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Important Facts for Prelims (26th November 2018)

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SSB to Patrol Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve and Sashastra Seema Bal** have joined hands to provide security to Dudhwa forests and its rich wildlife.
- Apart from joint patrolling, intelligence and information sharing among various security agencies about activities of wildlife and forest criminals will also be undertaken.

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- The Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is a protected area in **Uttar Pradesh** that stretches mainly across the **Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich districts**.
- It comprises of the **Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- The **Sharda River flows by the Kishanpur WL Sanctuary**, the **Geruwa River flows through the Katarniaghat WL Sanctuary** and the **Suheli and Mohana streams flow in the Dudhwa National Park**, all of which are **tributaries of the Ghagra River**.
- The **northern boundary** of the park is being constituted by the **Mohana River** flowing along the Indo-Nepal border whilst the **southern boundary** is formed by the **river Suheli**.
- It includes three large forest fragments - marshes, grasslands and dense forests, amidst the matrix dominated by agriculture.

Sashastra Seema Bal

- It was established as **Special Service Bureau in May 1963**, in the aftermath of the **Chinese aggression in 1962**.
- Sashastra Seema Bal came under aegis of the **Ministry of Home Affairs from 2001**.
- SSB was declared a Lead Intelligence Agency for Indo Nepal (June 2001) and assigned the **Indo Nepal border**. Later, SSB was also assigned **Indo Bhutan border** (March 2004).

Vetiver Grass

- Vetiver Grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides*) which has a wide range of applications is becoming popular in state of Tamil Nadu.
- Vetiver Grass commonly known as Khus grass is a perennial grass of Indian origin.
- **In India, there are two types of vetiver namely 'South Indian' and 'North Indian'.**
- Vetiver can be grown on almost every kind of soil. But, well drained sandy loam and red lateritic soils rich in organic matter are considered to be ideal for its cultivation.
- In India it is cultivated in the states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, TamilNadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.
- Vetiver is indigenous to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Its main producers are Tropical Asia, Africa, Australia, Haiti, Indonesia, Guatemala, India, China and Brazil.
- The Vetiver System (VS), which is based on the application of vetiver grass, was first **introduced by the World Bank for soil and water conservation in India in the mid-1980s.**
- The Vetiver System (VS), used in more than 100 countries, is a system of soil and water conservation, whose main component is the use of the vetiver plant.

Uses and Application of Vetiver Grass

- This grass helps in **combating soil erosion** especially on hilly slopes.
- It also **absorbs carbon dioxide**, thus erasing carbon footprints.
- The grass can be used to **purify polluted water bodies** through phyto-remediation.
- It has **moisture retention property**, which makes vetiver ideal for soil conservation and replenishment of ground-water.
- It is also used in **ethanol extraction, as cattle feed and for making handicrafts**. It is also an **antidepressant**.
- Roots of this grass **can be used to produce oil**, one kg of oil fetches between ₹30,000 and ₹58,000 to farmers.

Saltwater crocodile sighted in AP

- At least two saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*) were sighted in Andhra Pradesh Coast.
- Salt-water crocodiles are usually found around Odisha Coast. Their presence in Andhra indicates migration of the species from the Odisha coast.
- The two crocodiles will be shifted to the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP), Odisha.
- **In India, the BNP, the Sundarbans and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands are the prime habitats of the saltwater crocodile.**

Indian Crocodile Conservation Project

- Crocodilians were threatened in India due to indiscriminate killing for commercial purpose and severe habitat loss until enactment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.1972.
- **Crocodile Conservation Project was launched in 1975 in different States.**
- The Gharial and Saltwater crocodile conservation programme was first implemented in Odisha in early 1975 and subsequently the Mugger conservation programme was initiated.
- The estimated number of the saltwater crocodiles increased from 96 in 1976 to 1,640 in 2012 in India due to rear and release programme established under the Indian Crocodile Conservation Project.

Crocodiles in India

India has three species of crocodilians namely

- Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) (IUCN: Critically Endangered)
- Mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*) (IUCN: Vulnerable)
- Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) (IUCN: Least Concern)

Bhitarkanika National Park

- **Bhitarkanika National Park is one of Odisha's** finest biodiversity hotspots and is famous for its green mangroves, migratory birds, turtles, estuarine crocodiles and countless creeks.
- The wetland is represented by 3 protected Areas, the Bhitarkanika National Park, the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.
- **Bhitarkanika is located in the estuary of Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra and Mahanadi river systems.**
- It is said to **house 70% of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles.**

United Nations Shortlists Noida, Greater Noida for 'Global Cities' Initiative

- The United Nations officially invited Uttar Pradesh's Noida and Greater Noida to become a member of its **Global Sustainable Cities 2025 initiative** which aims to create 25 model cities across the world that will be fully compliant with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2025.
- The twin-cities in Gautam Buddh Nagar district, have been selected in the **"University City"** category ahead of Mumbai and Bengaluru, which were also under UN consideration for the initiative, as the only invitee from India.
- Cities are selected from each of the following **six categories: University, UN city, Medium (Approx. 500K population), Large (Approx. 1 million population), Mega(5 million+ population), Indigenous Communities.**

- As part of this initiative, the UN will enter into an agreement with the city administration to **provide multi-million dollar funding** to work towards realising Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN will also sponsor the **PHDs of 51 students** in Noida who contribute to the programme via research.
- Cities selected under the “University City” category will be judged on the basis of **how educated its population is, its economy, a high rate of entrepreneurship, and art and culture that “indicate a vibrant civil society”**.
- The project is conducted by the **UN Global Sustainability Impact Institute (UNGSII)**. UNGSII was founded in May of 2014.