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## Important Facts For Prelims (15th March 2019)

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### Bannerghatta National Park

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- The **Eco-Sensitive Zone** (ESZ) Expert Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), has recommended the **reduction of nearly 100 sq. km in the ESZ of Bannerghatta National Park.**
- ESZ provides a **regulated buffer zone** around protected areas.
- The fear is that this reduction would lead to more quarrying in the area.
  - However, there is a **Supreme Court ruling prohibiting quarrying and mining activities** within **1km of protected areas irrespective of the ESZ distance.**
  - Therefore, **the 'safe zone' of 1 km** around protected areas is already in place across the country.
  - Other **'development' activities** apart from mining and quarrying can take place, which can have an **adverse impact on forests.**

### Bannerghatta National Park

- The Bannerghatta National Park is located near **Bangalore in Karnataka.**
- Wildlife such as elephants, gaur, leopard, jackal, fox, wild boar, sloth bear, Sambar, Chital, spotted deer, barking deer, common langur, bonnet macaque, porcupine, and hares are found in abundance.
- The Bannerghatta Biological Park has been an integral part of Bannerghatta National Park.
- It emerged out as an **independent establishment during the year 2002.**
- Bannerghatta Biological Park is one among the few places in the world where wilderness is preserved so close to a big city. It is having different units such as Zoo, Safari, Butterfly Park and Rescue Center (Conservation of captive animals).

### West Nile Virus

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The Union health ministry has sent a disease surveillance team to Kerala to investigate a case of West Nile fever.

## West Nile Virus

- West Nile virus can cause a fatal **neurological disease in humans**.
- However, approximately 80% of people who are infected **do not show any symptoms**.
- West Nile virus is mainly transmitted to people through the bites of **infected mosquitoes**.
- The virus can cause **severe disease and death in horses**.
- Vaccines are available for use in horses but not yet available for people.
- It does not have specific treatment either.
- **Birds are the natural hosts of West Nile virus**. It spreads to human by **Culex mosquitoes**. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.
- WNV was first isolated from a patient from the **West Nile district of Northern Uganda in 1937**.

## Cases in India

- WNV is **very uncommon in India**. However, WNV infections have been reported from Vellore and Kolar districts during 1977, 1978 and 1981.
- During an outbreak of **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** in Kerala, in May 2011, the presence of WNV was confirmed in clinical specimens.