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## UCC in Uttarakhand from January 2025 | Uttarakhand | 21 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, The **Chief Minister announced** at a meeting in Dehradun that the **[Uniform Civil Code \(UCC\)](#)** will be **implemented across Uttarakhand from January 2025**.

### Key Points

- **Uniform Civil Code:**
  - **About:**
    - The **UCC** is outlined in **[Article 44 of the Constitution](#)** as part of the **[Directive Principles of State Policy](#)**, which states that the government should **strive to establish a uniform civil code for all citizens across India**.
    - However, its implementation is left to the discretion of the government.
  - **Historical Context:**
    - While the **British established uniform criminal laws in India**, they avoided standardising family laws due to their sensitive nature.
    - During the debates the **[Constituent Assembly](#)** discussed the UCC and Muslim members raised concerns about its impact on community personal laws, proposing safeguards for religious practices.
    - On other hand supporters like **[K.M. Munshi](#), [Alladi Krishnaswami](#), and [B.R. Ambedkar](#)** argued for the UCC to promote equality.
- **Milestone Achievement:**
  - Uttarakhand will become the **first state in India to implement the UCC** after Independence.
  - **Goa** was the only state in India where a UCC was in place, **following the [Portuguese Civil Code of 1867](#)**.

### Supreme Court of India's Stance on UCC:

- **Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum Case, 1985:** The Court noted with regret that "Article 44 has remained a dead letter" and advocated for its implementation.
  - **Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India, 1995 and John Vallamattom v. Union of India, 2003:** The Court reiterated the need for implementing the UCC.
  - **Shayara Bano v. Union of India, 2017:** The Supreme Court ruled that the practice of triple talaq was unconstitutional and violated the dignity and equality of Muslim women.
    - It also suggested that Parliament should pass legislation to regulate Muslim marriages and divorces.
  - **Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira Case, 2019:** The Court praised Goa as a "shining example" where "the uniform civil code is applicable to all, regardless of religion except while protecting certain limited rights" and called for its implementation across India.
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# Complete Ban on Firecrackers | Uttar Pradesh | 21 Dec 2024

## Why in News?

- Recently, [the Supreme Court](#) directed the **Haryana and Uttar Pradesh governments** to impose a **complete ban on firecrackers** in **National Capital Region (NCR)** areas until further orders.

## Key Points

- **Call for Complete Ban:**
  - The SC directed the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan to clarify their stance on imposing a year-round firecracker ban in the National Capital Region (NCR).
  - The court emphasized the **need for the ban to address both [air pollution and noise pollution](#).**
- **Current Status and Measures:**
  - A **complete ban on firecrackers** currently applies only **around Diwali and New Year**.
  - Delhi has enforced a year-round ban on the manufacture, storage, sale, and online delivery of firecrackers.
  - **Rajasthan has also imposed a similar ban in areas falling under the NCR.**
- **Enforcement of Anti-Pollution Measures:**
  - The [Graded Response Action Plan \(GRAP\) Stage 4](#) was enforced in Delhi-NCR due to worsening air quality.
    - NCR states were directed to form **teams of officials to ensure strict adherence to GRAP measures.**
  - These teams will function as officers of the Supreme Court, reporting compliance and breaches to the [Commission for Air Quality Management \(CAQM\)](#).

## Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

- The **GRAP** consists of emergency measures designed to prevent the deterioration of air quality after reaching specific thresholds in **the Delhi-NCR region**.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** notified the GRAP in 2017.
- Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas (CAQM) implements the GRAP.

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# Madhya Pradesh plans New Home for Cheetahs | Madhya Pradesh | 21 Dec 2024

## Why in News?

[The Cheetah Action Plan](#) for [Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary](#) includes analyzing **cheetah genetics**, relocating **leopards**, and **boosting prey numbers** in preparation for the **cheetah reintroduction in 2025**.

## Key Points

- **Action Plan for Cheetah Introduction:**
  - **Initial Release:** 6-8 cheetahs **will be introduced** in a 64 sq. km **predator-proof enclosure in the sanctuary's West Range.**
  - **Prey Base:** The area supports adequate prey including **chinkara, nilgai, and other species**, with an estimated 1,560-2,080 prey animals required annually.
  - **Current Prey Availability:** The area currently has 475 animals, being supplemented with 1,500 additional prey like [chital and blackbuck](#).
- **Leopard Challenge and Mitigation:**
  - **Leopard Population:** The West Range has about 70 **leopards, posing a threat to cheetahs, particularly cubs**, due to competition for prey.
  - **Leopard Translocation:** All leopards within the fenced area will be captured and **relocated before the cheetahs are introduced.**
  - **Ongoing Strategy:** This effort is part of a decade-long strategy to **stabilize the cheetah population**, including [Global Positioning System \(GPS\)](#) tracking of 10 leopards for research on carnivore interactions.
- **Cheetah Population and Genetic Strategy:**
  - **Importing Cheetahs:** A population of **12-14 cheetahs** (8-10 males, 4-6 females) **will be imported from African reserves** to create a genetically diverse population.
  - **Genetic Diversity:** Cheetahs will be **selected based on genetic compatibility to avoid inbreeding**, with analysis using **micro-satellite and [genomic techniques](#)**.
  - **Individual Monitoring:** Cheetah profiles will be maintained for demographic studies and to monitor survival and health.
- **Ecological Impact and Prey Species Management:**
  - **Ecological Effects:** The introduction of cheetahs will affect prey species' behavior, requiring potential supplementation of blackbuck, chital, and nilgai.
  - **Radio-Collaring Prey:** Some prey animals will be radio-collared to study their adaptation to the new predator presence.
  - **Restoration Plans:** The sanctuary's habitat restoration is part of a broader cheetah conservation plan, with other sites like Rajasthan's [Bhainsrogarh Wildlife Sanctuary](#) and [Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve](#) also identified for cheetah populations.
- **Current Cheetah Status:**
  - [Kuno National Park](#) currently **houses 24 cheetahs** (including 12 cubs), with two cheetahs recently released into the open forest.

## Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Location:**
  - Notified in 1974, encompassing the districts of **Mandsaur and Neemuch** in western Madhya Pradesh, bordering Rajasthan.
  - The [Chambal River](#) bifurcates the sanctuary into two nearly equal parts, with the [Gandhi Sagar Dam](#) situated within the sanctuary.
- **Ecosystem:**
  - Its ecosystem is characterised by its **rocky terrain and shallow topsoil**, which supports a [savanna ecosystem](#).
  - This comprises **open grasslands** interspersed with [dry deciduous trees](#) and shrubs. Additionally, the riverine valleys within the sanctuary are evergreen.

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## Policy to Manage Sacred Groves | Rajasthan | 21 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, in a judgment [the Supreme Court](#) told the Union government to **create a comprehensive policy** for the [management of sacred groves](#) across the country.

## Key Points

- **Supreme Court's Recommendation:**
  - The Union government was urged to spearhead efforts for the protection of sacred groves through the [Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change \(MoEF&CC\)](#).
  - While wildlife and habitat management has been primarily the responsibility of State governments, the Court emphasized the importance of preserving sacred groves as part of cultural and traditional rights.
- **Action Plan for Sacred Groves:**
  - The MoEF&CC was tasked with developing a plan for a **nationwide survey of sacred groves, including identifying their area and extent.**
  - The Union government was directed to **issue strict instructions to prevent the reduction of sacred groves due to deforestation or land use changes.**
  - The boundaries of the groves must be marked but remain flexible for future growth.
- **Court's Directives for Rajasthan:**
  - The Court directed the Rajasthan government to map sacred groves using both on-ground and satellite methods.
  - These groves should be classified as forests and granted legal protection under the [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#), regardless of their size.
- **Empowerment of Traditional Communities:**
  - The Court suggested empowering traditional communities, especially under the [Forest Rights Act, 2006](#), as custodians of sacred groves.
  - These communities should be given authority to regulate harmful activities to preserve their legacy of stewardship and promote [sustainable conservation](#).

## Sacred Groves

- Sacred groves are **forest patches traditionally protected by local communities** due to their **religious and cultural importance.**
- These groves also play a **significant role in conserving local biodiversity.**
- Sacred groves are commonly found in **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.**