



275 bird species counted during survey at Corbett Tiger Reserve

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LUCKNOW

About 275 bird species, including two critically endangered, four vulnerable ones and two endangered species, were counted during a survey at Corbett Tiger Reserve.

The survey, conducted between June 20 and 23 by a 62-member team consisting of ornithologists, conservationists, volunteers from World Wide Fund (WWF) India, Tiger Conservation Foundation and Village Volunteer Protection Force, covering over-all 540 km of 135 forest trails provided insights into the diverse bird species inhabiting at Corbett Tiger Reserve.

As per the report, two species, namely white-rumped vulture and red-headed vulture, consi-



The great hornbill. FILE PHOTO

dered critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) list, have been documented in the survey, which covered the vast range of landscape in the reserve, including grassland, dense forest, rivers and hilly terrains. Two endangered species – Pallas's fish-eagle, Egyptian vulture were also counted by the researchers

in the survey. Four vulnerable bird species – great hornbill, great slaty woodpecker, grey-crowned prinia and river tern – have also been counted in the survey.

Near-threatened species
About 10 near-threatened bird species – river lapwing, red-breasted parakeet, oriental darter, lesser fish-eagle, Himalayan griffon, great thick-knee, gray-headed fish-eagle, black-necked stork, Asian woolly-necked stork and Alexandrine parakeet – have also been found at the reserve.

About 256 species documented in the survey are considered to be of least concern by the IUCN.

The report was compiled by Oriental Trials, an NGO working for conservation of wildlife.

Importance of news from exam point of view

Mains

- Geography of GS Paper 1
- Biodiversity, environment and ecology of GS Paper 3

Prelims

Geography, Environment and ecology portion of General Studies.

Key points from article

- In a recent survey conducted in Jim Corbett National Park, about 275 bird species, including two critically endangered, four vulnerable ones and two endangered species were counted during survey.
- Critically endangered birds are- White humped vulture and red headed vultures.
- Two endangered species are- Pallas's fish eagle and Egyptian vulture.
- Four vulnerable species are- Great hornbill, great slaty woodpecker, grey crowned prinia and River tern.
- 10 near-threatened species are- river lapwing, red breasted parakeet, oriental darter, lesser fish eagle, Himalayan griffon, great thick knee, gray headed necked stork and alexandrine parakeet.
- Other 256 species are documented as least concern by IUCN.

Basics to be covered along with the article

- About IUCN and its various categories of IUCN
- Red data book

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SC plans expansion of infra; e-Courts to offer national link

The CJI says 'overhaul' of the court infrastructure is necessary on a priority basis to make them more accessible and inclusive, adds that new projects will modernise judicial infrastructure

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Tuesday announced a plan to expand the Supreme Court with 27 additional courts and 51 judges' chambers. Currently, the Supreme Court has 17 courtrooms and two registrar courts. Its judicial strength is 32 now.

In his address at the 77th Independence Day celebrations on the Supreme Court lawns, Chief Justice Chandrachud said an "overhaul" of the court infrastructure was necessary on a priority basis to make courts more accessible and inclusive. He said the emphasis of the new project would be on modernising the judicial infrastructure.

"We plan to expand the Supreme Court by constructing a new building to accommodate 27 additional courts, 51 judges' chambers, four registrar court rooms, 16 registrar chambers, and other requisite facilities for lawyers and li-



Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud greeting a CRPF soldier at the Independence Day celebrations on the Supreme Court lawns. ANI

tigants. This expansion is proposed in two phases," he said. The Chief Justice's speech did not confine itself to just an announcement of the infrastructure projects.

He spoke on the important role judiciary played in ensuring that "institutions of governance function within the defined constitutional limits".

He also highlighted that courts provide a "safe democratic space for individuals to seek protection of

their rights and liberties".

Access to justice

"The Supreme Court particularly has been the vanguard of institutional governance by enhancing access to justice and promoting constitutional values. The past 76 years suggest that the history of the Indian judiciary is the history of the daily life struggles of the Indian people. If our history teaches us anything, it is this — that no matter is big or small for

the courts," he said.

He said by examining and delivering judgments on disputes and grievances, the courts were merely performing their plain constitutional duty.

He highlighted the importance of technology as the "best tool" courts could wield against the inefficiency and opacity in judicial processes and to overcome the procedural barriers to justice.

"Phase 3 of the e-Courts project seeks to revolutionise the working of courts in India by inter-linking of all courts across the country, setting up the infrastructure of paperless court, digitisation of records, and setting up advanced e-sewa kendras in all complexes," he said. Technology is also being used by the top court to make its premises and services disabled-friendly. "The court had operationalised screen readable website and case files to remove the barriers faced by the blind community in accessing the services," he noted.

Importance of news from exam point of view

Mains

GS paper 2, separation of power, judiciary, governance, polity.

Prelims

GS paper 1. Indian Polity

Key points of article

- With announcing new additional courts and judges chambers the CJI Chandrachud pointed on the overhaul of the court infra.
- Supreme court ensuring important role of judiciary in ensuring that institution of governance function within the defined constitutional limit.
- SC being vanguard of institutional governance by enhancing access to justice and promoting constitutional values.
- Technology being best tool courts could wield against the inefficiency and opacity in judicial processes.
- Interlinking of all courts across the country under phase 3 of e-court project.
- Setting up of infra for paperless courts, digitisation of records, and setting up advanced e-sewa kendras in all complex.

Basics to be covered with article

- Indian judicial system .
- Pendency of cases in courts.
- Role of ICT in various aspect of governance.

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PM announces new housing scheme for urban poor; low interest rate loans on offer

The initiative will benefit families that live in unauthorised colonies, slums or rented houses in various cities, says Modi; he adds that weaker sections living in cities faced a plethora of problems

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

P rime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced a new scheme to help the urban poor build houses in cities. Under this programme, they will receive relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct their houses.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day, Mr. Modi said that weaker sections who lived in cities faced a plethora of problems.

Poor facilities

"Middle-class families are dreaming of buying their own houses. We are coming up with a new scheme in the coming years that will benefit those families that live in cities but are living in rented houses, or slums, or *chawls* and unauthorised colonies," he said.

The Prime Minister said that if this section wanted



Proud moment: Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Ministers Rajnath Singh, Piyush Goyal, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, and Anurag Thakur, and others at the Independence Day celebration. ANI

to build their own houses, the government would assist them with a relief in interest rates and loans from banks that would help them save lakhs of rupees.

Flagship mission

The government already has a scheme to address the housing shortage for the urban poor called the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U), which was launched in 2015.

The PMAY-U is a flagship mission of the government which is implemented by the Housing and Urban Af-

airs Ministry. The mission aims to address the urban housing shortage among the economically backward sections, including the slum dwellers by ensuring a *pucca* house to all eligible urban households by 2022.

The scheme period though now has been extended up to December 2024 to complete all the houses sanctioned without changing the funding pattern and implementation methodology.

A total of 75.51 lakh houses have been complet-

ed out of which 71.39 lakh have been occupied till now under the PMAY-U, the government had informed the Rajya Sabha.

Uttar Pradesh had the largest number of houses completed at 12,87,307. Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh were other high-performing States with 8,80,209 and 8,08,278 houses completed. The number for Tamil Nadu was 5,30,350.

The Centre has released a ₹1.48 lakh crore assistance to the States, the government said in the reply.

Importance of article from exam point of view

Mains

Governance part of GS Paper 2.

Prelims

Various government schemes for General studies paper 1

Key points from the article

- While addressing the nation on the occasion of 77th Independence Day PM laid down his vision for India.
- New scheme to help the urban poor build houses in cities by giving relief in interest rates and loans taken from bank to construct houses.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna Urban launched in 2015 is already addressing the issue.
- The scheme period now been extended upto December 2024 to complete all the houses sanctioned.
- In Rajya Sabha government had informed that out of 75.51 lakh houses 71.39 lakh house have been completed, with Uttar Pradesh having highest share in completed house followed by Gujrat and Andhra Pradesh.

Basics to be covered along with the article

Urban infrastructure, smart cities mission, PMAY-U

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Bindeshwar Pathak, who brought in public toilet revolution, dies at 80

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Bindeshwar Pathak, Sulabh International founder, Padma Bhushan recipient, and social worker, on Tuesday died of a cardiac arrest at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi, shortly after he was brought in to the hospital. He was 80.

Credited with bringing in the revolutionary Sulabh Complex public toilet system to India, which contributed significantly to reducing open-defecation and manual scavenging, Mr. Pathak was closely associated with his non-profit and "worked till the end", said his associates.

AIMS sources told *The Hindu* that Mr. Pathak was brought into the hospital at 1.15 p.m. on Tuesday, shortly after which he suffered a cardiac arrest and died at 1.42 p.m.

Mr. Pathak is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters and the death has come as a shock to family members and all those close to him, said



Social innovator: Bindeshwar Pathak's work helped bring toilet access to places in remote parts of the country. FILE PHOTO

Madan Jha, who worked with him at Sulabh International for nearly two decades now.

"He was singing and dancing till yesterday. Even today, he was at the Independence Day celebrations at Sulabh Complex in Delhi," Mr. Jha, 54, told *The Hindu*.

Condolences from PM
Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences in a post on X (formerly Twitter), saying, "The passing away of Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak Ji is a profound loss for our na-

tion. He was a visionary who worked extensively for societal progress and empowering the downtrodden. Bindeshwar Ji made it his mission to build a cleaner India.

"He provided monumental support to the Swachh Bharat Mission. During our various conversations, his passion towards Swachhata was always visible. His work will continue to inspire several people. My deepest condolences to his family and loved ones during this difficult time. Om Shanti."
President Droupadi

Murmu also expressed her grief at Mr. Pathak's passing, saying, "Shri Pathak had taken a revolutionary initiative in the field of cleanliness. He was honoured with many awards including Padma Bhushan. I express my condolences to his family and members of Sulabh International."

Born and educated in Bihar, Mr. Pathak had founded Sulabh International Social Services Organisation in 1970 to introduce a public toilet system in India that would go on to become a feature of hundreds of towns.

He was given the Padma Bhushan in 1991 for social work and he later became an ambassador for the government's Swachh Bharat Mission.

Over time, Sulabh International also contributed to the welfare of people engaged in manual scavenging and helped them come out of the occupation.

The organisation was given the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2016, jointly with the Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Relevancy of article from exam point of view

Mains

Role of NGO mentioned in GS Paper 2

Prelims

Current news, eminent personalities for GS Paper 1

Key points from the article

- Credited with bringing revolutionary Sulabh Complex public toilet to India, founder Bindeshwar Pathak Padma Bhushan recipient and social worker died on Tuesday, he was 80.
- Sulabh international contributed significantly to reducing open-defecation and manual scavenging.
- PM Modi highlighted his monumental support to the Swachh Bharat Mission, in his tweet expressing his condolence.
- Pathak founded Sulabh international in 1970 to introduce a public toilet system in India, he was given Padma Bhushan in 1991 for social work and he later became an ambassador for the government's swachh bharat mission.
- The organisation given the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2016.

Basics to be covered with article

Definition and role of NGOs, Manual scavenging, Padma awards

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