

**21-12-2022**

## **25th Eastern Zonal Council Meeting**

### **Why in Newspapers?**

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah presided over the meeting of the **25th Eastern Zonal Council** in **Kolkata** on **17 December 2022**. The meeting was attended by the **Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Jharkhand**, Deputy Chief Ministers of **Bihar** and **Odisha** and **other senior officials** from the **Ministry of Home Affairs** and states under the Council.

### **Quick Issue?**

- Over 1,000 issues were discussed in the meetings of the **Zonal Councils** in the last **8 years** under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **93 per cent of them were resolved**, which is a huge achievement.
- The Union Home Minister said that **Left Wing Extremism** has almost ended in the eastern region of the country and efforts should be made to sustain this decisive supremacy.
- The **union home minister** urged the Chief Minister to ensure the **district level structure of the NCORD (National Narcotics Coordination)** mechanism and its regular meetings for the prevention of narcotics.

### **Other Key Facts?**

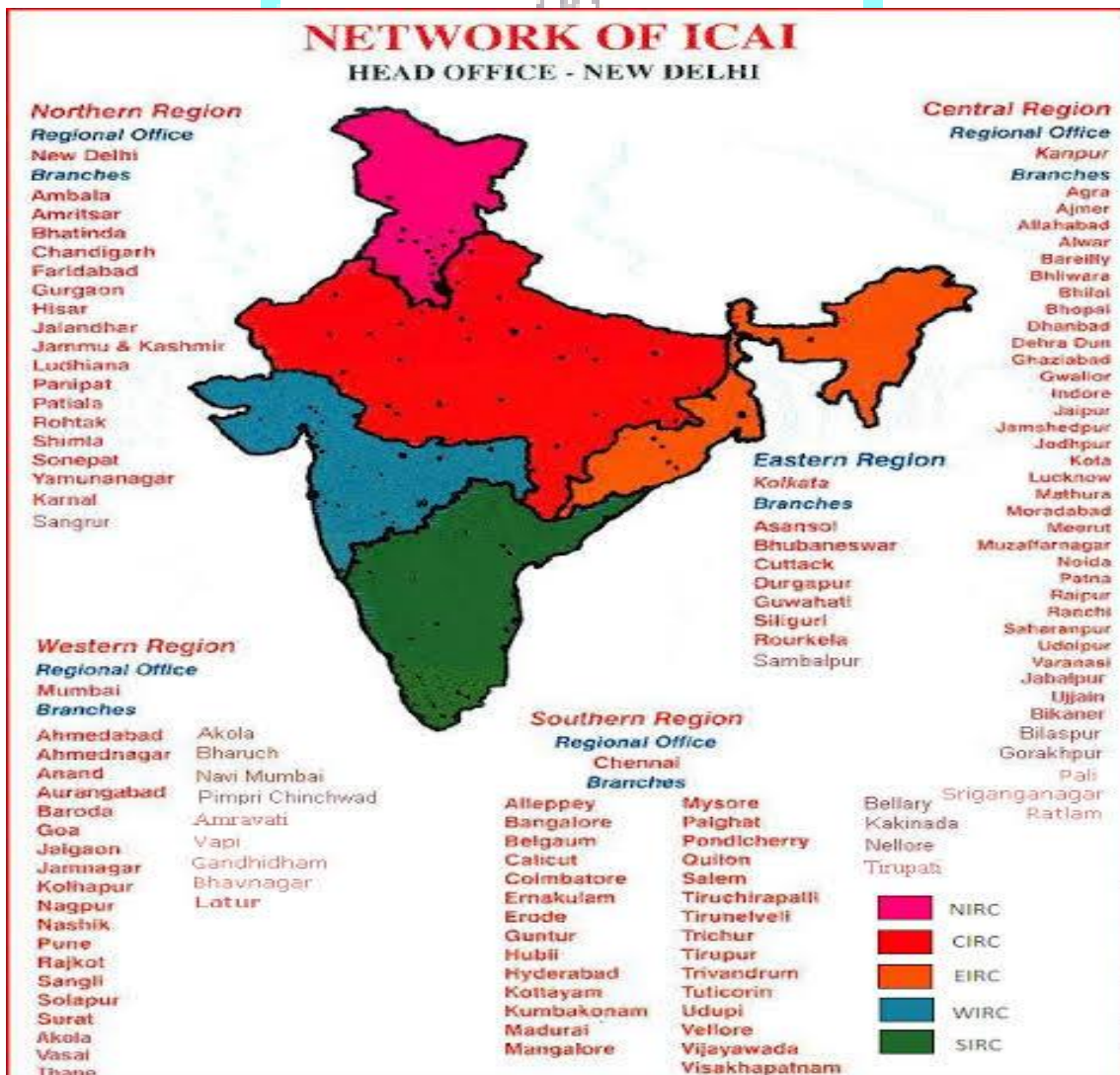
#### **Organizational Structure**

- **Chairman:** Union Home Minister is the chairman of all these councils.
- **Vice-Chairman:** The Chief Ministers of the states included in each Zonal Council act as **Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council** of that Zone for a period of one year at a time by rotation.
- **Members:** Chief Minister and two other ministers nominated by the governor from each state and two members from union territories included in the council.
- **Advisors:** For each Zonal Council, there is a Chief Secretary nominated by the **Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog)** and another officer/development commissioner nominated by each state included in the zone.

### **Historical Background?**

- Five Zonal Councils were established under **Part-III of the States Reorganization Act, 1956**.
- This act divided the country into five regions - **Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern** and provided for a regional council for each region.
- Zonal Councils are **statutory (not constitutional) bodies**.
- A number of factors have been taken into account while creating these zones which include:
  - Natural division of the country

- River system and means of communication
- Cultural and linguistic ties
- Need for economic development, security and law and order
- In addition to **the Zonal Councils**, a **North-Eastern Council** was created by a **separate Act of Parliament**, the **North-Eastern Council Act of 1971**.
- Members include **Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim**.
- **Northern Zonal Council**: It includes the **states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi** and the **Union Territories of Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**. **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- **Central Zonal Council**: It includes the states of **Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**. **Headquarters: Allahabad**
- **Eastern Zonal Council**: It includes the **states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal**. **Headquarters: Kolkata**
- **Western Zonal Council**: It includes the **states of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra** and the **Union Territories of Daman-Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli**. **Headquarters: Mumbai**
- **Southern Zonal Council**: It consists of the **states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu**, and the **Union Territory of Puducherry**. **Headquarters: Chennai**





- **Objective:-**
  - Realizing national integration.
  - Stopping the development of intense **state consciousness, regionalism and special type of tendencies.**
  - To enable **Center and States to exchange ideas and experiences and collaborate.**
  - To **establish an environment of cooperation among the states** for successful and speedy execution of development projects.
- **Functions of Councils:-**
  - **Any matter of general interest** in the field of **economic and social planning;**
  - **Any matter relating to border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-state transport;**
  - Any matter relating to or arising out of the **reorganization of States** under the **States Reorganization Act.**

### Expected Questions for Preliminary Exam

- Q. By whom the regional councils are formed?**
- (a) President (b) Prime Minister  
(c) Speaker of the Lok Sabha (d) Home Minister

**Answer: (a) President**

- Q. Consider the following statements about Zonal Council:**

1. Zonal Councils are constitutional bodies whose objective is only to promote co-operation among the states.
2. The Prime Minister is the chairman of all the regional councils.
3. Decisions by the Councils are binding on the State Governments.

**Select the incorrect statements using the codes given below.**

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3**

- Q. Which of the following body / which bodies are not mentioned in the constitution?**

1. National Development Council
2. Planning Commission
3. Zonal Councils

**Select the correct answer using the code given below :**

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3**

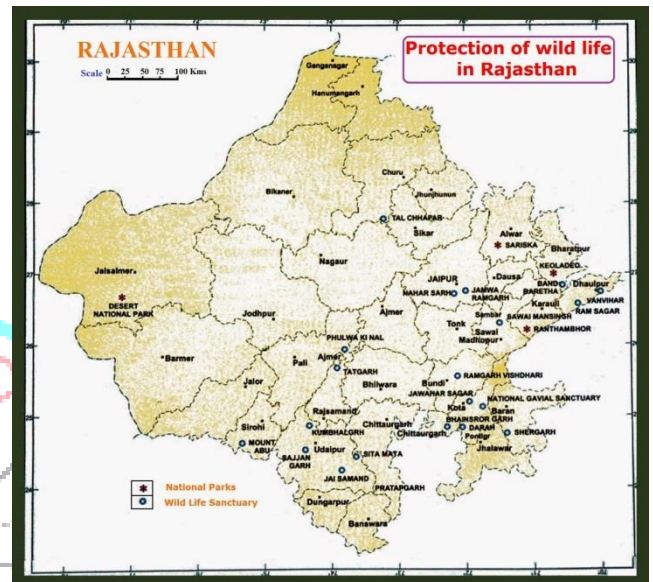
## Tal Chhapar Blackbuck Sanctuary

### Why in Newspapers?

Recently, a **division bench** of the Rajasthan High Court ordered a "complete ban" on any action to reduce the area of the **Tal Chhapar blackbuck sanctuary**.

### Quick Issue?

- The Court took note of reports that the area of the sanctuary was being **reduced to three square kilometres** under pressure from mine owners and stone crusher operators.



### Historical Background?

- Tal Chhapar Blackbuck Sanctuary located in **Churu district** of Rajasthan is spread over an area of **7.19 square kilometres**.
- The sanctuary is a habitat for about **4,000 blackbucks**, more than **40 species of raptors** and other wild animals and also hosts **more than 300 species of migratory birds**.
- Tal Chhapar is an exclusive haven for "**The Blackbuck**", the most **beautiful antelope** seen in India. It was given the status of a sanctuary in the year **1966**.
- Tal Chhapar was a hunting reserve of the erstwhile royal family of **Bikaner**.
- The word "**Tal**" is a **Rajasthani word** which means **flat land**.
- The sanctuary has **almost flat area** and combined **thin lowland area**. It has **open and broad grasslands** with **spreading Acacia and Prosopis plants** which give it a typical Savannah look.

### Other Key Facts?

#### Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ)

- ESZs are areas notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (CC) under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- The basic objective is to regulate certain activities around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries so as to minimize the negative effects of such activities on the sensitive ecosystem comprising the protected areas.
- In June, 2022, the Supreme Court directed that every protected forest, national park and wildlife sanctuary across the country should have a mandatory eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of at least one kilometer starting from their demarcated boundaries.





- **Tal Chhapar** is an exclusive haven for "**The Blackbuck**", the most beautiful **antelope** seen in India.
- **Tal Chhapar** is an **ideal place to see black buck** which are more than a thousand in number here. It is a good place to see **desert animals and reptile species**.
- The sanctuary is home to about **4,000 blackbuck**, more than **40 species of raptors** and **more than 300 species of endemic and migratory birds**.
- Migratory birds in the sanctuary include **harrier, eastern imperial eagle, tawny eagle, short-toed eagle, sparrowhawk** and **small-green bee-eater, black ibis and demoiselle crane**. In addition, **skylarks, crested larks, ring doves** and brown doves can be seen throughout the year.
- The scientific name of blackbuck is '**Antelope cervicapra**', which is also known as '**Indian antelope**'. It is a species of antelope originally endemic to India and Nepal.
- They are widely found in **Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha** and other regions (all over peninsular India).
- These are most commonly found in grasslands, that is, it is considered a symbol of grasslands.
- It is considered to be the **second fastest running animal in the world after the cheetah**.
- Blackbuck is a **diurnal antelope** i.e. it is **mainly active mostly during day time**.
- It is the **state animal of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab**.
- **Cultural Significance:** It is a **symbol of sacredness** for **Hinduism** as its skin and horns are considered sacred parts. It is a **symbol of good luck** for





### Buddhism.

- **Conservation Status :-**
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:**  
Schedule-I
  - **Position in IUCN:** Least Concern
  - **CITES:** Appendix-III
- **Threats:** - Their possible threats include **fragmentation of natural habitat, eradication of forests, natural calamities, poaching** etc.
- **Related Protected Areas :-**
  - **Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary -**  
Gujarat
  - **Point Calimer Wildlife Sanctuary -** Tamil Nadu
  - In the year 2017, the **Uttar Pradesh state government approved a plan to set up a blackbuck conservation reserve** in the **Trans-Yamuna Belt** near Prayagraj. This will be the **first conservation reserve dedicated to the blackbuck.**

### Other Key Facts?

#### How many sanctuaries are there in India 2022?

- India has a total of **104 National Parks, 551 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 131 Marine Protected Areas, 18 Biosphere Reserves, 88 Conservation Reserves** and **127 Community Reserves**. The **oldest National Park in India is Corbett National Park** which was created in 1936 in Uttarakhand.

### Expected Questions for Preliminary Exam

Q. Which of the following protected areas is famous for the conservation of the subspecies of the Indian Anoop antelope (barasingha), which thrives on paved land and is only herbivorous?

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (a) Kanha National Park          | (b) Manas National Park            |
| (c) Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary | (d) Tal Chappar Wildlife Sanctuary |

Answer: (a) Kanha National Park

Q. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct with reference to 'Environment Sensitive Zone' (ESZ)?

1. Eco-sensitive areas are those areas which have been declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. The purpose of declaring environment sensitive area is to ban all human activities except agriculture in those areas.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (a) 1 only       | (b) 2 only          |
| (c) Both 1 and 2 | (d) Neither 1 nor 2 |

Answer: (d) neither 1 nor 2

Q. Which of the following protected areas is famous for the conservation of the subspecies of the Indian Anoop antelope (barasingha), which thrives on paved land and is only herbivorous?

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| (a) Kanha National Park     | (b) Manas National Park            |
| (c) Mudumalai National Park | (d) Tal Chappar Wildlife Sanctuary |

Answer: (a) Kanha National Park