



# drishti

## News Analysis (07 Apr, 2020)

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## MP's Salaries Cut and MPLADS Suspended

### Why in News

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved an **ordinance to amend the Salaries, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954.**

- It will **cut the salaries** of Members of Parliament (**MPs**) by **30%**, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
- Apart from this, it has been decided to **suspend the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds** for **two financial years** (2020-21 to 2021-22).
- The saved amount will go to the **Consolidated Fund of India** to fight the **Covid-19 pandemic**.

### Key Points

- **30% Salary Cut**
  - It is applicable to **all MPs**, including the **Prime Minister** and the **Council of Ministers**, for the financial year 2020-2021.
  - The **President** and **Vice-President** of India along with all the **State Governors**, have also decided on their own to take a 30% salary cut.
  - However, the amendment will **only cut MPs' salaries, not allowances or the pensions** of ex-MPs.
  - According to the pay hike in 2018, each MP draws a monthly salary of ₹1 lakh, ₹70,000 as constituency allowance and ₹60,000 for running office besides other perks.

- **Suspension of MPLADS**
  - The amount saved from the scheme would be **around ₹8,000 crore** and will be redirected to the Consolidation Fund.
  - Many MPs had **already pledged to use their MPLADS funds** for efforts to combat the **coronavirus** pandemic.
  - 74 Rajya Sabha members had contributed a total of ₹100 crore, and 265 Lok Sabha members had given a total of ₹265 crore.
- Currently, the **Lok Sabha** has **542 members** while the **Rajya Sabha** has a strength of **245 members, including 12 nominated**.
- The **comprehensive decision** was taken to convey the message of **social responsibility** of the MPs.
- **Other Previous Measures**
  - The **employees of the central government** have already given **one day's salary** on their own. However, it is **not clear** if they will face a **pay cut** or not.
  - State government of **Telangana** had already announced **salary cuts at all levels** on 30<sup>th</sup> March.
  - Government has announced **various other measures** including the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana**.
- The salary cut has been **supported** throughout the country. However, the suspension of MPLADS has been **criticised** on the grounds that it is a **disservice to the constituents** and will undermine the role and functions of the MPs. It is the **centralisation of funds** which goes **against federalism**.

### **Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme**

- It was announced in **December 1993** under the control of the **Ministry of Rural Development**. Later, in **October 1994**, it was transferred to the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.
- **Objectives:**
  - To enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets based on the locally felt needs to be taken up in their Constituencies.
    - Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their constituencies and elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State they are elected from.
    - Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
  - To create durable assets of national priorities viz. drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc.
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme**. The **annual MPLADS fund** entitlement **per MP constituency is ₹5 crore**.

## Government Accounts

- **Consolidated Fund**

- It was constituted under **Article 266 (1)** of the Constitution of India.
- It is made up of:
  - All **revenues** received by the Government by way of **taxes** (Income Tax, Central Excise, Customs and other receipts) and all **non-tax revenues**.
  - All **loans** raised by the Government by issue of Public notifications, treasury bills (internal debt) and from foreign governments and international institutions (external debt).
- **All government expenditures are incurred** from this fund and no amount can be withdrawn from the Fund without **authorization from the Parliament**.
- **Each state** can have its own Consolidated Fund of the state with similar provisions.
- The **Comptroller and Auditor General of India** audits the fund and reports to the relevant legislatures on the management.

- **Contingency Fund**

- It was constituted under the **Article 267 (1)** of the Indian Constitution.
- Its **corpus is ₹500 crores**.
- It is **used for meeting unforeseen expenditure**.
- **Each state** can have its own Contingency Fund of the state with similar provisions.

- **Public Account**

- It was constituted under **Article 266 (2)** of the Indian Constitution.
- The **transactions** under this account relate to debt **other than those included in the Consolidated Fund of India**.
- The receipts under Public Account do not constitute normal receipts of Government hence Parliamentary authorization for payments is not required.
- **Every state can have their own similar accounts**.

**Source: TH**

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## Restrictions on Court Hearings Lawful

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Supreme Court held that all **restrictions imposed on people** from entering, attending or taking part in court hearings **are lawful in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic**.

The court said these **restrictions were in tune with the social distancing norms** and best public health practices advocated to contain the Covid-19.

## Key Points

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- **Duty vs Discretion:** The apex court invoked its extraordinary Constitutional powers under **Article 142** to step away from the **convention of open court hearings**. It further clarified that use of this extraordinary power was **not a matter of discretion but of duty**.
- **Convention vs Public Health:** Although the open court system ensures transparency in administration of justice, scaling down of conventional operations was done to avoid congregation of a large number of people. The court made it clear **that public health takes precedence over conventions**.
- **Cooperation and Participation:** The court said every individual and institution is expected to cooperate in the implementation of measures designed to reduce the transmission of the virus.

It also argued courts at all levels respond to the call of social distancing and ensure that court premises do not contribute to the spread of virus.

- **Covid-19 and Rule of Law:** Access to justice is fundamental to preserve the **rule of law** in the democracy envisaged by the Constitution of India. In the absence of access to justice, people are unable to have their voice heard, exercise their rights, challenge discrimination or hold decision-makers accountable.

The challenges occasioned by the outbreak of Covid-19 have to be addressed **while preserving the constitutional commitment** to ensuring the delivery of and access to justice to those who seek it.

## ICT and Delivery of Justice

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- **Guidelines:** The Supreme Court also issued the following **guidelines to streamline the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)** in effective delivery of Justice:
  - **High Courts:** The High Courts to decide the modalities for the use of videoconferencing technologies in their respective States.
  - **District Courts:** District courts in each State would adopt the mode of videoconferencing prescribed by the respective High Courts.
  - **Helplines:** Helplines to be set up to receive and rectify technical complaints.
- The **courts should make available video conferencing facilities** for litigants who do not have it or appoint an amicus curiae (friend of the court).
- **Mutual Consent of Parties:** The court said in no case shall evidence be recorded without the mutual consent of both the parties by videoconferencing.
- **Social Distancing:** If it is necessary to record evidence in a courtroom, the presiding officer shall ensure the social distancing to be followed.

## Article 142

- It provides **discretionary power to the Supreme Court** as it states that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is **necessary for doing complete justice** in any cause or matter pending before it.
- **Constructive Application:** In the early years of the evolution of Article 142, the general public and the lawyers both lauded the Supreme Court for its efforts to bring complete justice to various deprived sections of society or to protect the environment.
- In the **Union Carbide case**, relating to the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy, the **Supreme Court placed itself above the laws made by the Parliament** or the legislatures of the States by saying that, to do complete justice, it **could even override the laws made by Parliament**.

However, in the *Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court stated that **Article 142 could not be used to supplant** the existing law, but only to **supplement the law**.

- **Cases of Judicial Overreach:** In recent years, there have been several judgments of the Supreme Court wherein it has been **foraying into areas which had long been forbidden to the judiciary by reason of the doctrine of 'separation of powers'**, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution. One such example is:

**The ban on the sale of alcohol along national and state highways:** While the notification by the central government prohibited liquor stores along National Highways only, the Supreme Court put in place a ban on a distance of 500 metres by invoking Article 142.

### Source: TH

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## Measures for Smooth Disbursal of Funds Under PMGKY

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Ministry of Finance has tweaked **Prevention of Money Laundering (PML)** norms with the aim to make all inoperative bank accounts functional.

This is to ensure that cash transfers by the government under the **COVID-19** relief package (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) scheme) reach beneficiaries.

### Key Points

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- As a part of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) scheme**, the government has decided to **transfer ₹500 per month for three months to the poor and vulnerable sections of the society** whose livelihood has been impacted due to the nationwide **lockdown**.
- The PML norms have been tweaked to ensure that beneficiaries are able to withdraw the money transferred to them by the government **without any problems or requirement of additional documentation**.
- The Rules have been amended in respect of
  - The **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts**.
  - Basic savings account and small accounts.
  - Those accounts which have become inoperative due to various reasons including **Non-completion of Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements or updation**.
- **Accounts that may have become dysfunctional** due to non-operation in the account for the last two years have also been **made functional**.
- The Finance Ministry had also requested the **Ministry of Home Affairs for adequate security personnel at bank branches** and with the business correspondents  
This is to maintain law and order, and social distancing, in view of the higher customer footfall expected for cash withdrawals after the transfers are made.

## Money laundering

It is the **concealing or disguising the identity of illegally obtained proceeds** so that they appear to have originated from legitimate sources.

## Round Tripping of Funds

- Round tripping refers to money that leaves the country through various channels and makes its way back into the country often as foreign investment.
- This mostly involves black money and is allegedly often used for stock price manipulation.

## Prevention of Money-Laundering Act

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- **Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002** deals with money laundering and has three main objectives :
  - To prevent and control money laundering.
  - To provide for confiscation and seizure of property obtained from laundered money.
  - To deal with any other issue connected with money-laundering in India.
- Under the PMLA Act, **the Enforcement Directorate** is empowered to conduct a Money Laundering investigation.

- **PMLA (Amendment) Act, 2012**

- Adds the concept of '**reporting entity**' which includes a banking company, financial institution, intermediary etc.
- It prescribes **obligation of banking companies, financial institutions and intermediaries for**
  - **Verification and maintenance of records of the identity of all its clients** and also of all transactions.
  - **Furnishing information of such transactions in prescribed form to the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND).**

It empowers the Director of FIU-IND to impose fine on banking company, financial institution or intermediary if they or any of its officers fails to comply with the provisions of the Act as indicated above.
- PMLA, 2002 levied a fine up to Rs 5 lakh, but the amendment act has removed this upper limit.
- It has provided for **provisional attachment and confiscation of property** of any person involved in such activities.

### **Financial Intelligence Unit-India**

- FIU-IND is a **central, national agency** responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions to enforcement agencies and foreign FIUs.
- It was set **up in 2004.**
- It is an **independent body** reporting directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) headed by the **Finance Minister.**

### **Source: TH**

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## Fall in IHS Markit India Services Business Activity Index

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### Why in News

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The **IHS Markit India Services Business Activity Index (i.e Service Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI))** was at 49.3 in March, down from February's 85-month high of 57.5.

### Key Points

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- The Index is **compiled by IHS Markit** for more than 40 economies worldwide. IHS Markit is a global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.

- The fall implies contraction in India's **services sector activity** during March basically due to **COVID-19**.
  - The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced demand, particularly in overseas markets. Nationwide store closures and prohibition to leave the house weighed heavily on the services economy.
  - In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.
- The **Composite PMI Output Index** that maps both the manufacturing and services sector also fell to 50.6 in March, down 7 points from February's 57.6.
 

This signals a **sharp slowdown in private sector output growth** and brought an abrupt end to the recent strong upward-moving expansion trend.

## Purchasing Managers' Index

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- PMI is an index of the prevailing direction of **economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors**.
- It consists of a diffusion index that summarizes whether **market conditions**, as viewed by purchasing managers, are expanding, staying the same, or contracting.
- The purpose of the PMI is to provide information about **current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors**.
- It is **different from the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, which also gauges the level of activity in the economy.

## Index of Industrial Production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity, manufacturing, etc.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the **Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.
- The **Base Year of the Index of Eight Core Industries** has been revised from the year 2004-05 to 2011-12 from April, 2017.
  - The eight core industries comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
  - The eight Core Industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilizers.

## Difference between PMI and IIP



- IIP covers the **broader industrial sector compared to PMI.**
  - Index of Industrial Production (IIP) measures **growth in the industrial sector.**
  - IIP shows the **change in production volume** in major industrial sub sectors like manufacturing, mining and electricity.
  - Similarly, the IIP also gives **use based (capital goods, consumer goods etc) trends in industrial production.**
- **PMI is more dynamic compared to a standard industrial production index.**
  - The PMI senses dynamic trends because of the variable it uses for the construction of the index compared to **volume based production indicators like the IIP.**
  - For example, new orders under PMI show growth oriented positive trends and not just volume of past production that can be traced in an ordinary Index of Industrial Production.

**Source: TH**

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## India in Containment Phase

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### Why in News

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According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India has now **stepped out of the local transmission phase** and moved into the **“large outbreaks amenable to containment phase”**.

The Ministry has brought out a 'containment document' for large outbreaks to stop the chain of transmission and reduce morbidity and deaths.

### Key Points

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- India would be following **a strategic approach for possible scenarios** - travel-related cases reported in India, local transmission of Covid-19, large outbreaks amenable to containment, widespread community transmission of Covid-19 disease and India becoming endemic for Covid-19.
- According to the document, **a large outbreak can be defined as a localised increase in the incidence of coronavirus cases occurring within a defined geographic area.**
  - This can happen within a village, town or even a big city.
- The document states **containment for large outbreaks** calls for near **absolute interruption of movement of people** to and from a relatively **large defined area where there is single large outbreak** or multiple foci of local transmission of Covid-19.

- The cluster containment strategy is a part of the document. It would **"include geographic quarantine, social distancing measures, enhanced active surveillance, testing all suspected cases, isolation of cases,** quarantine of contacts and risk communication to create awareness among the public on preventive public health measures".

Geographic quarantine shall be applicable to such areas reporting large outbreaks and/or multiple clusters of Covid-19 spread over multiple blocks of one or more districts that are contiguous.

- The **containment operation shall be deemed to be over 28 days** from the discharge of the last confirmed case (following negative tests as per discharge policy) from the designated health facility.
- **Factors that will determine the success of containment strategy**
  - A number of variables determine the success of the containment operations through geographic quarantine which include the **number and size of the cluster or clusters** and also **how efficiently the virus is transmitting in Indian population,** taking into account **environmental factors** especially temperature and humidity.
  - The factors also include **public health response** in terms of active case finding, testing of large numbers of cases, immediate isolation of suspect and confirmed cases and quarantine of contacts along with the geographical characteristics of the area.

**Source: TH**

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## Animals and Covid-19

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### Why in News

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Owing to a recent news report on a Tiger being infected with **Covid-19** in New York (Bronx Zoo), the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued an advisory regarding the containing and management of Covid-19 in National Parks/Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves.

- Also, a tiger in **Pench Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh)** has died due to respiratory illness. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is investigating whether the tiger should be tested for the novel coronavirus disease.
- However, swabs from the throat and nose to test for **rhinotracheitis, a viral infection that afflicts cats and causes respiratory illness** were collected.

### Key Points

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- **Spread of Infection from humans to animals**
  - The Bronx Zoo case suggests that a zoo employee spread the virus to the tiger.
  - The virus came from an animal source and mutated; humans have since been infecting humans. Thus, it is **theoretically possible for the virus to mutate again** to survive in certain species after being transmitted by humans.
- **Advisory by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**
  - It has asked all **Chief Wildlife Wardens (CWLWs)** of all States/UTs to take immediate preventive measures to stop the transmission and spread of the virus from humans to animals and vice versa, in National Parks/Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves.
  - The CWLW is the **statutory authority under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** who heads the Wildlife Wing of a State Forest Department and exercises complete administrative control over Protected Areas (PAs) within a state.
- **Guidelines issued by the NTCA and CZA**
  - Both the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) and the NTCA have issued guidelines that require zoos to be on the “highest alert” and monitor animals on closed-circuit cameras 24/7 for “abnormal behaviour and symptoms.”
  - The CZA has also directed zookeepers to approach sick animals wearing personal protective equipment and isolate and quarantine them.

### Central Zoo Authority

- The CZA is a **statutory body** whose main objective is to enforce minimum standards and norms for upkeep and health care of animals in Indian zoos. It was established in **1992**.
- Zoos are regulated as per the provisions of **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and are guided by the **National Zoo Policy, 1998**.

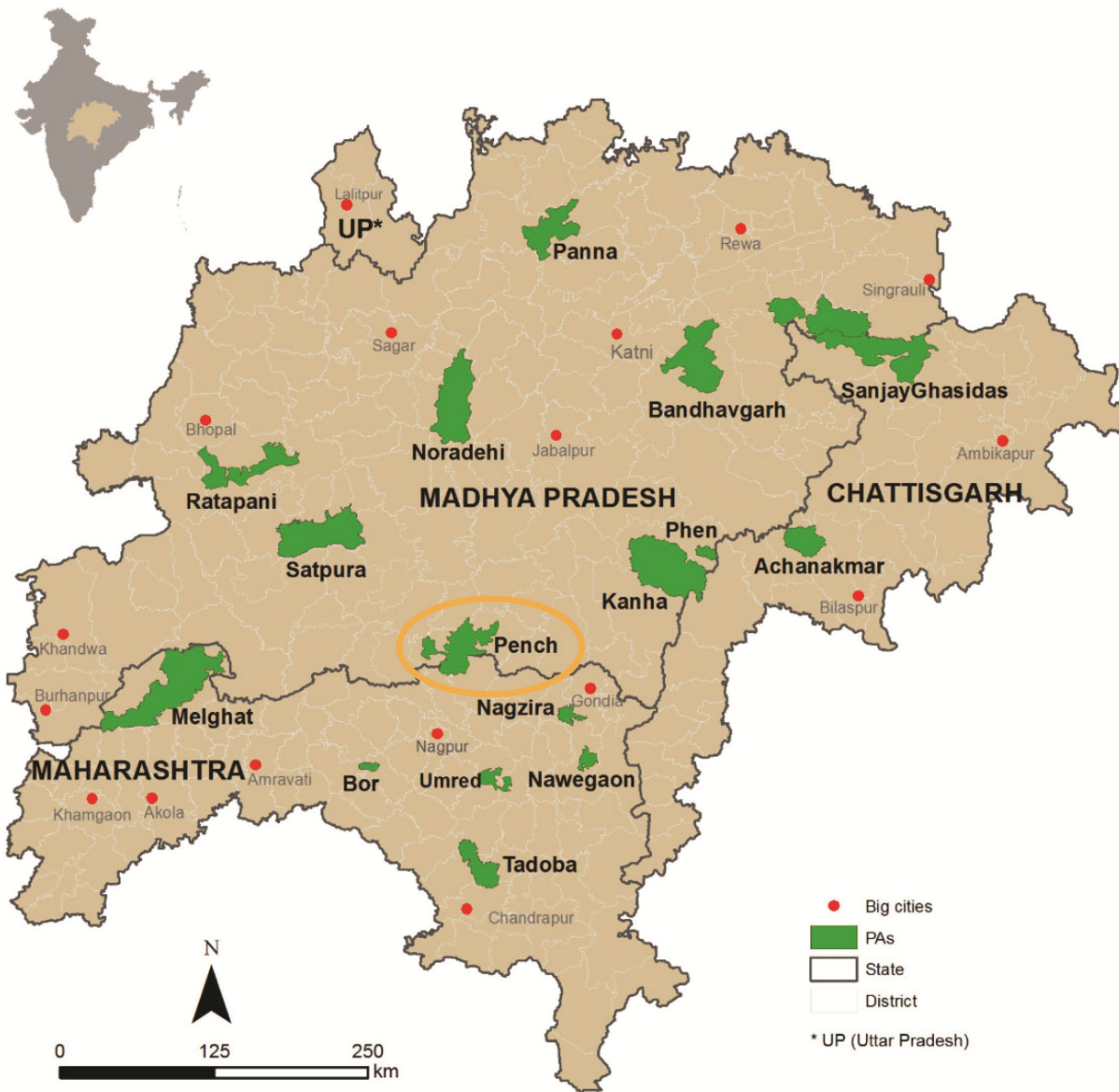
### National Tiger Conservation Authority

- NTCA is a **statutory body** under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- It was **established in December, 2005** following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.
- It was constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it .

### Pench Tiger Reserve

- Pench Tiger Reserve, **Seoni (Madhya Pradesh)** is one of the major Protected Areas of **Satpura-Maikal ranges** of the Central Highlands. It was **included in the Project Tiger in 1992-93**.

- It is among the sites notified as **Important Bird Areas** of India.  
The IBA is a programme of Birdlife International which aims to identify, monitor and protect a global network of IBAs for conservation of the world's birds and associated diversity.
- It has a **contiguous forest cover with Kanha Tiger Reserve and Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra)**.
- The area of the Pench Tiger Reserve and the surrounding area is the real story area of **Rudyard Kipling's famous "The Jungle Book"**.
- The **forests** found in Pench Tiger Reserve are divided **into three parts**: southern tropical wet dry forest, southern tropical dry deciduous teak forest and southern tropical dry deciduous mixed forest.
- The **major Carnivores** are Tiger, leopard, wild cat, wild dog, hyena, jackal, fox, wolf, weasel, among the vegetarian species, Gaur, Nilgai, Sambar, Chital, Chasinga, Chinkara, Wild Pig etc. are prominent.
- There are a **lot of migratory birds** seen in the cold season. Among the migratory birds, Ruddy shelduck, Pintail, Whistling Teal and Vegtel etc are prominent.



**Source: TH**

## NHAI Achieves Highest Ever Construction of National Highways

### Why in News

Recently, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** completed construction of 3,979 km of national highways in the financial Year 2019-20.

**This is the highest ever highway construction** achieved in a financial year by NHAI.

### Key Points

- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has envisaged an ambitious highway development programme **Bharatmala Pariyojana** which includes development of about 65,000 km national highways.
- Under Phase-I of **Bharatmala Pariyojana**, implementation of 34,800 km of national highways in 5 years (from 2017 to 2022) has been approved.
- NHA has mandated development of about 27,500 km of national highways under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I.
- **Bharatmala Pariyojana**
  - It is an **umbrella program for the highways sector** that **focuses on optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement** across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps through **effective interventions**.
  - The effective interventions include **development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads and Green-field expressways**.

### **National Highways Authority of India (NHA)**

- NHA was set up under **NHA Act, 1988**.
- **Objective:** It has been entrusted with the **National Highways Development Project**, along with other minor projects **for development, maintenance and management**. **National Highways Development Project (NHDP)** is a **project** to upgrade, rehabilitate and widen major **highways** in India to a higher standard. The project was started in 1998.
- **Vision:** To meet the nation's need for the provision and **maintenance of National Highways network to global standards** and to **meet user's expectations** in the most time bound and cost effective manner and **promote economic well being** and quality of life of the people.

### **National Highways (NH)**

- NH are the **arterial roads** of the country for inter-state movement of passengers and goods.
- They traverse the length and width of the country **connecting the National and State capitals, major ports and rail junctions and link up with border roads and foreign highways**.
- The NHs including Expressways constitute only about 1.7% of the length of all roads, they carry about **40% of the road traffic**.

**Source: PIB**

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- Mahavir Jayanti is one of the most auspicious festivals in the **Jain community**.
  - This day marks the **birth of Vardhamana Mahavira**, who was the **24<sup>th</sup> and the last Tirthankara** who succeeded the **23<sup>rd</sup> Tirthankara, Parshvanatha**.
  - According to Jain texts, Lord Mahavira was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the bright half of the moon in the **month of Chaitra**.

As per the Gregorian calendar, Mahavir Jayanti is usually celebrated during the month of March or April. In 2020, Mahavir Jayanti was celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> of April.

- A procession is called with the idol of Lord Mahavira called the **Rath Yatra**.
- Reciting stavans or Jain prayers, statues of the lord are given a ceremonial bath called **abhisheka**.

## Lord Mahavira

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- Mahavir was born to **King Siddhartha of Kundagrama and Queen Trishala, a Lichchhavi princess** in the year 540 BC in the **Vajji kingdom**, identical with modern day Vaishali in Bihar.
- Mahavira belonged to the **Ikshvaku dynasty**.
- There are several historians who believe that he was born in a place called **Ahalya bhumi** and the land has not been plowed for hundreds of years by the family that owns it.
- Lord Mahavir was named Vardhamana, which means **"one who grows"**.
- He abandoned worldly life at the age of 30 and attained **'kaivalya' or omniscience at the age of 42**.
- Mahavira taught ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (chastity) and aparigraha (non-attachment) to his disciples and his teachings were called **Jain Agamas**.
- Ordinary people were able to understand the teachings of Mahavira and his followers because they **used Prakrit**.
- It is believed that the Mahavira passed away and attained moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death) at the age of 72 in 468 BC at a place called Pavapuri near modern Rajgir in Bihar.

## Jainism

- The word Jaina comes from the term **Jina, meaning conqueror**.
- Tirthankara is a **Sanskrit word meaning 'Ford maker'**, i.e., one who is able to ford the river, to cross beyond the perpetual flow of earthly life.
- Jainism attaches utmost importance to ahimsa or non-violence.



- It preaches **5 mahavratas (the 5 great vows)**:
  - Ahimsa (Non-violence)
  - Satya (Truth)
  - Asteya or Acharya (Non-stealing)
  - Aparigraha (Non-attachment/Non-possession)
  - Brahmacharya (Celibacy/Chastity)
- Among these 5 teachings, the **Brahmacharya (Celibacy/Chastity) was added by Mahavira.**
- The **three jewels or Triratna of Jainism include**
  - Samyak Darshana (right faith).
  - Samyak Gyana (right knowledge).
  - Samyak Charitra (right conduct).
- Jainism is a religion of **self-help.**
  - There are no gods or spiritual beings that will help human beings.
  - It does not condemn the varna system.
- In later times, it got divided into **two sects**:
  - **Shvetambaras (white-clad)** under **Sthalabahu.**
  - **Digambaras (sky-clad)** under the leadership of **Bhadrabahu.**
- The important idea in Jainism is that the **entire world is animated**: even stones, rocks, and water **have life.**
- **Non-injury to living beings**, especially to humans, animals, plants, and insects, is central to Jaina philosophy.
- According to Jain teachings, **the cycle of birth and rebirth is shaped through karma.**
- **Asceticism and penance** are required to free oneself from the cycle of karma and achieve the liberation of the soul.
- The practice of **Santhara** is also a part of Jainism.
  - It is the ritual of fasting unto death. Svetambara Jains call it Santhara whereas Digambaras call it **Sallekhana.**

## Smart Cities Command Centres

### Why in News

Recently, municipalities have started using their **Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** as war rooms for **Covid-19** response under the **Smart Cities Mission.**

### Key Points



- Of the **100 municipalities** in the Smart Cities Mission, the ICCCs of 45 cities are online or operational.
- The **ICCCs set up under the Mission** are meant to **coordinate traffic management, surveillance, utilities and grievance redressal**.  
Now, they are being used to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.
- As **Covid-19 war rooms**, the ICCCs are **implementing initiatives such as**:
  - CCTV surveillance of public places.
  - GIS mapping of Covid-positive cases.
  - GPS tracking of healthcare workers
  - Predictive analytics (heat maps) for virus containment across different zones of the city.
  - Virtual training to doctors and healthcare professionals.
  - Real-time tracking of ambulances and disinfection services.
  - Providing medical services through video-conferencing, tele-counselling and tele-medicine.

## Smart City Mission

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- It is an **innovative** initiative under the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**, Government of India to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of people by enabling local development and harnessing technology as a means to create smart outcomes for citizens.
- **Objective:** To promote cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of Smart Solutions.
- **Focus:** On sustainable and inclusive development and to look at compact areas, create a replicable model which will act like a lighthouse to other aspiring cities.
- **Strategy:**
  - Pan-city initiative in which at least one Smart Solution is applied city-wide.
  - Develop areas step-by-step with the help of these three models:
    - Retrofitting.
    - Redevelopment.
    - Greenfield.
- **Coverage and Duration:** The Mission covers **100 cities** for the duration of **five years** starting from the financial year (FY) 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- **Financing:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.

**Source: TH**

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## World Health Day

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- **Every year 7<sup>th</sup> April** marks the celebration of **World Health Day**.
  - Its idea was conceived at the **First Health Assembly in 1948** and it came into **effect in 1950**.
  - **Aim:** To create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the **World Health Organization** (WHO).

Over the years, it has brought to light **important health issues** such as mental health, maternal and child care and climate change.
  - **Theme for 2020: Support Nurses and Midwives.**
  - **2020** has been designated as the **International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife**.
    - This year, the day celebrates the work of nurses and midwives and reminds world leaders of the critical role they play in keeping the world healthy.
    - On the Day, the **'State of the World's Nursing 2020'** report has been launched.
    - WHO and its partners will make a series of recommendations to strengthen the nursing and midwifery workforce.
  - Nurses and other health workers are at the forefront of **Covid-19** response-providing high quality, respectful treatment and care, leading community dialogue to address fears and questions and collecting data for clinical studies.
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