UPSC Daily Current affairs | Prelim Bits 02-01-2020

State of India's forest Report 2019

- The biennial State of India's forest Report 2019 is published by Forest Survey of India (FSI), a premier institution under the Ministry of Environment and forest.
- According to the recent report, compared to the last assessment of 2017,

1. The total tree and forest cover in the country increased by 5,188 Sqkm with sharpest declines in the northeastern states
2. There is an increase of 46 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country

- The total forest cover (TFC) in 2019 is 21.67% of the total geographical area (TGA) of the country as against 21.54% in 2017.
- Tree and forest cover together made up 24.39% of the geographical area.
- In terms of canopy density classes, area covered by Very Dense Forests (VDF) is 3.02%, Moderately Dense Forest is 9.39% and Open Forest is 9.26%.
- The category of VDF is defined as a canopy cover over 70 per cent has increased by a mere 1.14% between 2017 and 2019.
- The forest cover within the Recorded Forest Area or officially classified as 'forest' by States/Centre showed a decrease, but 'forest' outside such recorded area increased by 4,306 sqkm.
- Maharashtra had the largest extent of such tree outside forest.
- The top three States showing an increase in forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.
- Area-wise Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
- In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are Mizoram (85.41%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%), Meghalaya (76.33%), Manipur (75.46%) and Nagaland (75.31%).
- The mangrove cover increased by 54 sqkm, or about 1%, from the last assessment, with Gujarat and Maharashtra registering the largest improvements.

Forest Survey of India

- Forest Survey of India (FSI) is an organisation under the Ministry of

Environment & Forests.

- Its principal mandate is to conduct survey and assessment of forest resources in the country.
- The Forest Survey of India organize the training programmes to state sponsored forest personnel.
- FSI releases State of Forest Report biennially based on satellite imageries.
- According to the State of Forest Report, the definition of forest cover includes all lands more than 1 hectare in area with a tree canopy of more than 10 per cent, irrespective of land use, ownership, and legal status

Tree cover and Forest Cover

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change defines 'forest cover' in India as "all lands, more than one hectare in area with a tree canopy density of more than 10%"
- Similarly 'tree cover' is defined as "tree patches outside recorded forest areas exclusive of forest cover and less than the minimum mappable area of 1 hectare".
- There is a third measure known as Tree outside forest (TOF).
- The 'India State of Forest Report 2017' defines TOF as "trees existing outside the recorded forest area in the form of block, linear & scattered size of patches".
- Since tree cover measures only non-forest patches that are less than 1 hectare, it is only a part of TOF.

e-BCAS Project

- It is a training module project launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- It facilitates external stakeholders to access Biometric enabled Centralised Access Control System (CACS) for training in digital platforms.
- All 29 Aviation Security Training Institutes have been registered as User Entities for this project.
- It envisaged to achieve a "paperless office" under e-Governance initiative.

Standing Committee on Economic Statistics

- The statistics ministry has constituted a 28 member Standing Committee on Statistics (SCES) chaired by former Chief Statistician Pronab Sen.
- It is to improve quality of data amid criticism of the government over political interference.
- The first meeting of the SCES is scheduled on January 6, 2020.
- The committee is set up in the backdrop of controversy over revision of GDP numbers and withholding employment data by the National Sample Survey

Organisation (NSSO).

- Earlier, Ministry of Statistics had decided not to release the Consumer Expenditure Survey results of 2017-18 citing data quality issues.

eBkray

- It is a platform launched by the Ministry of Finance.
- It enables online auction of assets attached by various state-run banks.
- It provides navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites, property search feature and presents single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction.
- It also provides facility for comparison of similar properties.
- It seeks to bring in transparency in the sale of properties.

University for Transgender Community

- The country's first university for transgender community will be opened in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district.
- It is being built by All-India transgender education service trust.
- It facilitate its members to study right from class one to PG and even do research and get PhD degree.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, Economic Times