

Prelim Bits 24-10-2019

Snow Leopard Population Assessment

- Union Environment Ministry launched the First National Protocol on Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India.
- It was launched in the Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Program on International Snow Leopard Day.
- It is the first of its kind, developed in association with the Snow Leopard States/UTs - Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Snow Leopard is found in 12 countries - India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- It is listed as a 'vulnerable' category in the Red List of IUCN.

GSLEP

- It is the world's first initiative that aims to conserve high mountain ecosystems by protecting snow leopard in the region.
- It unites all 12 range country governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations, local communities, private sector.
- Arunachal Pradesh is one of the 22 priority landscapes of the GSLEP.
- In 2004, WWF-India introduced the concept of Community Conserved Area (CCA) in the State to empower local communities to become active decision-makers and implement conservation initiatives.
- This year, the GSLEP Program is being organised by the Union Environment Ministry at New Delhi.
- The Steering Committee meeting of GSLEP chaired by Nepal and Co-Chaired by Kyrgyzstan.

Global Ease of Doing Business

- World Bank has released Ease of Doing Business ranking for the year 2019.
- India ranks at 63rd among 190 countries, moved 14 places from the previous year (77th rank in 2018).
- The report assess improvement in ease of doing business environment in Delhi and Mumbai.
- In the last 5 years, India's ranking has improved 79 places - to 63 in 2019

from 142 in 2014.

- Status in individual parameter ranking –
- 1. Biggest jump in “resolving insolvency” category (to 52nd rank from 108th)
- 2. Improved substantially in Dealing with Construction Permits (to 27th from 52nd) and “Trading across Borders” (to 68th from 80th).
- 3. Improved in “Registering Property” to 154th rank from 166th despite a drop-in score
- 4. Deteriorated in “protecting minority investors” (from 7th to 13th position) and “getting electricity” (from 22nd to 25th).
- 5. Ranking remained unchanged in “enforcing contracts” at 163rd

NAM Summit

- The 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is going to be held at **Baku, Azerbaijan**.
- The theme is “Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world”.
- NAM was established in 1961 with 29 members. India is one of the founding members.
- It has since grown to 120 members to become one of the largest groupings of nation-states.
- It was envisioned as a platform for those who didn’t want to be dictated by the then two superpowers - USSR and USA.
- It held its first ministerial in Belgrade (erstwhile Yugoslavia) in 1961 and complete independence of members in their foreign policy was ingrained.
- **NAM 2.0** - There were calls for rejigging the non-alignment concept in 2012 to suit the emerging current realities of an emerging and assertive China.
- The Vice-President of India will lead the Indian delegations to the 18th summit.

Eastern Zonal Council

- The 11th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eastern Zonal Council was held at Patna.
- The five Zonal Councils (Northern, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Central Zonal Councils) were set up under the State’s Reorganization Act, 1956.
- The present composition of zonal councils is,
 - i. The Northern Zonal Council - Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Chandigarh;
 - ii. Central Zonal Council- Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and

Madhya Pradesh;

- iii. Eastern Zonal Council- Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal;
 - iv. Western Zonal Council - Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and UT of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli;
 - v. Southern Zonal Council - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the UT of Puducherry.
- The 7 North Eastern States and Sikkim are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.
 - Union Home Minister is the Chairman of these councils.
 - The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
 - Members- Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
 - It is to foster Inter-State co-operation and co-ordination among the States.
 - The Zonal Councils are mandated to discuss and make recommendations on any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning, border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport etc.

Source: PIB, The Economic Times