

Current Affairs

UPSC Prelims 2024

LECTURE-09

By Kinshuk Sir





Most Trusted Learning Platform



- ❖ **Topics**
- ❖ **Abortion Law amendment in France**
- ❖ **Persons With disabilities in India**
- ❖ **MethaneSAT**
- ❖ **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**
- ❖ **Places in News: Jim Corbett National Park**
- ❖ **Species in News: Leopard Population Count**

- **Abortion Law amendment in France:**
- **Context:** The French Parliament on March 4 overwhelmingly approved a bill to enshrine abortion as a constitutional right at a historic joint session at the Palace of Versailles. **With this, it has become the only country to explicitly guarantee a woman's right to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy.**
- **What about other countries?**
- **Abortion is currently accessible in more than 40 European nations, but some countries are seeing increased efforts to limit access to the procedure.**
- **In September last year, Hungary's far-right government made it obligatory for women to listen to the pulse of the fetus, sometimes called the "foetal heartbeat," before they can access a safe abortion.**

- **Poland**, which has some of the most stringent abortion laws in Europe, allows termination only in the event of rape, incest or a threat to the mother's health or life.
- Restrictions were further tightened in 2020 when the country's top court ruled that abortions on the grounds of foetal defects were unconstitutional.
- The United Kingdom permits abortion to 24 weeks of pregnancy, if it is approved by two doctors. Delayed abortions are allowed only if there exists a danger to the mother's life.
- However, women who undergo abortions after 24 weeks can be prosecuted under the **Offences Against the Person Act, 1861**

India

- Since the early 1990s, nearly 60 countries across the world have eased abortion laws to expand the grounds under which abortion is legal.
- Only four countries, namely the U.S., El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Poland have removed legal grounds for abortion during this time period.
- Most notably, the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated the constitutional right to abortion in 2022.

- **What about India?**
- **India's Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971 (Amended in 2021) allows abortion under certain circumstances, including:**
- **Up to 20 weeks: One registered medical practitioner's opinion is required**
- **20 to 24 weeks: Two registered medical practitioners' opinions are required**
- **Over 24 weeks: A state-level medical board's opinion is required**
- **Continue after 24 weeks: A board of doctors must attest that continued pregnancy presents a risk to the woman's life or if there are foetal abnormalities**

- **A few facts**
- **Over a quarter (27%) of all the abortions in India are performed by women themselves in their homes, according to National Family Health Survey (NFHS) – 5.**
- **Around 16% of women who had abortions reported complications, and 90% of these needed medical treatment.**

➤ **Persons With disabilities in India**

➤ **Context:**

➤ The Central Public Works Department (CPWD), the central government's flagship infrastructure construction and maintenance management agency, has asked its regional offices to ensure that "all [public] buildings [are] accessible to people with disabilities".

➤ Lifts must have both audio announcements and visual displays, and emergency evacuation routes for persons with disabilities (PwD) must be "appropriately" displayed, with signage in Braille.

- **India's disability law**
- **The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 gave effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**
- **The convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006, and entered into force in 2008. India ratified the convention in 2007.**
- **The 2016 Act repealed and replaced The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunity, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, and it commenced in April 2017.**
- **The rights of persons with disabilities Act, 2016 recognizes 21 types of disabilities including low vision, Leprosy cured persons, etc.**

21

- It mandated the central government to notify guidelines and standards for public buildings, and to review them "from time to time" based "on the latest scientific knowledge and technology"
- Section 45 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 mandates to make all public buildings (government buildings plus buildings run by the private sector used for public) accessible to persons with disabilities within 5 years of implementation of such rules.

- **About Disabled People in India:**
- **As per the figures of Census 2011, about 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' of which 56% are males and 44% are females.**
- **Only around 55% of PWDs are literate.**
- **Only 36% of the total PWDs are workers.**
- **The majority (69%) of the disabled population resided in rural areas.**
- **More than 50% of the children with multiple disabilities or with mental illness never attended educational institutions**

37.1.

- **Challenges**
- **Physical: Inaccessible physical environments, objects or structures that prevent mobility and access, or medical equipment that requires a person to stand up to use it**
- **Communication: Anything that affects reading, writing, hearing, speaking, and understanding, such as videos without captioning, no large print option, or technical language**
- **Information and communications technology: Lack of appropriate assistive technology, or access to assistive technology**
- **Legislation or policy: Negative attitudes towards disability**
- **Societal attitudes: Negative attitudes towards disability**

➤ Way Forward

A

Acknowledge and respect individual experiences and abilities.

L

Learn about different disability types.

L

Leverage your influence to promote accessibility and inclusion.

Y

Yield the floor to people with disabilities to help identify and eliminate barriers.



(12)
A
L
L
Y

➤ MethaneSAT

➤ MethaneSAT — a satellite which will track and measure methane emissions at a global scale — was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon9 rocket from California.

➤ All About MethaneSAT

➤ The entity behind MethaneSAT is the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) — a US-based nonprofit environmental advocacy group.

➤ To develop the satellite, EDF partnered with Harvard University, the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, and the New Zealand Space Agency.

➤ Essentially, MethaneSAT will orbit the Earth 15 times a day, monitoring the oil and gas sector.

➤ MethaneSAT

- It will create a large amount of data, which will tell “how much methane is coming from where, who’s responsible, and are those emissions going up or down over time”
- The data collected by MethaneSAT will be made public for free in near real-time. This will allow stakeholders and regulators to take action to reduce methane emissions.



➤ MethaneSAT

➤ All about Methane:

➤ Methane is an invisible but strong greenhouse gas, and the second largest contributor to global warming after carbon dioxide

➤ It is responsible for 30 per cent of global heating since the Industrial Revolution.

➤ According to the United Nations Environment Programme, over a period of 20 years, methane is 80 times more potent at warming than carbon dioxide.

➤ The gas also contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone — a colourless and highly irritating gas that forms just above the Earth's surface.

➤ According to a 2022 report, exposure to ground-level ozone could be contributing to one million premature deaths every year.

1972

10 - 15 - 30

(a) 1972

(b) 1992

(c) 1982

(d) 2022

➤ **MethaneSAT**

➤ **Global Methane Pledge**

➤ The Global Methane Pledge (GMP) was launched at COP26 by the European Union and the United States.

➤ Participants joining the Pledge agree to take voluntary actions to contribute to a collective effort to reduce global methane emissions at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030. This is a global, not a national reduction target.

➤ Nearly 155 countries have joined this Global Methane Pledge

➤ India, South Africa, China, Russia are not a party to this pledge

➤ The Climate and Clean Air Coalition provides secretariat services to the GMP.

155

➤ **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**

- **The IT hub is facing a serious water problem, mainly because of a severe drought. There hasn't been enough rain, which has caused the water levels in the Cauvery River to drop. This shortage doesn't just affect drinking water but also impacts irrigation. Additionally, borewells in Bengaluru are drying up because of the lack of rain in recent months**
- **Why the challenge?**
- **Only uncertain rains and changing climatic conditions cannot be blamed for the water crisis in Bengaluru, population explosion, unplanned urbanisation, unfriendly industrial and agricultural policies have also resulted in this problem.**

➤ **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**

➤ **Water Crisis in India**



➤ Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India

- The report titled "Composite Water Management Index", published by NITI Aayog in June 2018, mentions that India is undergoing the worst water crisis in its history and nearly 600 million people are facing high to extreme water stress.
- The report further mentions that India is placed at 120th amongst 122 countries in the water quality index, with nearly 70% of water being contaminated.
- In the 75 years since Independence, annual per capita availability of water has declined by 75% – from 6,042 cubic meters in 1947 to 1,486 cubic meters in 2021.

➤ **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**

- It projected the country's water demand to be twice the available supply by 2030, implying severe scarcity for hundreds of millions of people and an eventual loss in the country's GDP.
- It is projected that the per capital water availability will dip to around 1400 cum in 2025, and further down to 1250 cum by 2050.

➤ **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**

➤ **Causes:**

➤ **Urbanization and industrialization**: These have led to increased water demand, pollution, and poor water quality.

➤ In India, the **urban population** amounts to **461** million people. This number is growing **by 2.3** per cent each year.

➤ **Climate change**: This has caused erratic rainfall patterns and affected water sources.

➤ **Agricultural practices**: These are inefficient and have led to excessive groundwater extraction, which has depleted water sources.

➤ Of the farmers using irrigation in the country, **70-80** per cent are groundwater dependent

- **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**
- **Government policies:** These include lack of regulation, over-privatization, corruption, and waste from industrial and human activities.
- **Water distribution:** India has only 4% of the world's freshwater resources, and their uneven distribution puts stress on water for agriculture

➤ **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**

➤ **Recent Steps:**

- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) was started in 2019 as a movement for water conservation, recharge and rainwater harvesting in 256 water-stressed districts. The JSA now covers all 740 districts in the country. States.**
- **As on 31.07.2023, out of 19.43 Crore rural households in the country, around 12.69 Crore (65.33%) households are reported to have tap water supply in their homes and the remaining 6.74 Crore are to be covered.**
- **Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) scheme was launched during 2015-16**
- **It aims to increase water use efficiency at the farm level through Micro Irrigation technologies i.e. drip and sprinkler irrigation systems.**

- **Water Crisis in Bengaluru or India**
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY)** has been launched as a central sector scheme worth **Rs.6,000 crore** for **sustainable management of groundwater** with **community participation** in some selected states
- In 2021, **"Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain"** (JSA:CTR) was initiated with the theme **"Catch the Rain - Where it Falls When it Falls"** to cover all the blocks of all districts (rural as well as urban areas) across the country.

➤ **Places in News: Jim Corbett National Park**

➤ **Context:**

- **The SC appointed a committee consisting of a representative each from the National Tiger Conservation Authority; the Wildlife Institute of India; the CEC; and an officer of the Environment ministry not below the rank of Joint Secretary as its Member Secretary.**
- **This committee is tasked with assessing the environmental damage to the Corbett Tiger Reserve; identify “delinquent officers” from whom the costs for restoration can be recovered, and recommend measures for restoration.**

- **Places in News: Jim Corbett National Park**
- **The committee will also assess whether tiger safaris can be permitted in the buffer or fringe areas of a national park, and if yes, suggest guidelines for establishing them.**
- **The Court outlined key factors that need to be kept in mind for the committee's recommendations — "the approach must be of ecocentrism and not of anthropocentrism;"**

➤ **Places in News: Jim Corbett National Park**

➤ **About the Jim Corbett National Park**

➤ **Originally it was called Hailey National Park after Sir Macolm Hailey, the governor of the United Province**

➤ **It was renamed Ramganga National Park, named after the river that flows through it, shortly after Independence and was rechristened yet again as Corbett National Park in 1956**

➤ **It is Located in the Himalayan foothills in Nainital District of Uttarakhand**

➤ **It is not only the first national park in India, but also the first to come under the Project Tiger initiative.**

➤ **It boasts of a single largest tiger population in a tiger reserve (More than 250) and one of the highest tiger densities in the country**

➤ **Places in News: Jim Corbett National Park**

➤ **About the Jim Corbett National Park**

➤ **Originally it was called Hailey National Park after Sir Macolm Hailey, the governor of the United Province**

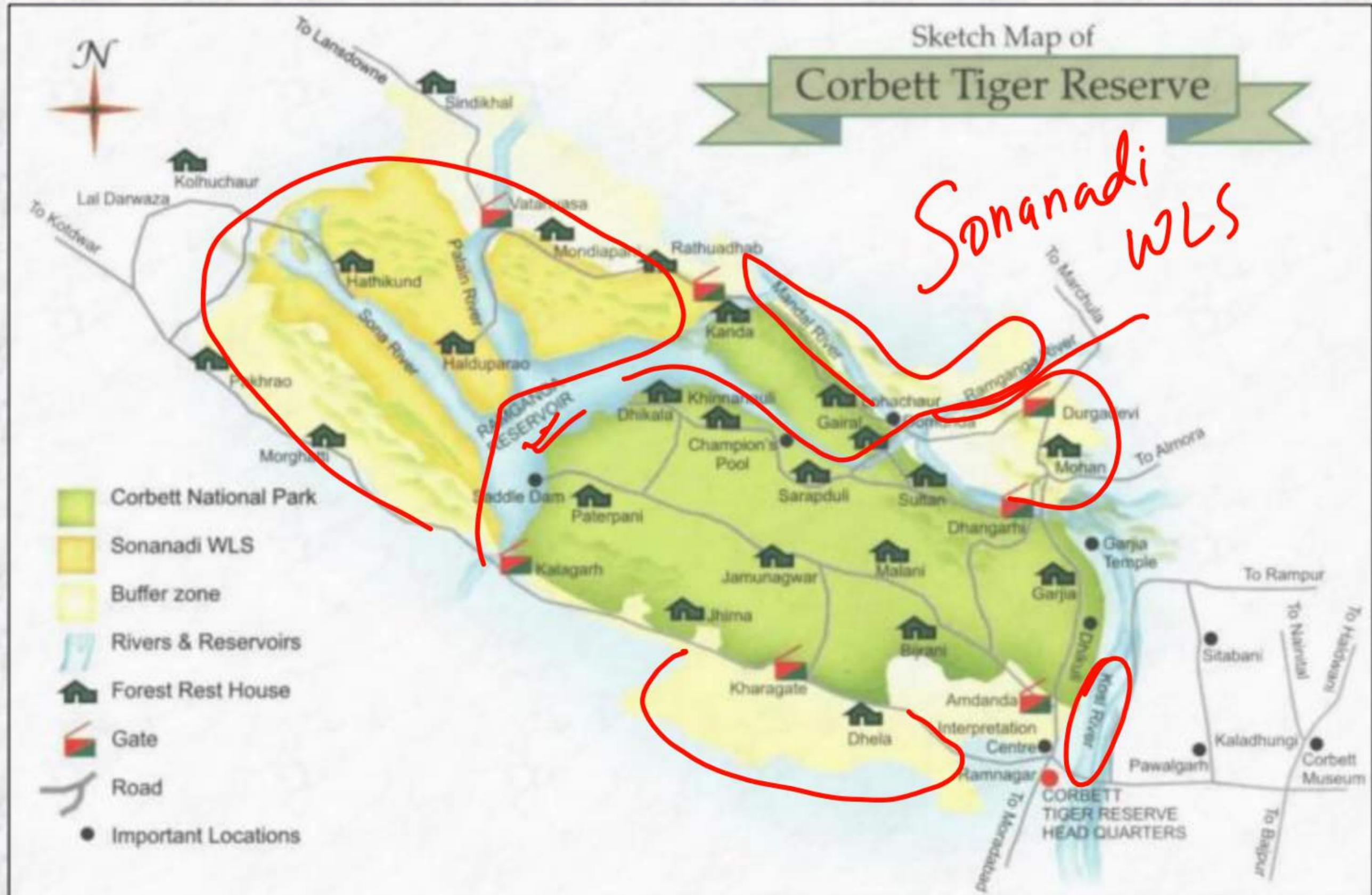
➤ **It was renamed Ramganga National Park, named after the river that flows through it, shortly after Independence and was rechristened yet again as Corbett National Park in 1956**

➤ **It is Located in the Himalayan foothills in Nainital District of Uttarakhand**

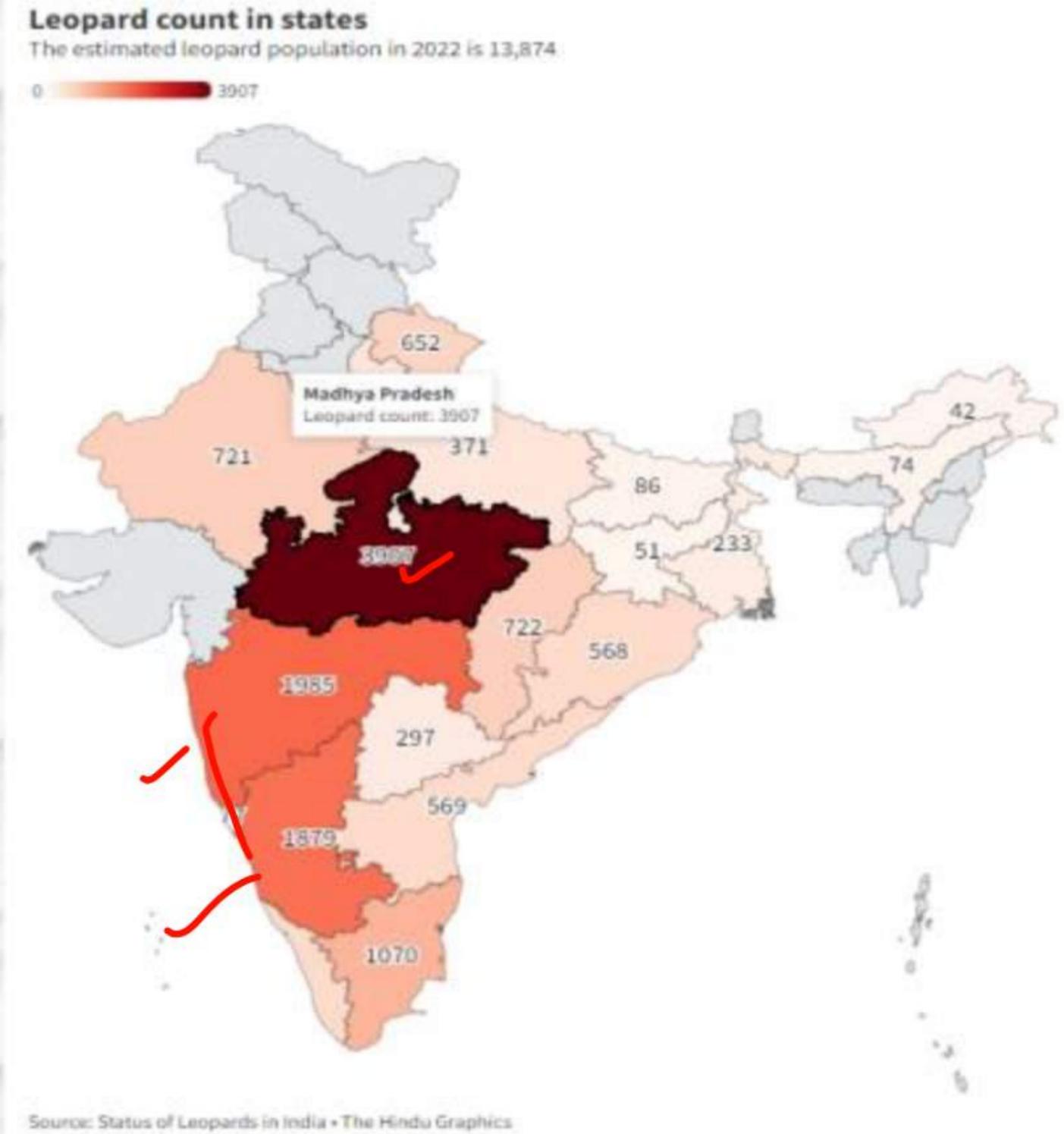
➤ **It is not only the first national park in India, but also the first to come under the Project Tiger initiative.**

➤ **It boasts of a single largest tiger population in a tiger reserve (More than 250) and one of the highest tiger densities in the country**

- **Places in News: Jim Corbett National Park**
- The park's forests are dense moist deciduous type, with prominent trees such as sal, khair, sissoo, peepal, rohini, mango, and the coniferous variety of chir pine
- 40% of Corbett Tiger Reserve's forests are dominated by Sal.
- It boasts of a single largest tiger population in a tiger reserve (More than 250) and one of the highest tiger densities in the country



- **Species in News: Leopard Population Count**
- **India's leopard numbers rose by 8% from 12,852 in 2018 to 13,874 in 2022, according to a report made public by the Environment Ministry**
- **While the highest number of leopards were reported in Madhya Pradesh (3,907), only three other States reported over a 1,000 animals each — Maharashtra (1,985), Karnataka (1,879) and Tamil Nadu (1,070).**



- **Species in News: Leopard Population Count**
- While Uttarakhand reported a 22% decline in the big cat numbers — reportedly due to poaching and man-animal conflict, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal saw a collective 150% rise to 349 animals.
- Habitat: tropical rainforests to temperate deciduous and alpine coniferous forests. It is also found in dry scrubs and grasslands.



➤ **Species in News: Leopard Population Count**

➤ **Central & Eastern Ghats > Western Ghats > Shivalik & Gangetic Plain > North East**

➤ **Madhya Pradesh > Maharashtra > Karnataka**

➤ **Conservation Status:**

➤ **IUCN- Vulnerable (2019 Assessment)**

➤ **WPA- Schedule 1 / IV**

➤ **CITES- Appendix 1**



Common Leopard