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19 February 2024

West Bengal News

Asian black bear census



Context:

- A three-month Asiatic black bear census across North Bengal's forests, starting on November 1, 2023, unveiled the **highest bear concentration in Darjeeling and Kalimpong.**
- Of the 154 samples collected from sanctuaries like Nayoravalli, Mahananda, Buxa, Jaldapara, and Garumara, around **100 originated from Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts.**

About:

The **Asiatic Black Bear (Ursus thibetanus)**, also known as the Asian black bear, moon bear, and white-chested bear, is a medium-sized bear species native to Asia.

Habitat: It is found in various regions from **southern Iran to the Himalayas, Southeast Asia, and parts of eastern Asia, including Japan.**

Diet: The Asiatic black bear is omnivorous, consuming insects, fruit, nuts, honey, small mammals, and birds, as well as carrion.

Appearance:

- It has black fur, a light brown muzzle, and a distinct whitish or creamy patch on the chest, sometimes **V-shaped.**
- Its ears are bell-shaped, longer than those of other bears, and stick out sideways from the head.

Size: Adult males weigh between 60–200 kg with an average weight of about 135 kg. Adult females weigh between 40–125 kg.

Lifestyle: This species is largely adapted to an arboreal lifestyle.

Conservation Status:

- It is listed as **vulnerable on the IUCN Red List**, and is threatened by deforestation and poaching for its body parts used in traditional medicine.
- **Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**

Mamata Banerjee Unveils Major Development Projects Worth Rs 720 Crore in Birbhum

Healthcare Sector Boost

- Mamata inaugurated three new medical colleges in Birbhum: Tamralipta Medical College at Tamluk, Prafulla Chandra Sen Medical College and Hospital at Arambagh, and Barasat Medical College and Hospital at Barasat, enhancing the healthcare infrastructure.



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

Power Infrastructure Enhancement

- A new substation at Harisingha in Deocha Pachami is under construction, with a budget of Rs 23 crore.

Infrastructure Projects

- Various infrastructure projects were highlighted, including the construction of a bridge over the Ajay River costing Rs 165 crore and the development of the bus depot in Suri with an expenditure of Rs 73 crore.
- The Kandi Master Plan, aimed at benefiting 5 lakh people, is nearing completion.

Read more about the Kandi master plan.

State government passes two Bills to simplify the motor vehicle tax system

Context:

The state government passed two Bills in the state Assembly on Saturday to simplify the motor vehicle tax system, which has been in place for over four decades.

Key points:

- Previously, commercial vehicles weighing less than six tonnes had to pay taxes **every three months. This has now been changed to a yearly payment.**
- The new system also offers rebates for commercial vehicles.
- A 15 percent rebate is available for those who pay three years in advance, increasing to 30 percent five years in advance, and 40 percent for 10 years in advance.
- For vehicles weighing above six tonnes, 25 percent are defaulters, according to the Transport Department.

Access to State Schemes Despite Aadhaar Issues

- CM Mamata Banerjee stated that people in Bengal can still access state government schemes even if their Aadhaar cards are cancelled.
- The CM urged people to ensure they are registered to vote and announced an online portal for complaints regarding cancelled Aadhaar cards, promising government action in such cases.
- CM assured that state schemes will not be linked to Aadhaar and benefits will be provided through other means if necessary.

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