holistic healthcare system.
 - The WAC 2024 is a **milestone event in positioning Ayurveda as a transformative force** in global healthcare.

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The World Ayurveda Foundation (WAF)

- It is an organization that **promotes Ayurveda globally and supports research, health programs, and other activities** related to Ayurveda.
- It is an initiative of **Vijnana Bharati** that was **founded in 2011**. The WAF's objectives include:
 - Supporting research
 - Supporting health programs through camps, clinics, and sanatoriums
 - Organizing seminars, exhibitions, and study groups
 - Providing leadership in policy and planning for Ayurveda
- The WAF organizes **the World Ayurveda Congress (WAC)**, which is an event that **features scientific sessions, health ministers' conclaves, and other activities**.
 - The WAC aims to discuss how Ayurveda can address various health challenges.

AYUSH Systems of Medicine

AYUSH encompasses Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homeopathy, with Ayurveda having a documented history of 5000+ years.

Ayurveda

➤ **Samhita Period (1000 BC):**

Emerging as mature medical system

- **Charaka Samhita:** Oldest and most authoritative text
- **Sushruta Samhita:** Gives fundamental principles and therapeutic methods in eight specialties

➤ **Main Schools:**

- **Punarvasu Atreya** - School of physicians
- **Divodasa Dhanvantari** - School of surgeons

Branches of Ayurveda:

- Kayachikitsa (internal medicine)
- Shalya Tantra (surgery)
- Shalakya Tantra (disease of supra-clavicular origin)
- Kaumarabhritya (paediatrics)
- Agada Tantra (toxicology)
- Bhootavidya (psychiatry)
- Rasayana Tantra (rejuvenation and geriatrics)
- Vajikarana (eugenics & science of aphrodisiac)



Lord Brahma is believed to be the 1st proponent of Ayurveda

Unani

Pioneered in Greece, developed by Arabs as 7 principles (Umoor-e-Tabbiya)

- Based on the framework of teachings of **Buqrat** (Hippocrates) and **Jalinoos** (Galen)
- Hippocratic theory of **four humors** viz. blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile
- **Recognised by WHO** and granted official status by India as an alternative health system

Siddha

Dates back to 10000 – 4000 BC; Siddhar Agasthiyar - Father of Siddha Medicine

- Preventive, promotive, curative, rejuvenative, and rehabilitative health care
- **4 Components:** Latro-chemistry, Medical practice, Yogic practice & Wisdom
- Diagnosis based on 3 humors (**Mukkuttram**) and 8 vital tests (**Ennvagai Thervu**)

Sowa Rigpa

Origin: Lord Buddha in India before 2500 years

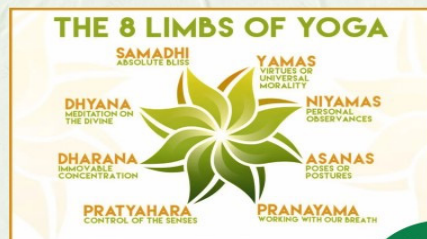
- Traditional medicine in Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, etc.
- Recognised in India by Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970 (As amended in 2010)

Homeopathy

German physician Dr. Christian F. S. Hahnemann codified its fundamental principles

- Medicines prepared mainly from natural substances (plant products, minerals, animal sources)
- Brought in India by European missionaries - 1810; official recognition - 1948
- **3 Key Principles:**
 - **Similia Similibus Curentur** (let likes be cured by likes)
 - Single Medicine
 - Minimum Dose

Yoga & Naturopathy



➤ **Naturopathy:** Healing with help of 5 natural elements - Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Ether

- Based on theories of self-healing capacity of body and principles of healthy living
- Encourages a **person-centred approach** rather than disease-centred

Yoga first propounded by Maharishi Patanjali in systematic form Yogsutra



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Note:

Transgender Welfare Board in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, the **Uttarakhand Cabinet** cleared a proposal for the formation of the **State Transgender Persons Welfare Board**.

- The State will bring a **policy to provide equal opportunity in employment to transgender persons**.

Key Points

- **Survey and Issuance of Identity Cards:**
 - A **survey will be conducted** across Uttarakhand to **identify and ascertain the number of transgender persons in the State**.
 - Following the survey, transgender individuals will be **issued identity cards to formalize their recognition**.
- **Facilitating Welfare Access:**
 - The welfare board will **ensure the transgender community's access** to existing social, educational, and health schemes.
 - It will also **develop new schemes that are sensitive and non-discriminatory** towards the community.
 - An **effective monitoring system will be established** to address grievances, with a fixed time limit for complaint resolution.
- **Formation of Uttarakhand Transgender Persons Welfare Board:**
 - The **Social Welfare Department will serve as the administrative department**, with the Chief Minister as the head for the Transgender Persons Welfare Board.
 - Members will include **Secretaries of Departments such as Social Welfare, Home, Finance, Personnel, Urban Development, and Panchayati Raj**, along with:
 - Five experts from the transgender community.
 - A representative from **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** working for transgender rights.
 - National Context and Legal Mandate.
- **18th State to Establish Welfare Board:**
 - **Uttarakhand will become the 18th State/Union Territory** to establish a welfare board for transgender

persons under **the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, and Rules, 2020**.

- **Other states with Transgender Welfare Boards** are Rajasthan, Mizoram, Chandigarh, Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, Maharashtra, Kerala, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir and Andaman & Nicobar.

Transgender

- According to **the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** transgender means a person **whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth**.
- It includes trans-person with intersex variations, **gender-queer** and people having such socio-cultural identities as kinnar, hijra, aaravani and jogta.
- India's **2011 Census** was the **first census in its history to incorporate the number of 'trans' population of the country**. The report estimated that **4.8 million Indians identified as transgender**.

UCC in Uttarakhand from January 2025

Why in News?

Recently, The **Chief Minister** announced at a meeting in Dehradun that the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** will be implemented across Uttarakhand from **January 2025**.

Key Points

- **Uniform Civil Code:**
 - About:
 - The **UCC** is outlined in **Article 44 of the Constitution** as part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy**, which states that the government should **strive to establish a uniform civil code for all citizens across India**.
 - However, its implementation is left to the discretion of the government.
 - Historical Context:
 - While the **British established uniform criminal laws in India**, they avoided standardising family laws due to their sensitive nature.

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Note:

- During the debates the **Constituent Assembly** discussed the UCC and Muslim members raised concerns about its impact on community personal laws, proposing safeguards for religious practices.
- On other hand supporters like **K.M. Munshi**, **Alladi Krishnaswami**, and **B.R. Ambedkar** argued for the UCC to promote equality.

➤ Milestone Achievement:

- Uttarakhand will become the **first state in India to implement the UCC** after Independence.
- **Goa** was the only state in India where a UCC was in place, following the **Portuguese Civil Code of 1867**.

Supreme Court of India's Stance on UCC

- **Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum Case, 1985:** The Court noted with regret that "Article 44 has remained a dead letter" and advocated for its implementation.
- **Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India, 1995 and John Vallamattom v. Union of India, 2003:** The Court reiterated the need for implementing the UCC.
- **Shayara Bano v. Union of India, 2017:** The Supreme Court ruled that the practice of triple talaq was unconstitutional and violated the dignity and equality of Muslim women.
 - It also suggested that Parliament should pass legislation to regulate Muslim marriages and divorces.
- **Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira Case, 2019:** The Court praised Goa as a "shining example" where "the uniform civil code is applicable to all, regardless of religion except while protecting certain limited rights" and called for its implementation across India.

Uttarakhand's Wine Tourism Initiative

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand government inaugurated its **first wine production unit** in **Kotdwar** as part of its **new excise policy** to promote **wine tourism**.

Key Points

- **Wine Tourism Initiative:**
 - The initiative aims to offer **wine enthusiasts the opportunity to tour** the wine production units,

learn about the **history of wine**, understand the **production process**, and **taste different varieties** of wine.

- **Guest houses** are being developed around wine units to enhance the tourism experience, allowing visitors to relax and enjoy the region's **scenic beauty**.
- **Uttarakhand's Agricultural Resources:**
 - Uttarakhand is rich in fruits such as **malta**, **apples**, **buransh flowers**, **pears**, and **galgal**, which can be utilized for wine production.
 - These local resources will help create a unique appeal for **wine tourism**.
- **Expansion Plans:**
 - A private wine unit in **Kotdwar** was established two months ago, producing wine continuously with approval from the excise department.
 - New wine production plants are planned for **Bageshwar** and **Champawat**.
- **Economic and Employment Objectives:**
 - The government seeks to ensure the excise policy **increases revenue** and creates **employment opportunities**.
 - **Small and medium wine production units** will be encouraged in **hilly regions**, using **local fruits** to create jobs and business opportunities for local populations.

Rise in Forest Fires in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the report by **the Forest Survey of India (FSI)**, Uttarakhand has recorded a **74% rise** in **forest fires**.

Key Points

- **Satellite Observations and Fire Counts:**
 - In **Uttarakhand**, satellite data recorded a significant rise in fire incidents, with **21,033 fire counts from November 2023 to June 2024**, compared to 5,351 during the same period in 2022–2023.
 - A total of 1,808.9 sq km of forest area was impacted by fires during the season.
 - **Andhra Pradesh** reported the highest fire-affected area (5,286.76 sq km) followed by **Maharashtra** (4,095.04 sq km) and **Telangana** (3,983.28 sq km), **Himachal Pradesh** (783.11 sq km).

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- **Top Affected States:**
 - Chhattisgarh: 18,950 incidents.
 - Andhra Pradesh: 18,174 incidents.
 - Maharashtra: 16,008 incidents.
 - Madhya Pradesh: 15,878 incidents.
 - Telangana: 13,479 incidents.
- **High-Risk Areas:**
 - Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir were declared as “very high risk” zones.
- **Nationwide Risk:**
 - Approximately 11.34% of India’s forest cover and scrub area lies in extremely to **very highly fire-prone zones**, with vulnerable patches in **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand.**
- **Fire Susceptibility:**
 - Climatic conditions like **extreme heat and availability of fuel wood** contribute significantly to forest fire susceptibility.
 - Fires often **spread rapidly** to other forest areas **due to the presence of combustible material.**
 - This data highlights the growing severity of forest fires in India, with **substantial ecological and environmental implications.**

Forest Survey of India

- **Established:** Established on **1st June 1981**, succeeding the **Pre Investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR)** initiated in 1965.
 - In **1976**, the **National Commission on Agriculture (NCA)** recommended establishing a **National Forest Survey Organization**, leading to the creation of **FSI.**
 - PISFR was initiated in **1965** by the Government of India with the sponsorship of **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).**
- **Parent Organization:** **Ministry of Environment and Forests**, Government of India.
- **Primary Objective:** To **assess and monitor the forest resources** of India regularly.
 - In addition, it is also engaged in providing the services of **training, research and extension.**
- **Functioning:** FSI has headquarters at **Dehradun** and has pan India presence with four regional offices at **Shimla, Kolkata, Nagpur and Bangalore.**
 - The Eastern zone has a sub centre at **Burnihat (Meghalaya).**

Fishing Cat Collaring Project

Why in News?

The Wildlife Institute of India-Dehradun is set to launch **India’s first Fishing Cat Collaring Project** at **Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary.**

Key Points

- **Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary:**
 - Spanning 235 square kilometres, Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) is **India’s second-largest mangrove habitat.**
 - It is **home to the endangered fishing cat.**
 - Located in the **Godavari** estuary, the sanctuary lies at the confluence of the Coringa River and the **Bay of Bengal** in **Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.**
 - **Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary** in the Krishna estuarine forest area is **another habitat** for the fishing cat.
- **Fishing Cat Population Trends:**
 - The **first fishing cat survey in 2018** recorded a population of 115 individuals.
 - Sightings have **increased significantly over the past five years**, suggesting population growth in and around the sanctuary.
- **Mangrove Conservation and Community Role:**
 - Local communities, through the **Environment Development Committees (EDCs)**, actively conserve the mangrove ecosystem.
 - A total of 420 locals are part of the EDCs, which also manage **Community-Based Eco-Tourism (CBET)** for alternative livelihoods.
- **India’s First Fishing Cat Collaring Project:**
 - The Wildlife Institute of India-Dehradun is **executing India’s first Fishing Cat Collaring Project** as part of the **second fishing cat census.**
 - This three-year project **aims to study the species’ home range, behaviour, habitat ecology, feeding habits, and space use.**
 - The project plans to **collar 10 fishing cats with lightweight GIS-equipped devices.**
 - The collaring is expected to be completed by **March or April 2025.**

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➤ **Ramsar Convention Site Proposal:**

- The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department is striving to secure **Ramsar Convention Site** status for Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary due to its rich biodiversity and ecological significance.

Mithila Makhana

Wildlife Institute of India

- It is an autonomous institution **under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.**
- It was **established in 1982.**
- It is based in **Dehradun, Uttarakhand.**
- It offers training programs, academic courses, and advisory in wildlife research and management.

Fishing Cats



➤ **Scientific Name:** *Prionailurus viverrinus.*

➤ **Description:**

- It is twice the size of a house cat.
- The fishing cat is **nocturnal (active at night)** and apart from fish **also preys on frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals.**
- The species **breed all year round.**
- They spend most of their lives in areas of dense vegetation close to water bodies and are excellent swimmers.

➤ **Habitat:**

- Fishing cats have a patchy distribution along **the Eastern Ghats.** They abound in estuarine floodplains, tidal **mangrove forests** and also inland freshwater habitats.
- Apart from Sundarbans in West Bengal and Bangladesh, fishing cats inhabit the **Chilika lagoon** and surrounding **wetlands** in Odisha, Coringa and Krishna mangroves in Andhra Pradesh.

➤ **Threats:**

- A major threat for fishing cats is the **destruction of wetlands,** their preferred habitat.
- **Shrimp farming** is another growing threat to **mangrove habitats** of the Fishing Cat.
- This unique cat also faces threats from **hunting for meat and skin.**
- Tribal hunters indulge in **ritual hunting practices** throughout the year.
- It is also occasionally **poached for its skin.**

➤ **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **CITES:** Appendix II
- **Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I



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