

## **1. Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Program (GSLEP)**

### **Why in News?**

- ▶▶ Union Environment Minister has released the Snow Leopard Population Assessment (SLPAI) at the fourth steering committee meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Program (GSLEP).

### **About:**

- ▶▶ GSLEP is a high-level intergovernmental alliance of 12 snow leopard range countries.
- ▶▶ It comprises of Russia, China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- ▶▶ The meeting was chaired by Nepal and co-chaired by Kyrgyzstan.
- ▶▶ SLPAI is prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India, Nature Conservation Foundation, GSLEP technical committee, Global Tiger Initiative council, World Wide Fund for Nature, World Bank, Global Tiger Forum, and Wildlife Conservation Trust.
- ▶▶ It discusses sustainable development efforts to be made in snow leopard habitats and take into consideration green economic development, innovative conservation financing and population assessment of global Snow Leopards.

### **Snow Leopards in India:**

- ▶▶ In India, snow leopards are found in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape at an elevation between 3,000 meters and 5,400 meters, spanning over 100,000 square km across Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ▶▶ In India, “National-level estimation processes are done for tigers, rhinos and elephants. With this protocol, the same pattern is to be followed for snow leopards”.

## **2. BHIM 2.0**

### **Why in News?**

- ▶▶ The IT Ministry unveiled a slew of new initiatives and programmes, including BHIM 2.0 that packs-in new functionalities, support additional languages and has increased transaction limits.

### **BHIM 2.0:**

- ▶▶ BHIM app, a UPI based payment interface developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that allows real-time fund transfer, was launched in December 2016.

- ▶▶ Some of the striking features marking BHIM 2.0 include a 'Donation' gateway, increased transaction limits for high-value transactions, linking multiple bank accounts, offers from merchants, the option of applying in IPO, gifting money etc.
- ▶▶ The new version of BHIM also supports three additional languages — Konkani, Bhojpuri and Haryanvi — over and above the existing 13.

### **3. Railway Ministry to provide WiFi services inside trains**

#### **Why in News?**

- ▶▶ The Railway Ministry is planning to introduce WiFi services inside the trains in the next four and a half years.

#### **Highlights:**

- ▶▶ The free WiFi service is currently available at around 5150 railway stations in India.
- ▶▶ The Railways is planning to extend the WiFi services to all 6,500 stations by the end of 2020.
- ▶▶ WiFi inside the trains is a more complicated technology subject, as the service would require investment, towers would need to put and equipment will need to be provided inside the trains.
- ▶▶ The Ministry might have to bring in foreign technology and investors to launch the service.
- ▶▶ Having WiFi service inside the trains will boost security in trains, as it will help the police to track live CCTV feed from every train compartment and it will also enable the signaling system to work in a better manner.

#### **World's first zero-emission Railway:**

- ▶▶ Railway Minister Piyush Goyal also revealed the Ministry's plans to transform the Indian Railways into the world's first zero-emission Railway.
- ▶▶ This will be done by making the Railways 100 percent electric.
- ▶▶ The Ministry is planning to use railway land for solar installation to enable the same. The project is expected to take about 4-5 years.

### **4. White bellbird- the world's loudest bird**

#### **Why in News?**

- ▶▶ Bellbirds have the loudest bird calls yet documented in the world, according to a study.

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**Bellbirds:**

- ▶▶ The study found that their mating songs pack more decibels than the screams of howler monkeys and the bellows of bison.
- ▶▶ The male white bellbird's mating call is about three times louder than screaming phias — the previously loudest bird singer.
- ▶▶ The bellbird's calls were so loud that they wondered how the females of the species listened to them at close range without permanent damage to their hearing.
- ▶▶ The loud singing ability also came with a trade-off, according to the researchers, who said that as the songs of bellbirds became louder, they also got shorter in duration.

