



# drishti

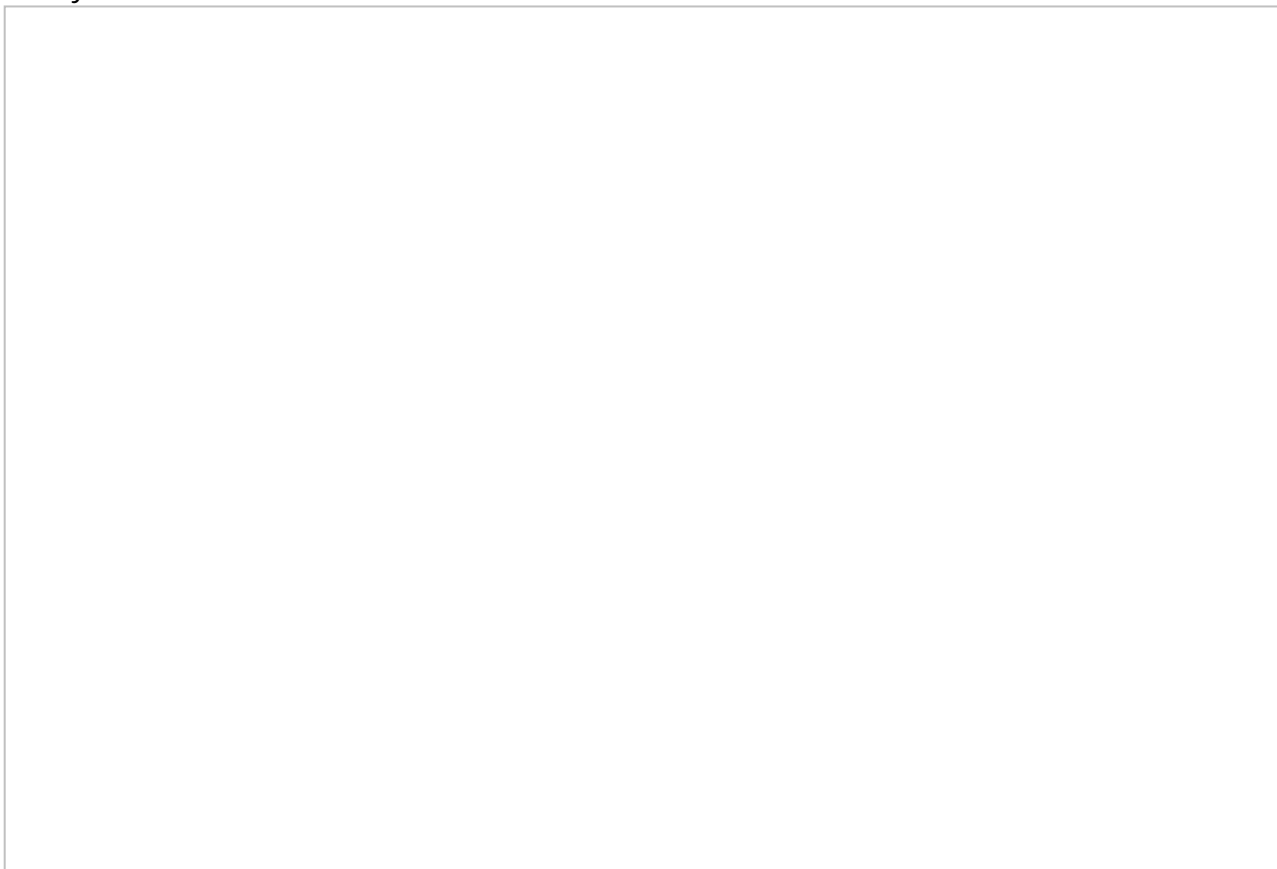
## News Analysis (04 Mar, 2019)

 [drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/04-03-2019/print](https://drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/04-03-2019/print)

### Fire in Bandipur Tiger Reserve

The fire has raged through the **Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.**

- There are concerns about the long-term damage to the ecosystem, which is a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere that hosts the world's largest tiger population, at more than 575 (2014 census).
- The **country's forest policy encourages a zero forest fire approach for its protected landscapes** — whether it is Bandipur or the rainforests of the upper Western Ghats.
- However, Scientist has shown that this blanket approach of zero fire may be doing harm to dry, deciduous forests where trees have evolved to co-exist with fire.



## Cause of Fire in Bandipur Tiger Reserve

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- The 2018 monsoon was particularly strong, but the year-end northeast monsoon has failed.
- The **monsoon led to dense growth**, while the blistering **heat since September has turned vegetation brittle and dry**.
- As with most forest fires, it is assumed that **Bandipur's ignition was also man-made**.

## Positive Impacts of forest fire

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- **Healthy Ecosystem**
  - Scientists have said that, **when fires are relatively frequent, adult tree mortality in these systems is very low**.
  - Many saplings sprout shortly after the fire from underground reserves, and the system returns to its original state in a few years.
  - Conversely, when fires are suppressed — including by curbing the tribal practices of controlled fire burning — greater biomass builds up that can lead to high-intensity fires which affect the ecosystem negatively.
  - Moreover, there might be a correlation between fire suppression and growth of forest fire incidents.
- **Curbing Invasive Species**
  - **Forest fires also help in suppressing invasive species**.
  - Scientists have said that the exclusion of tribal communities from the tiger reserves in Karnataka had, in turn, stopped their traditional use of small “litter fires” just before the dry season set in.
  - **This has led to the abundance of invasive *lantana camara* plant which is native to America**.
  - ***Hairy mistletoe*** — a parasitic shrub that affects mature trees — has also thrived due to fire suppression.

## Arun-3 Hydro Project

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Recently the government has approved an investment proposal for transmission component in **Nepal portion of Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project**.

- The investment will be done by state-owned **Sutlej Jal Vikas Nigam (SJVN)** which has been carrying out the construction work at the plant.
- The power from the project will be **exported from Dhalkebar in Nepal to Muzaffarpur in India**. This will not only provide surplus power to India but also **strengthen the economic linkages with Nepal**.
- The Arun-3 Hydro Electric project (900 MW) is a **run-of-river located on Arun River in Eastern Nepal**.

- A Memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Government of Nepal and SJVN Limited for the project in 2008 for execution on **Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT)** basis for a period of 30 years including five years of construction period.

## Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT)

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- **BOOT (build, own, operate, transfer)** is a **public-private partnership (PPP)** project model in which a private organization conducts a large development project under contract to a public-sector partner, such as a government agency.
- BOOT is sometimes known as **BOT (build, own, transfer)**.
- In this model, the public-sector partner contracts with a **private developer with specific expertise** - to design and implement a large project.
- The public-sector partner may **provide limited funding or some other benefit (such as tax exempt status)** but the private-sector partner assumes the risks associated with planning, constructing, operating and maintaining the project for a specified time period.
- During that time, the developer charges customers who use the infrastructure that's been built to realize a profit. At the end of the specified period, the **private-sector partner transfers ownership to the funding organization**, either freely or for an amount stipulated in the original contract.

## Run-of-the-river Project

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- Run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects are hydroelectric systems that harvest the energy from **flowing water to generate electricity**.
- The primary difference between this type of hydroelectric generation compared to others is that **run-of-the-river primarily uses the natural flow rate of water to generate power—instead of the power of water falling from a height**.
- For a run-of-the-river system to be possible in a given location, there needs to be **two specific geographical features**:
  - A **substantial flow rate**, either from rainfall or a melting snowpack.
  - There must be **enough of a tilt to the river to speed** the water up significantly.
- Features:
  - These are **less expensive** to build and can be **built over a shorter period of time**.
  - They have a **smaller environmental footprint** when compared to dams with large amounts of water storage.
  - However, the **output from run-of-the-river system is significantly lower** than large scale hydro projects, which **increases the cost per kWh as compared to Dam based hydroelectric generation**.
  - The manipulation of river flows can cause a significant number of environmental impacts **affecting the aquatic ecosystem**.

## Important Fact For Prelims (4th March 2019)

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### Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019

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- Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 has been placed in the **Guinness World Records in three sectors.**
- The **three sectors are:**
  - Largest traffic and crowd management plan,
  - The biggest painting exercise of public sites under “Paint my City” scheme, and
  - The biggest sanitation and waste disposal mechanism.

### Kumbh Mela

- Kumbh Mela is the **largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth**, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
- Kumbh Mela comes under the **UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**
- The festival is held at **Prayagraj (at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati), Haridwar (on the Ganges), Ujjain (on the Shipra) and Nasik (on the Godavari) every four years by rotation** and is attended by millions of people irrespective of caste, creed or gender.
- As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a **culturally diverse festival.**
- The event encapsulates the science of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritualistic traditions, and social and cultural customs and practices, making it extremely rich in knowledge.
- Knowledge and skills related to the tradition are transmitted through ancient religious manuscripts, oral traditions, historical travelogues and texts produced by eminent historians.
- The teacher-student relationship of the sadhus in the ashrams and akhadas remains the most important method of imparting and safeguarding knowledge and skills relating to Kumbh Mela.

### National Company Law Tribunal

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- NTPC Ltd. will acquire only those stressed power projects which are undergoing insolvency proceedings in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), with an aim to get fairer deals.
- All those insolvency deals so far in the NCLT have got discounts of up to 70% or even more from secured creditors.
- National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) was constituted under **section 18 of the Companies Act, 2013 w.e.f. 01st June 2016** based on the **recommendation of the Justice Eradi committee** on law relating to insolvency and winding up of companies.

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is a **quasi-judicial body that adjudicates issues relating to Indian companies.**

The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code(IBC)** proposed **two tribunals to adjudicate insolvency** resolution cases- the **National Company Law Tribunal that will adjudicate cases for companies and limited liability partnerships** and the **Debt Recovery Tribunal that will adjudicate cases for individuals and partnership firms.**

- The NCLT has eleven benches, two at New Delhi (one being the principal bench) and one each at Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai.

## Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)

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- Recently, a study has concluded that **unauthorized surcharging and high MDR charges** are impeding the growth of digital payments.
- MDR is a fee charged **from a merchant by a bank for accepting payments from customers** through credit and debit cards in their establishments.
- MDR compensates the card issuing bank, the lender which puts the PoS terminal and payment gateways such as Mastercard or Visa for their services.
- MDR charges are usually shared in pre-agreed proportion between the bank and a merchant and is expressed in percentage of the transaction amount.
- To promote digital transactions, the government decided to bear MDR charges on transactions up to Rs 2,000 made through debit cards, BHIM UPI or Aadhaar-enabled payment systems for till December 2020.

## Space-X Dragon Crew Capsule

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- Space-X Dragon crew capsule, in a test flight, has successfully docked itself to **International Space Station (ISS).**
- This docking maneuver is something the capsule will have to do routinely in the future when it will start transporting astronauts to and from the ISS.
- **SpaceX has become the first company** to design, build, launch, and now dock a **commercial spaceship made for flying people to the International Space Station.**

