



# INNOVATIVE IAS

## Daily News Analysis

10th January 2020

### General studies-2

#### U.P. tops list in crimes against women

##### Why in News?

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) published the annual Crime in India Report 2018. The NCRB also released the Accidental Death and Suicides in India 2018 report.

##### Key points:

- It was published with provisional data, as five States — West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim — did not send clarifications sought by the NCRB despite repeated reminders.
- The 2017 annual crime report was published in October 2019, after a delay of two years.

##### Findings of the annual Crime in India Report 2018:

- According to the report, 3,78,277 cases of crime against women were reported in the country, up from 3,59,849 in 2017.
- Uttar Pradesh topped the list, followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal.
- The conviction rate in rape-related cases stood at 27.2% even though the rate of filing chargesheets was 85.3% in such cases.
- Cruelty by husband or his relatives (31.9%) followed by assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (27.6%) constituted the major share of crimes against women.
- Cognisable crimes showed an increase of 1.3% in the registration of cases compared to 2017.
- As many as 27,248 cases of cybercrimes were registered in 2018, up from 21,796 cases in 2017.
- Rioting accounted for 75.2% of the offences against public tranquillity.

##### Findings of the Accidental Death and Suicides in India 2018 report:

- Suicides by people working in the farm sector accounted for 7.7 % of the total number of suicides in the country in 2018.
- The highest number of suicide victims were daily wagers comprising 22.4% of such deaths.
- The majority of the suicides was reported in Maharashtra followed by Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.
- Many States and Union Territories have reported nil data on suicides by farmers, cultivators and farm labourers.

#### Nirbhaya Case: Two convicts file curative pleas

##### Why in news?

- Curative petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court by two convicts in the Nirbhaya case.

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### Curative Petition:

- Curative Petition is the last judicial resort available for redressal of grievances in court which is normally decided by judges in-chamber. It is only in rare cases that such petitions are given an open-court hearing.
- The concept of the curative petition was evolved by the Supreme Court of India in the matter of Rupa Ashok Hurra vs. Ashok Hurra and Anr. (2002) where the question was whether an aggrieved person is entitled to any relief against the final judgement/order of the Supreme Court, after the dismissal of a review petition.
- The Supreme Court, in the case, held that in order to prevent abuse of its process and to cure gross miscarriage of justice, it may reconsider its judgements in the exercise of its inherent powers.
- For this purpose, the Court has devised what has been termed as a “curative” petition.
- Certain specific conditions are laid down by the Supreme Court to entertain the curative petitions.

### They are:

- The petitioner will have to establish that there was a genuine violation of principles of natural justice and fear of the bias of the judge and that the judgement adversely affected him.
- The petition shall state specifically that the grounds mentioned had been taken in the review petition and that it was dismissed by circulation.
- The petition is to be sent to the three senior-most judges and judges of the bench who passed the judgement affecting the petition, if available.
- If the majority of the judges on the above bench agree that the matter needs hearing, then it would be sent to the same bench (as far as possible).
- The court could impose “exemplary costs” to the petitioner if his plea lacks merit.
- Article- 137: Review of judgments or orders by the Supreme Court subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament or any rules made under Article 145, the Supreme Court shall have power to review any judgment pronounced or order made by it.

### Eurasia Group places India as 5th highest geopolitical risk in 2020 list

#### Why in news?

- The Eurasia Group has placed India as the 5th highest 'geopolitical risk' in the 2020 list, in its report titled “Top Risks 2020”.

### Key points:

- India has been ranked the 5th highest “Geopolitical Risk” in 2020, according to a list of 10 global risks in the year ahead, compiled by the Eurasia Group, a leading global political risk management consultancy.
- It said that in its second term, the present government's “social” policies were affecting India's economic agenda and foreign policy image.

- “Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spent much of his second term promoting controversial social policies at the expense of an economic agenda. The impacts will be felt in 2020, with intensified communal and sectarian instability, as well as foreign policy and economic setbacks,” said the report.
- The report pointed to the widening fiscal deficit, low GST collections, and the latest six-year low in GDP growth.
- According to the report, amongst the risks for India in 2020 are “sectarian conflict”, anti-CAA protests, and possible violence in Kashmir, which it describes as a “powder keg” after the dilution of Article 370
- Amongst the other risks listed for 2020 are U.S. governance and institutional conflicts with President Donald Trump, the U.S.-China trade rift, European geopolitics, climate change, and Turkey.

### General studies-3

#### Forest Committee approves scheme to 'trade' in forests

##### **Why in News?**

- The Forest Advisory Committee has approved a scheme that could allow “forests” to be traded as a commodity.

##### **Forest Advisory Committee (FAC):**

- The Forest Advisory Committee is a key statutory body which considers questions on the diversion of forest land for non-forest uses such as mining, industrial projects, townships and advises the government on the issue of granting forest clearances.
- It is an apex body tasked with adjudicating requests by the industry to raze forest land for commercial ends.

##### **What is the system followed at present?**

- In the current system, the industry needs to make good the loss of forest by finding appropriate non-forest land — equal to that which would be razed.
- It also must pay the State Forest Department the current economic equivalent — called Net Present Value — of the forest land.
- It's then the Forest Department's responsibility to grow appropriate vegetation that, over time, would grow into forests.

##### **Key points:**

- Industries have often complained that they find it hard to acquire appropriate non-forest land, which has to be contiguous to an existing forest.
- Nearly 50,000 crores had been collected by the Centre over decades, but the funds were lying unspent because States were not spending the money on regrowing forests.
- The Supreme Court intervened; a new law came about with rules for how this fund was to be





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administered. About 47,000 crores had been disbursed to States until August 2019, but it has barely led to any rejuvenation of forests.

- In 2015, a 'Green Credit Scheme' for degraded forest land with public-private participation was recommended, but it was not approved by the Union Environment Minister, the final authority.

### Green Credit Scheme:

- The proposed 'Green Credit Scheme', allows agencies — they could be private companies, village forest communities — to identify land and begin growing plantations. After three years, they would be eligible to be considered as compensatory forest land if they meet the Forest Department's criteria. An industry needing forest land could then approach the agency and pay it for parcels of such forested land, and this would then be transferred to the Forest Department and be recorded as forest land.
- The participating agency will be free to trade its asset, that is plantation, in parcels, with project proponents who need forest land.

### Benefits of the scheme:

- One of India's prongs to combat climate change is the Green India Mission that aims to sequester 2.523 billion tonnes of carbon by 2020-30, and this involves adding 30 million hectares in addition to existing forest.
- If implemented, the new scheme allows the Forest Department to outsource one of its responsibilities of reforestation to non-government agencies.
- The FAC believes that such a scheme will encourage plantation by individuals outside the traditional forest area and will help in meeting international commitments such as sustainable development goals and nationally determined contributions.

### Arguments against the scheme:

- A few experts opine that it does not solve the core problems of compensatory afforestation.
- It is believed that it would create problems of privatising multi-use forest areas as monoculture plantation plots.
- It is also argued that forests would be treated as a mere commodity without any social or ecological character.

### A continent on fire: on Australia wildfires

- Fire is no stranger to Australia but the fires now burning across the nation have been described as unprecedented with over 10 million hectares of land damaged, killing at least 25 people and tens of millions of animals, besides forcing the evacuation of communities.
- Bushfires are actually a part of Australia's ecosystem. Many plants depend on them to cycle nutrients and clear vegetation. In fact, eucalyptus trees in Australia depend on fire to release their seeds. But all this usually happens during a few weeks in late January-February, when



the country is at its driest. The prolonged blaze in 2020 has coincided with Australia's harshest summer.

- Much of Australia is facing a drought that is a result of three consecutive summers with very little precipitation. This, according to climate scientists, is unprecedented.
- Australian Bureau of Meteorology's 2018 State of the Climate report notes, "Australia's climate has warmed by just over 1 degree Celsius since 1910, leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events." This has led to more rainfall in northern Australia, but created drought-like conditions in the more densely populated southeast.

### Political decisions of the Government criticized

- The Government has sought to downplay the impact of changing climate.
- It ignored calls from fire experts to prepare in advance to reduce the damages due to fire.
- Australia is a major producer of fossil fuels, and among the world's top exporters of coal and liquefied natural gas.
- The Prime Minister has further pledged to maintain Australia's position as a world-leading coal exporter.
- It continues to support aggressive development without giving importance to the environment and sustainable development.
- The government has prioritized the needs of business over action to cut carbon emissions.

### Concerns

- Australia's encounters with devastating fires could become more frequent, perhaps even once in eight years, making large parts of the continent uninhabitable.
- Australia is home to nearly 250 animal species, some of them like the koalas and kangaroos are not found elsewhere. But the region also has the highest rate of native animals going extinct over the past 200 years. The fires will aggravate this situation.
- The fires have also caused a drop in the bird, rodent and insect populations. These creatures are the building blocks of the ecosystem and the fall in their population is bound to have long-term impacts.

### Conclusion

- The situation is bound to worsen without policy change, as temperatures are predicted to soar to 50°C.
- Over the past half-century, the number of hot days and very hot days each year have steadily increased. It would be tragic if this scientific insight is ignored.
- Long-term prosperity for Australians and a future for its charismatic animals can be secured only through policies that foster environmental protection

### Miyawaki method of afforestation

- Kerala has decided to use the Japanese Miyawaki method of afforestation.



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- Earlier, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana and some other states adopted this method.
- The replication of the model across Kerala, which has suffered floods, landslides and soil erosion, assumes significance with the Rebuild Kerala initiative on.

### Key Points:

- The Miyawaki method has revolutionised the concept of urban afforestation by turning backyards into mini-forests.
- Regardless of soil and climatic conditions it has helped create more than 3,000 forests all over the world.
- It creates a dense forest in just 20 to 30 years, while through conventional methods it takes anywhere between 200 to 300 years.
- Forests grow 10 times faster and 30 times denser.
- The saplings become self-sustainable after the first three years.

### Miyawaki Process

- The native trees of the region are identified and divided into four layers — shrub, sub-tree, tree, and canopy.
- The quality of soil is analysed and biomass which would help enhance the perforation capacity, water retention capacity, and nutrients in it, is mixed with it.
- A mound is built with the soil and the seeds are planted at a very high density. The ground is covered with a thick layer of mulch.
- Multi-layered saplings are planted close to each other. This blocks sunlight from reaching the ground and prevents weeds from growing, thus keeping the soil moist. The close cropping further ensures that the plants receive sunlight only from the top thus enabling them to grow upwards rather than sideways.
- This is one of the reasons why the saplings grow tall in a short span of time.

### Tiger reserve

- Activists and politicians from Goa have demanded that certain areas in wildlife sanctuaries of the state be notified as a tiger reserve.
- In 2017, the State government had proposed about 500 sq km area of Mahadayi, Netravali and Cotigao sanctuaries with some part of BhagwanMahaveer wildlife sanctuary to be marked as a tiger reserve.
- Recent deaths of four tigers in Mahadayi wildlife sanctuary has brought the demand again in the scenario.

### Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary

- Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Goa bounded by Cotigao wildlife sanctuary on the eastern side and BhagwanMahaveer wildlife sanctuary on the northern side.
- It is located in the Kali river basin forest area.



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- It is predominantly moist deciduous forests with patches of semi-evergreen forest in the valleys.
- This region supports a rich diversity of flora and fauna and notable among them are Leopard, Giant Squirrel, Mouse Deer, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon and Ceylon Frogmouth.

### **Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary**

- Cotigao Sanctuary is situated in Canacona Taluka, of Goa.
- It was established in 1968-69 to protect a remote and vulnerable area of forest lining the Goa- Karnataka border.
- The vegetation is mostly moist-deciduous type, interspersed with semi-evergreen and evergreen patches.

### **BhagwanMahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary**

- BhagwanMahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Mollem town of Goa.
- It is one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries of Goa and contains within it the Mollem National Park.
- It was formed to protect the vast biodiversity of the Western Ghat.
- Originally known as the Mollem Game Sanctuary, it was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1969 and thence renamed the BhagwanMahavir Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The sanctuary is heavily forested and contains tropical evergreen forests, semi-evergreen forests and moist deciduous forests.

### **Migratory birds**

- Recently, a record number of migratory birds have arrived at the Nalabana bird sanctuary in Odisha.
- The dismantling of illegal prawn gherries inside the lake is being cited as the main reason behind the avian gathering. Gherries are areas encroached for illegal prawn cultivation inside the wetland area.

### **Key Points:**

- The Nalabana bird sanctuary is located on Nalabana Island in the Chilika lagoon area in Odisha.
- The Nalabana Bird Sanctuary is the core area of Chilika.
- The large Nalabana Island (Forest of Reeds) covering about 16 sq km was declared a bird sanctuary in 1987.
- The island disappears during the monsoon due to inundation, only to emerge again post-monsoon.
- Nalabana and Mangalajodi (on the banks of Chilikalake) are the two major places in Chilika where the birds congregate.





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- Migratory birds usually start arriving at Chilika in November as it is a comparatively hospitable alternate habitat compared to the extreme freezing conditions in their natural habitats in Siberia, China, Japan and other countries in the northern hemisphere.
- Few important migratory birds seen here are: Bar-headed geese, greater flamingos, herons, black-tailed godwits and rare Great Knot. The Great Knot was seen after five years.
- Chilika Lake is Asia's largest and world's second-largest lagoon after the New Caledonian barrier reef in New Caledonia.



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