

08 MAY 2019

FALL ARMYWORM

Why in news?

- Recently the outbreak of Fall Armyworm has affected maize cultivation in 122 villages of Mizoram.

More on news:

- These flying insects arrived in India in July and have since spread to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and China's Yunnan province.
- These insects feed mostly on maize and can feed on several species of crops, including rice and sugarcane.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has expressed concerns over the increasing menace of Crop-damaging armyworms in Asia.



About Fall Armyworm:

- The fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) is a species in the order of Lepidoptera and is the larval life stage of a fall armyworm moth.
- The term "armyworm" can refer to several species, often describing the large-scale invasive behavior of the species' larval stage.
- It is regarded as a pest and can damage and destroy a wide variety of crops, which causes large economic damage.
- Because of its propensity for destruction, the fall armyworm's habits and possibilities for crop protection have been studied in depth.
- Armyworms which are native to the Americas have been moving eastwards since 2016 sweeping across Africa where they caused \$1-3 billion in damage, before arriving in Asia.

ODISHA'S WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES RAVAGED BY FANI

In news:

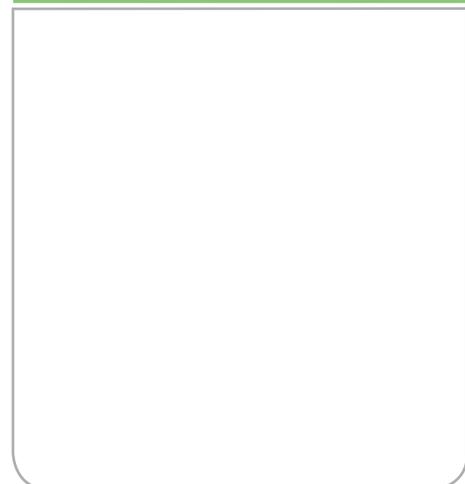
- Severe Cyclone Fani rendered dealt a severe blow to wildlife and forest resources in the Odisha region.

More on news:

The major sanctuaries affected are

- Balukhand -Konark Wildlife Sanctuary, which is located along the coast between Puri and Konark.
- Chandaka Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary near Bhubaneshwar which is known for successful conservation of elephants

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About Balukhand- Konark Wildlife Sanctuary:

- It is located along the Bay of Bengal coast, between the towns of Puri and Konark.
- The sanctuary includes sandy beaches, coastal dunes, groves of introduced Casuarina trees planted in 1916-17, and cashew plantations
- The sanctuary is home to a herd of Blackbuck (IUCN status -Least Concern), Olive Ridley Sea Turtles (IUCN status - Vulnerable) nest on the beaches.

About Chandaka Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary:

- The Chandaka- Dampara forest, near Bhubaneswar represents the north-eastern limits of Eastern Ghats.
- The Indian elephant is the flagship species and indicative of the potential productivity of the habitat.
- The leopard is in the apex of biological pyramid. Chital, barking deer, mouse deer, wild boar, common langur, rhesus monkey, small Indian civet, common Indian mongoose, small Indian mongoose, ruddy mongoose, pangolin, sloth bear, ratel, Indian wolf and hyena are other mammals of the area.
- Among reptiles, rock python and Bengal monitor lizard are quite common. Chameleon, common skink, Indian flap shell turtle, Russell's viper, bamboo pit viper, common krait, common vine snake, kukri snake, and Indian bronze back are indicative reptiles.
- Muger crocodiles have remarkably adapted to large water bodies after their release.

GRIZZLED GIANT SQUIRREL

- Researchers for the first time have sighted over 300 nests of the grizzled giant squirrel at Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee in the Eastern Ghats.
- It is endemic to the southern States of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, and in patches of riparian forest along the Kaveri River.
- IUCN status - Near threatened.



PURPLE FROG TO BECOME KERALA'S STATE AMPHIBIAN

In News:

- Purple frog could be soon designated as Kerala's state amphibian.
- The proposal for this is being mooted by Kerala's leading Herpetologists (a specialist in study of reptiles and amphibians).
- The odd-looking species is endemic to Western Ghats. The title would help in protecting species fragile habitat.

About Purple Frog

- Scientific Name: Nasikabatrachus sahyadrensis (N. sahyadrensis).
- It is also known as Maveli frog or Pignose Frog.
- Features: Its body appears sturdy and swollen. It is relatively round in shape as compared to other flattened frogs. Compared to other frogs it has a small head and an unusual pointed



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snout (muzzle). In most cases adults are dark purplish-grey in color.

- **Habitat:** For almost its entire life it lives in underground tunnels and comes out to surface for only a single day in a year to breed.
- **Distribution:** They were thought to be limited to south of the Palghat Gap (a pass which is located between Nilgiri Hills to north and Anaimalai Hills to south) in Western Ghats, but are now known to be quite widely distributed in Western Ghats.
- As per Herpetologists purple frog should rightly be called ‘living fossil’ as it is believed that they have co-existed with dinosaurs almost 70 million years ago.
- **IUCN Red List:** Their conservation status is endangered as per International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

KVIC'S HONEY MISSION

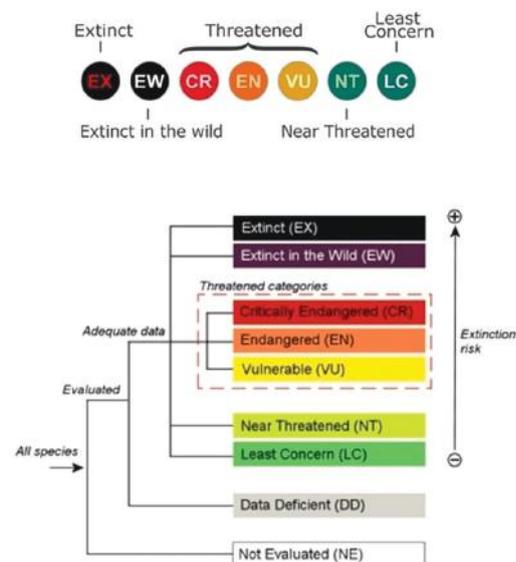
In News

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) distributed more than one lakh bee-boxes among farmers and unemployed youths across India in less than two years under its ‘Honey Mission’ initiative.
- This is the first time such mass scale distribution of honey bee boxes has taken place in country.

About Honey Mission:

- It was launched in August 2017 in line with PM Narendra Modi’s call for ‘Sweet Revolution’ (revolution in production of honey to increase its production) in 2016 while introducing Banas Honey project at Deesa in Gujarat.
- Under this mission KVIC provides beekeepers
- Practical training about examination of honeybee colonies.
- Acquaintance with apicultural equipments..
- Identification and management of bee enemies and diseases.
- Honey extraction and wax purification.
- Management of bee colonies in spring, summer, monsoon, autumn and winter seasons.
- So far, KVIC have created more than 10,000 new jobs and around 25,000 additional man days through fabrication of bee boxes and honey extractors.
- KVIC would provide loans for setting up processing units, packaging units and labelling units for honey.
- Importance: Production of healthy honey and wax, and bee-keeping would open many job opportunities for unemployed youths and also for aspiring young entrepreneurs.
- Under mission till date about 246 metric tonnes of honey has been extracted through these bee-boxes valuing over Rs 4 crore.
- Earlier on 21 May 2018 on occasion of World Honey Bee Day, KVIC distributed 1,000 bee-boxes among 100 Mishing tribe in Kaziranga forest area in Assam and created a new world record of distributing maximum number of bee boxes in a single day.

About Khadi and Village Industries Commission



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(KVIC):

- It is a statutory body formed under 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956' by Government of India.
- It is an apex organisation under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
- It is nodal implementation agency of Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) at national level.
- PMEGP is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by MSME Ministry since 2008-09 and will Continue till 2019-20. It aims to generate employment in India's rural and urban areas.



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