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 rejiging 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

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