



Animal Attacks in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 30 Dec 2023

Why in News?

According to data by the forest department, **43 fatalities** are seen in [human-wildlife conflicts involving tigers and leopards](#) in the year of 2023.

Key Points

- According to 2023 data, 21 people died in leopard attacks and 22 people died in tiger attacks.
- The [Wildlife Protection Society of India \(WPSI\)](#), has released data showing 204 deaths in the country in 2023.
 - From January 2000 to December 2023, **a total of 551 people lost their lives in leopard and tiger attacks**, and over 1,833 individuals sustained injuries.
- The [Corbett Tiger Reserve \(CTR\)](#) has reported the highest number of tigers at 260 among the 53 tiger reserves in the nation.
- The tiger population in Uttarakhand **has surged from 442 to 560 compared to the figures reported in 2018**. The estimated number of leopards in Uttarakhand is 3,115.
- Since June 2001, **a total of 1,663 leopard deaths have been recorded, with many attributed to accidents or interspecies conflicts**, among other causes.

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HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT



When encounters between humans and wildlife lead to negative results, such as loss of property, livelihoods, and even life

Causes of HWC

- Agricultural Expansion
- Urbanization
- Infrastructure Development
- Climate Change
- Wildlife Populations Growth and Range Expansion

Impacts of HWC

- Grave injuries, Loss of life
- Damage to farms and crops
- ↑ violence against animals

WWF India during 2003-2004 developed the Sonitpur Model by which community members were connected with Assam Forest Dept and given training on how to drive elephants away from crop fields and human habitations safely.

In 2020, the SC upheld Madras HC's decision on the Nilgiris elephant corridor, affirming the right of passage of the animals and closure of resorts in the area.

Data on HWC

- Tigers killed 125 humans between 2019 and 2021
- Death of 329 tigers due to poaching, natural and unnatural causes.
- Elephants killed 1,579 humans in three years
- Death of 307 elephants due to poaching, electrocution, poisoning and train accidents

Advisory for HWC Management (Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife)

- Gram Panchayats empowered to deal with problematic wild animals (WPA 1972)
- Compensation against crop damage due to HWC (PM Fasal Bima Yojna)
- Local/State depts. to adopt early warning systems and create barriers
- Paying a part of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family

State - Specific Initiatives

- **UP** - Man-animal conflict under **listed disasters** (in State Disaster Response Fund)
- **Uttarakhand** - **Bio-fencing** carried out by growing various species of plants in areas
- **Odisha** - Casting **seed balls** inside different forests to **enrich food stock for wild elephants**



First Project in Haryana to Get Post-facto Environmental Clearance | Haryana | 30 Dec 2023

Why in News?

Recently, a private university built on protected **Aravali** land was given a post-facto approval by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**.

- It is the **first project in Haryana to get post-facto environmental clearance** since the **Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980** was amended.

Key Points

- Categorized under sections 4 and 5 of **Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA), 1900** the university

lies on 13.6 hectares of Aravali land, **which prohibits [deforestation](#), resale and fragmentation of land without prior permission.**

- Due to the amended act the **government can approve projects or industries that had begun functioning without obtaining prior environment clearance** and disclosing their environmental impact after a review in line with provisions of the Act.
- The committee gave its approval on few conditions:
 - The land **should not pass through any [national park](#), wildlife sanctuary, [elephant](#), or [tiger reserve](#).**
 - The university identifies an equal area of non-forest land for **compensatory afforestation** and should carry out plantation on it.
- In exceptional cases **regional forest department offices have been directed to examine and process** such proposals and forward them to the ministry with comments and recommendations for appropriate decisions.
- The amended FCA states that **it will be applicable to land parcels "notified" as forest according to the [Indian Forest Act, 1927](#).** The revised FCA is not applicable in areas converted from forest for non-forest purposes by any government authority authorized by the state before December 12, 1996.
- On December 12, 1996, the Supreme Court delivered its landmark judgment in the **[Union of India Vs T N Godavarman case](#)** ordering application of the FCA to **any area that qualified as a forest as per its dictionary meaning.**

DIVERSION 'UNAVOIDABLE & BAREST MINIMUM'

<ul style="list-style-type: none">1998 Construction of university begins next to Badkhal-Surajkund road in Faridabad, continues till 2004-052008 Forest dept submits report to Supreme Court, saying the university building and other encroachments on forest land are to be razed2022 Forest dept tells Union environment ministry university was built in violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 19802023 After FCA amendment, university approaches environment ministry for post-facto clearance. It's granted by advisory committee	<p>WHY THE NOD</p> <p>According to the ministry's advisory committee,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Requirement of land to be diverted is 'unavoidable and barest minimum'➤ As university proposal envisaged 'access' to education in area, there's forest land is unavoidable➤ University is not located on forest land with any socio-cultural or cultural value➤ There's no protected archaeological/heritage site or defence establishment in area➤ No rare or endangered species of flora and fauna recorded in area➤ University does not lie in way of any national park or wildlife sanctuary
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Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal Issue | Haryana | 30 Dec 2023

Why in News?

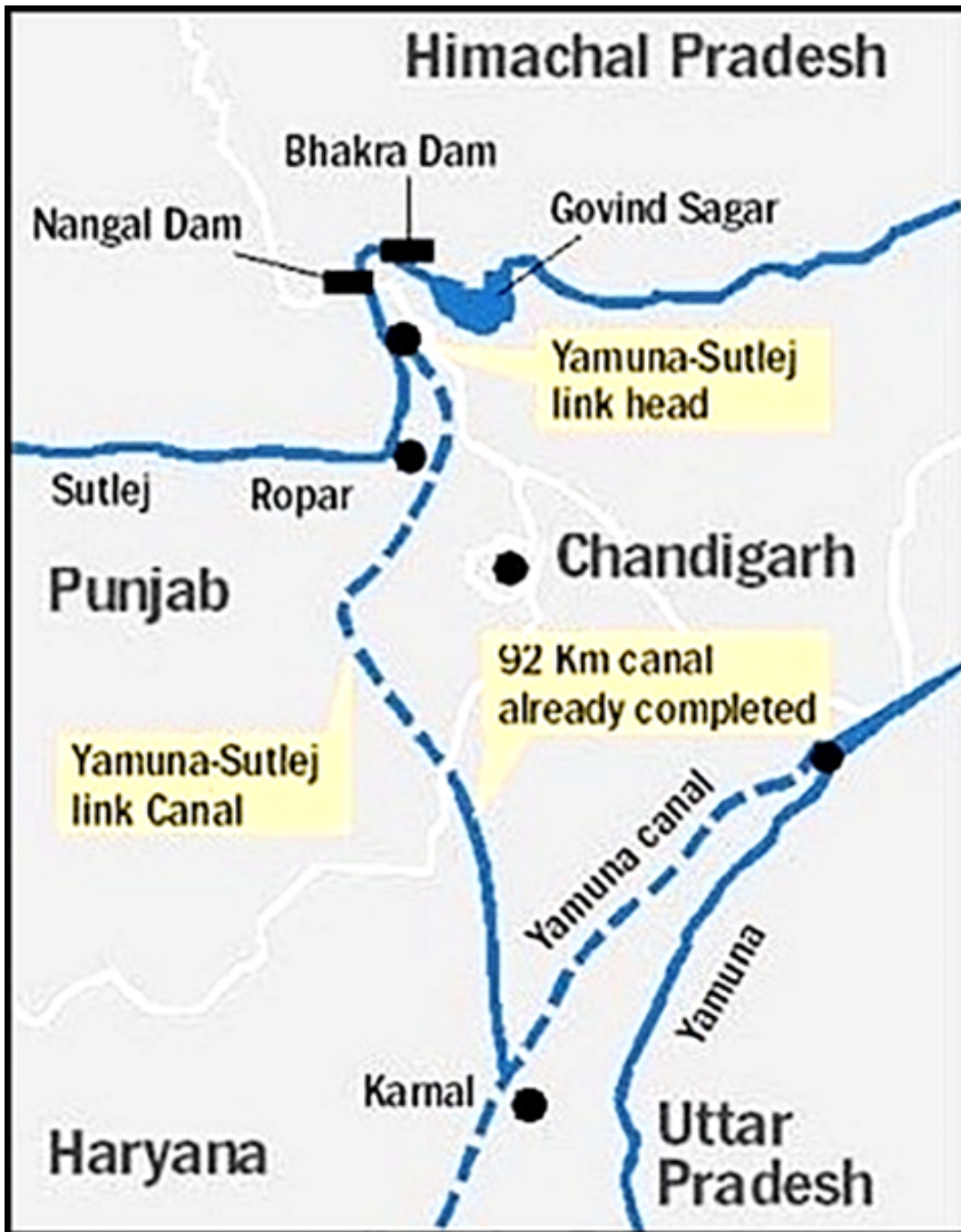
Union Jal Shakti Minister will be holding a meeting with the Chief Ministers of Haryana and Punjab, as the **meeting conducted earlier failed to bridge the gap between Haryana and Punjab on the [Sutlej-Yamuna Link \(SYL\) canal issue](#).**

Key Points

- Underscoring the importance of constructing the SYL, **the Punjab government will submit an**

affidavit to the Central government, providing details about the SYL and water situation.

- According to officials, **Punjab has no surplus water** to share with Haryana and reassessment of availability is required as per international norms.
 - In Punjab 76.5% of blocks (117 out of 153) are over-exploited. Here **groundwater extraction is estimated at more than 100%**. In Haryana the figure for over-exploited blocks is 61.5% (88 out of 143).
- Earlier the apex court directed the union government to conduct a survey of the land in Punjab that was assigned for construction of the SYL canal.



Why in News?

Recently, a **4-day winter carnival** began in **Mussoorie** to showcase the local culture of Uttarakhand.

Key Points

- The carnival gained popularity and became a major attraction for tourists and locals, along with giving a boost to tourism and benefits local businesses.
- The **theme of this year's festival is millets**, and a wide range of delicacies made from the crop.
- The event features many **musical and cultural performances** along with a **food festival**.



Illegal Sand Mining | Bihar | 30 Dec 2023

Why in News?

Recently, Bihar police **arrested sand smugglers in a major crackdown against [illegal sand mining](#)**.

- This operation, near the **Sone River**, signifies a significant step in the ongoing battle against powerful criminal syndicates involved in illicit sand mining activities.

Key Points

- **Initiatives to Prevent Sand Mining in India** are Mines and Mineral Development and Regulation Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), 2006 Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), Sustainable Sand Management Guidelines (SSMG) 2016 and **[Enforcement and Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining 2020](#)**.
- The Sone River, a **perennial river in central India, is the Ganges' 2nd-largest southern tributary**.
- Originating near Amarkantak Hill in Chhattisgarh, **it flows through Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, forming waterfalls at the Amarkantak plateau**.
 - It merges with the Ganges near Patna, Bihar.
- **Tributaries include** Ghaghar, Johilla, Chhoti Mahanadi, Banas, Gopad, Rihand, Kanhar, and North

Koel River.

- **Prominent dams include** the Bansagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh and the Rihand Dam near Pipri in Uttar Pradesh.



A Rise in Tiger Numbers in Valmiki Tiger Reserve | Bihar | 30 Dec 2023

Why in News?

Recently, the [National Tiger Conservation Authority \(NTCA\)](#) had officially announced the increase in [tiger](#) population in Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR).

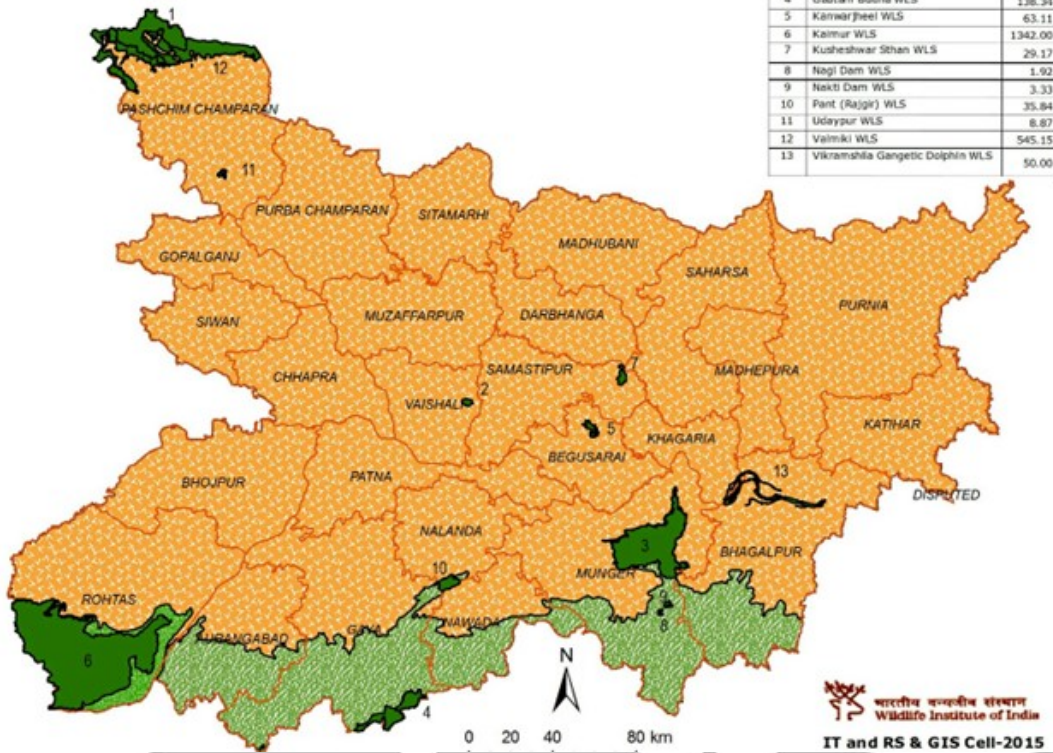
- It witnessed the growth in the number of big cats from 31 (2018) to 54 (2023).
- The Bihar government is waiting to obtain NTCA approval for declaring Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary as the state's second [tiger reserve](#) after VTR.

Key Points

- A total **ban on sand and stone mining** inside VTR, and strict restrictions on mining in its eco-sensitive zone, helped increase grassland cover.
- An **increase in grassland cover** thus helps in supporting the prey population, in turn increasing the chances of the carnivores' survival.
- The VTR is the **only tiger reserve in Bihar**, which forms the easternmost extent of the Himalayan Terai forests in India.

- The VTR is **located in Bihar's West Champaran district**, bordering Nepal to its north and Uttar Pradesh to its west.
- According to the Forest Survey of India Report 2021, **85.71% of its total area is covered by forest cover.**
- Wild mammals **found in the forests of Valmiki Tiger Reserve include** tiger, sloth bear, leopard, wild dog, bison, wild boar etc.
- **Rivers Gandak, Pandai, Manor, Harha, Masan and Bhapsa** flow through various parts of the reserve.

1	Valmiki NP	335.65
2	Bareilly S.A.Z.S. WLS	1.96
3	Bhimbandh WLS	681.99
4	Gautam Buddha WLS	138.34
5	Kaifirjeei WLS	63.11
6	Kaimur WLS	1342.00
7	Kulleshwar Sthan WLS	29.17
8	Nagi Dam WLS	1.92
9	Nakti Dam WLS	3.33
10	Pant (Rajji) WLS	35.84
11	Udaypur WLS	8.87
12	Valmiki WLS	545.15
13	Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin WLS	50.00



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