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Daily News Analysis

11th January 2020

General studies: 3

Waterbird census in A.P.

Why in news?

- The Annual Bird Census will commence in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) and surrounding wetlands in the Godavari mangrove cover on the east coast of India.
- Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary is Located in Andhra Pradesh.
- It is part of the Godavari estuary.

Key points:

- It will be a two-day census of the avian species which will assess the threats and challenges being faced by the water birds.
- The census aims at documentation of migratory and resident birds to be able to prepare a better management plan of the complex ecosystem that supports the waterbird species.
- It will give a picture of its present state and results of the conservation being done in the wildlife sanctuary and outside.

Indian Skimmer

- It is a waterbird.
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable.
- It has started visiting the Godavari mangroves. It can also be sighted at Chambal River in Central India.

Steel mesh to replace fences on the borders

Why in news?

- India shares 4,096.7 km border with Bangladesh and 3,323 km border with Pakistan. The border currently has barbed wires which will be replaced with meshed fence made of steel and coated with anti-rust paint.
- This will be a complete overhaul of the security system.

Key points:

- The Border Security Force (BSF) that is deployed along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders has been tasked to ensure that the fence is installed in a time-bound manner.
- The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) is implementing the project.
- Measures also include strengthening Indian defences along Pakistan, mapping of infiltration prone areas along the two borders.
- BSF is pushing the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to get the latest technology to disable drones in the region.
- Surveillance drone flights are very frequent. But load-carrying drones are a grave threat. In



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fact, that's the future of warfare.

- The assassination of Iranian Major General Qasim Suleimani in Iraq by a US drone strike is an instance.
- They have requested for a drone disabling technology that can cut radio frequency and disable
- Global Positioning System (GPS) — the two key technologies guiding most of the drones.

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

Why in News?

- Union Home Minister inaugurated the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

The I4C is a multipronged system, which includes

- National Cyber Crime Threat Analytics Unit,
- National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal,
- National Cyber Crime Training Centre,
- Cyber Crime Ecosystem Management Unit,
- National Cyber Crime Research and Innovation Centre,
- National Cyber Crime Forensic Laboratory Ecosystem and
- Platform for Joint Cyber Crime Investigation

The portal enables citizens to report online content with specific focus on crimes against women, children, particularly child pornography, child sex abuse material, online content pertaining to rapes/gang rapes.

Significance

- The portal can boost the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to investigate cases and will improve the success rate of prosecutions.
- The portal will improve coordination among the law enforcement agencies of different states, districts and police stations for dealing with cyber-crimes in a coordinated and effective manner.

National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal

- It is a citizen-centric initiative which will enable citizens to report cybercrimes online and all the complaints will be accessed by the concerned law enforcement agencies for taking action as per law.
- The portal specifically focuses on crimes against women, children, particularly child pornography, child sex abuse material, online content pertaining to rapes/gang rapes, etc.
- It also focuses on crimes like financial crime and social media related crimes like stalking, cyberbullying, etc.
- The portal was launched on a pilot basis on 30th August 2019.
- It will improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate the cases after



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successful completion by improving coordination amongst the law enforcement agencies of different States, districts and police stations.

Making a holistic approach to dengue

Why in news?

- The advent of a new vaccine against the dengue virus.

Key points:

- Dengue is essentially a tropical disease that occurs in the countries around the Equator.
- Hot weather and high humidity aided by intermittent rainfalls favour the sustenance of *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* (a minor contributor)- the vectors transmitting the dengue virus.
- Dengue is mostly an asymptomatic infection, and only a very few develop severe disease. Those very young or very old and those who have chronic ailment are at a greater risk of developing severe disease. The worldwide Dengue case fatality rate is as low as 0.3%.
- The advent of a new tetravalent vaccine against the dengue virus has thrown new light into the evidence-based management of dengue.
- The studies and trials have indicated that this vaccine confers about 80% protection to children vaccinated between 4 and 16 years of age without any major side effects.

Challenges associated with Dengue:

- Urbanisation, poor town planning, and improper sanitation are the major risk factors for the multiplication of the vector mosquitoes. The rapid and unplanned urbanization in India has only amplified the challenges for the public health system
- *Aedes* eggs can remain dormant for more than a year and will hatch once they come in contact with water.

Shortage of skilled manpower:

- Source reduction activities like preventing water stagnation and using chemical larvicides and adulticides are often recommended. These chemicals need to be applied in periodic cycles to kill the larvae that remain even after the first spray.
- However given the scale of operations required and the shortage of skilled workers available for such measures, the above options are rarely used.
- Many posts in government departments remain vacant despite there being a dire public health need. The National Vector Borne Disease Control Program notes that the deficiency of manpower has led to a lack of active surveillance in India which has severely impeded India's actions against Dengue.

Under-Reporting:

- Dengue cases are often under-reported due to political reasons, fearing political backlash by the voters in subsequent elections.



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- The state also considers under-reporting of cases to avoid spreading panic among the common people

Lack of Co-ordination:

- There is a lack of coordination between the local bodies and health departments in the delivery of public health measures. This has resulted in piecemeal efforts from the stakeholders thus depriving the community the benefit that would arise from synergy.
- The lack of proportionate targets and resources to the different levels of public health system has resulted in overburdening of the grass root levels.

Alternative medicine drugs:

- Despite the guidelines for the management of dengue cases by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Indian government, the usage of complementary medicines like Nilavembukudineer (a Siddha medicine) and papaya leaf extract are rampant among the people.
- For any medicine, safety is more important than efficacy. Every modern medicine drug has come out after rigorous safety and efficacy studies for around 10 years, with an informed declaration of the side effects. There has been a lack of such studies with respect to the above alternative drugs.
- The studies on which alternative drugs are being promoted are based on very primitive forms of research like case reports, in-vitro studies, and animal studies.
- A meta-analysis of various studies has shown that there is no credible evidence for the use of papaya extract in dengue fever. However, some pharmaceutical companies are still marketing papaya extract pills. There are case reports which point out to many side effects due to the usage of these medicines.

Way forward:

More comprehensive approach:

- A comprehensive mechanism is required in the efforts against Dengue. Apart from promoting the use of the vaccine, gaining control over dengue will require a more holistic approach. An integrated approach against Dengue should also include within its ambit vector control and proper case management.

Vector control:

- Aedes mosquitoes have a limited range as it cannot fly beyond a hundred meters. Keeping the surroundings clean and hygienic can help prevent the breeding of the vector mosquitoes.
- Considering that the vector mosquitoes bite during the daytime, keeping the windows shut in the day hours is a simple yet effective measure to reduce dengue incidence.

Epidemiological Measures:

- Epidemiological measures are essential in the management of communicable diseases like

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Dengue.

- Epidemiology is the study and analysis of the distribution, patterns and determinants of health and disease conditions in defined populations. It is a cornerstone of public health and shapes policy decisions and evidence-based practice by identifying risk factors for disease and targets for preventive healthcare.
- Singapore uses one successful model of mapping and analysing data on dengue, using Geographical Information System (GIS). This involves mapping the streets with dengue cases for vector densities. It helps the state to focus attention on such areas for more effective interventions.

Proper Case Management:

- Fluid management is the cornerstone in the management of severe diseases like dengue hemorrhagic fever and dengue shock syndrome. There is a need to adhere to the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), given that, it is based on elaborate studies and trials.

Need for studies on alternative medicines:

- Alternative medicines need to undergo rigorous testing before its wide-scale usage

General studies-2

Ruling on Suspension of Internet

Why in news?

- The Supreme Court has recently given its ruling on the Kashmir lockdown and communications shutdown cases.
- The cases were also related to the impact of the prohibitory orders issued under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) on press freedom.
- Internet access was snapped after Jammu and Kashmir's special status was revoked and the state bifurcated into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Key Points:

Ruling on Suspension of Internet

- Suspending Internet services indefinitely is impermissible under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services [Public Emergency or Public Service] Rules, 2017.
- The court held that suspension could be done for temporary duration only and the same is subject to judicial review.
- A "complete and broad" suspension of telecom and Internet services should be resorted to only as a drastic measure in an "unavoidable" situation.
- The Court has thus asked the government to review within seven days all orders directing suspension of internet services.



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Upheld Fundamental Rights

- The freedom of free speech and expression on the Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The State cannot cite the extensive reach and impact of the Internet as a medium in order to restrict this right.
- Trade, occupation or commerce dependent on the Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(g).
- Restriction upon such fundamental rights should be in consonance with the mandate under Article 19 (2) and (6) of the Constitution, inclusive of the test of proportionality.

Ruling on Section 144:

- The Court held that the repetitive orders under Section 144 CrPC as an abuse of power.
- The Court said that power under the Section 144 is exercisable not only where there exists present danger, but also when there is an apprehension of danger. However, the danger contemplated should be in the nature of an 'emergency' and for the purpose of preventing obstruction and annoyance or injury to any person lawfully employed”.
- The government cannot recourse to blanket use of the power under Section 144 CrPC (for issuing restrictions) as a tool to prevent the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any fundamental rights. There is a need to find a balance regarding security and liberty of people.
- The Court has thus asked the authorities to review forthwith the need for continuance of any such order.

State Energy Efficiency Index 2019'

Why in news?

- The government has released the 'State Energy Efficiency Index 2019'. The Index tracks the progress of Energy Efficiency (EE) initiatives in states and union territories based on 97 significant indicators.

Key points:

- Assessment is based on their efforts and achievements in policy and regulation, financing mechanisms, institutional capacity, adoption of energy efficiency measures and energy savings achieved.
- The index incorporates qualitative, quantitative and outcome-based indicators to assess energy efficiency initiatives, programs and outcomes in five distinct sectors – buildings, industry, municipalities, transport, agriculture, and DISCOMs.

About Index

- The first “State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index 2018” was launched on August 1, 2018.
- The index is developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in association with Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE).



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- The 2019 index has included new indicators like the adoption of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017, energy efficiency in MSME clusters, etc.
- Data collection: The required data were collected from the concerned state departments such as DISCOMs, Urban Development departments and other departments with the help of State Designated Agencies (SDAs).

Key Points:

- Comparison: For rational comparison, States/UTs are grouped into four groups based on aggregated Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) required to meet the state's actual energy demand (electricity, coal, oil, gas, etc.) across sectors.
- The index categorises states as 'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant' based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation.
- The top-performing states for 2019 are Haryana, Kerala and Karnataka, are in the 'Achiever' category.
- Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand and Rajasthan performed the worst in the Aspirant groups.
- Since there isn't state in the 'Front runner' category, it can be inferred that a lot more can be done at the state level to realise energy savings from energy efficiency.
- TPES grouping helps states compare their performance and share best practices within their peer group.
- The index will help states contribute towards national goals on energy security and climate action by helping drive EE policies and program implementation at the state and local level.
- It will track progress in managing the states' and India's energy footprint and institutionalising the data capture and monitoring of EE activities by states.

India's energy policy

Why in news?

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released the first in-depth review of India's energy policies.
- The report highlights the achievements of India's energy policies and provides recommendations to support the government's goals of promoting well-functioning energy markets and boosting deployment of renewables.
- IEA regularly conducts in-depth reviews of energy policies for its member and association countries. This is the first review carried out for India, which has been an IEA-association country since March 2017.



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Key Findings

- **Policies Appreciated**
Government's achievements in extending citizens' access to electricity, affordable efficient lighting and clean cooking through historic schemes like SAUBHAGYA, UJALa and UJJWALA.
- **Energy efficiency improvements in India avoided 15% of additional energy demand, oil and gas imports, and air pollution as well as 300 million tonnes of CO2 emissions between 2000 and 2018.**
- **Government policies designed to conduct large-scale renewable energy auctions, open up coal mining to private companies, and promote access to oil and gas markets for foreign investors.**
- **Status of Renewables:** There is a strong growth of renewables in India, which now accounts for almost 23% of the country's total installed capacity.

India's Demand for Energy

- The country's demand for energy is set to double by 2040, and its electricity demand may triple.
- Indian oil consumption is expected to grow faster than that of any other major economy (including China). This makes further improving energy security a key priority for India's economy.
- India's oil demand is expected to reach 6 million barrels per day (bpd) by 2024 from 4.4 million bpd in 2017, but its domestic production is expected to rise only marginally, making the country more reliant on crude imports and more vulnerable to supply disruption in the Middle East.
- India's oil refining capacity is expected to rise to 5.7 million bpd by 2024, making it a very attractive market for refinery investment.

Recommendations

- NITI Aayog can play a strong role in working with the states to implement power sector reforms, advance grid integration, improve flexibility and coordinate energy policy decisions.
- In renewables-rich states, the share of variable renewables in electricity generation is already above 15%, a level that calls for dedicated policies to ensure they integrate smoothly into the power system.
- The review encourages India to institutionalise energy policy coordination across government with a national energy policy framework.
- India should also to expand its Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR).