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1. Multidimensional poverty: meaning, numbers

Why in news?

In her Interim Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said 25 crore Indians had been pulled out of poverty over the past decade. "With the pursuit of 'Sabka ka Saath' in these 10 years, the Government has assisted 25 crore people to get freedom from multidimensional poverty," she said.

What is the basis for this assessment?

This number appeared in a discussion paper, Multidimensional Poverty in India Since 2005-06, published by NITI Aayog on Jan 15.

Escaped Multidimensional Poverty (2013-14-2022-23)

	Estimated in lakh
Bihar	377.09
Madhya Pradesh	230.00
Maharashtra	159.07
Odisha	102.78
Rajasthan	187.12
Uttar Pradesh	593.69
West Bengal	172.18
INDIA	2,482.16

Multidimensional poverty in India was found to decline from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23 with about 24.82 crore people escaping poverty during this period. At the States' level, Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 5.94 crore people escaping poverty followed by Bihar at 3.77 crore and Madhya Pradesh at 2.30 crore.

What is the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)?

Traditionally, poverty is calculated based either on income levels or, if income data are not available, on expenditure levels. The so-called "poverty lines" are actually expenditure levels that are considered minimum enough for someone to be called poor.

The MPI approaches poverty differently. Globally, the MPI uses 10 indicators covering three main areas: (i) health, (ii) education, and (iii) standard of living. These three dimensions have one-third weight each in the final index.

The health dimension includes nutrition and child & adolescent mortality indicators. The education dimension includes years of schooling and school attendance indicators. The standard of living dimension includes six household-specific indicators: housing, household assets, type of cooking fuel, access to sanitation, drinking water, and electricity.

The Indian MPI has two additional indicators: maternal health (under the health dimension) and bank accounts (under the standard of living dimension). This has been done, according to the NITI Aayog, to align the MPI with India's national priorities.

How were the data for 2013-14 and 2022-23 arrived at?

Typically, the health metrics depend on data from the different rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). The NFHS is conducted every five years; the last round refers to the 2019-21 period.

How then were the MPI for 2012-13 and 2022-23 calculated?

According to the paper, this required interpolation of estimates for the year 2013-14, and extrapolation for the year 2022-23.

"A better understanding of the impact of various initiatives launched during the previous decade on poverty and deprivation can be obtained by comparing the estimates of poverty and deprivation in year 2013-14 with year 2022-23 even though the actual estimates for 2015-16 and 2019-21 clearly point to acceleration in rate of reduction in MPI after 2015-16 compared to 2005-06 to 2015-16," it states.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express and PIB

2. India's snow leopard count

Why in news?

The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI) has estimated a population of 718 in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Carried out between 2019 and 2023, this study is a major leap in our

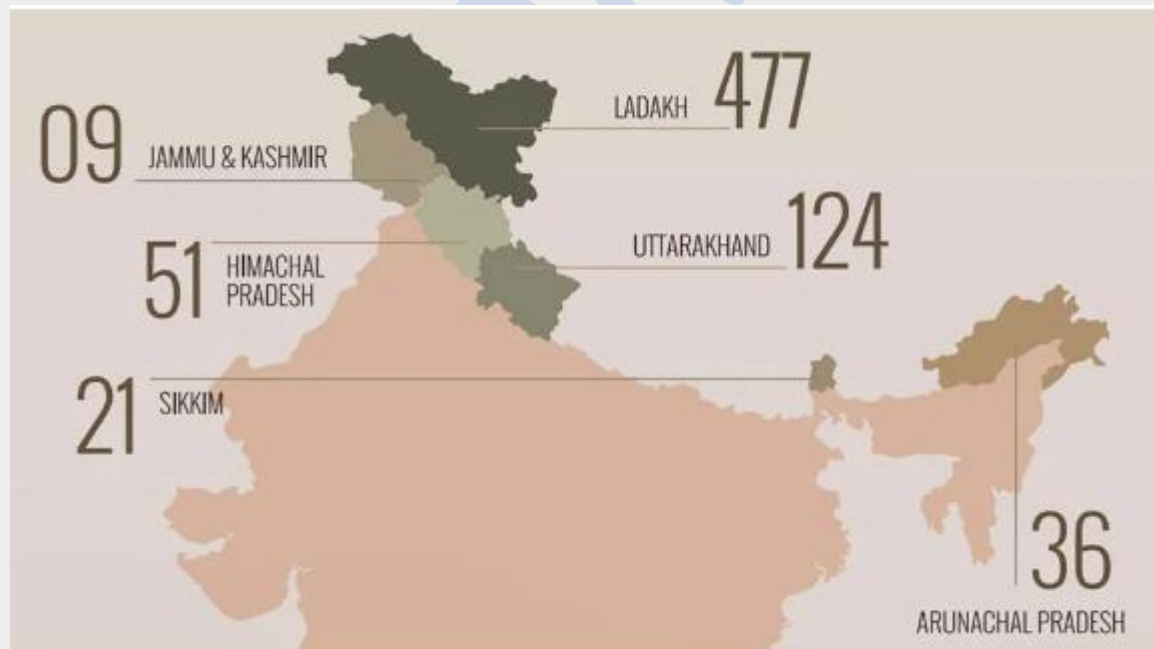
understanding of the keystone species. Snow leopards are believed to occupy around 1 lakh sq km of the higher Himalayan terrains in India.



Need for Assessment

As recently as 2016, the cat's status was unknown in as much as one-third of its range. This went well with the legend of the 'ghost of the mountains' built around the elusive cat's mastery of stealth and camouflage. But for this 'ghost' to have a future — and since the future of most species is

increasingly determined by human actions — knowledge of the cat's status across its range was necessary for framing the right policies.



Where snow leopards were found in India and their numbers. (Via SPAI)

This was also a question of securing our future because the snow leopard's habitat is where all major Himalayan rivers that sustain life across much of India spring to life. Yet, a national effort to count snow leopards — colloquial for 'studying abundance' — across its range remained daunting on multiple counts.

Report Recommendations

The report also mentions the need for establishing a dedicated Snow Leopard Cell at WII under the MoEFCC is proposed, with a primary focus on long-term population monitoring, supported by well-structured study designs and consistent field surveys. Consistent monitoring is essential to ensuring Snow leopards' long-term survival. For the same, states and UTs can consider adopting a periodic population estimation approach (every 4th year) in the Snow leopard range. These regular assessments will offer valuable insights for identifying challenges, addressing threats, and formulating effective conservation strategies.

About SPAI

The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI) Program is the first-ever scientific exercise that reports Snow leopard population of 718 individuals in India.

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is the National Coordinator for this exercise that was carried out with support the support of all snow leopard range states and two conservation partners, the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru and WWF-India.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: PIB and Indian Express

3. Champai Soren is 12th CM of Jharkhand



Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren during the swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi

Why in news?

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Champai Soren took oath as the twelfth Chief Minister of Jharkhand, even as his predecessor Hemant Soren was remanded to five days in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate in an alleged land scam case.

Threat of Opposition

Soon after the ceremony, 39 MLAs of the ruling coalition, who have been staying in the Ranchi Circuit House, were rushed straight to the airport and flown to Hyderabad by chartered plane in a bid to prevent them from being poached by the Opposition before the new government seeks a vote of confidence on February 5. The JMM-led alliance has submitted letters of support from 47 MLAs to the Raj Bhavan.

Arrest of Hemant Soren

Earlier in the day, a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act court granted the ED five days remand of Mr. Hemant Soren, who was arrested in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. The Supreme Court has refused to entertain his plea against his arrest, and asked him to approach the High Court. The former CM had resigned after ED officials held him for over seven hours of questioning for the second time, at his official residence.

After his resignation, senior JMM leader and Transport Minister Champai Soren was elected as the leader of the legislative party. A five-time MLA from Saraikela, Mr. Champai Soren earned the nickname of 'Jharkhand Tiger' while playing an active role in the movement for Jharkhand's Statehood in the 1990s, alongside JMM patriarch Shibu Soren. Before taking oath, the new CM went to meet the party chief — who is also Mr. Hemant Soren's father — and sought his blessings.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Indian Express