



# World Elephant Day

## Why in News

On the occasion of [World Elephant Day](#) (12<sup>th</sup> August) the Union Environment Minister made public the **population estimation protocol** to be adopted in the **all-India elephant and tiger population estimation in 2022**.

- World Elephant Day was launched in 2012 to **bring attention to the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants**.

## Key Points

- **Current Data on Elephants in India:**
  - According to the last count in 2017, there were **29,964 elephants in India**. Which is a slight **increase from 2012's mean of 29,576 elephants**.
- **Asian Elephants:**
  - **About:**
    - There are three subspecies of Asian elephant which are the Indian, Sumatran and Sri Lankan.
    - The **Indian subspecies has the widest range** and accounts for the majority of the remaining elephants on the continent.
    - **Global Population:** Estimated 20,000 to 40,000.
  - **Protection Status:**
    - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered.
    - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I.
    - **CITES:** Appendix I
- **African Elephants:**
  - **About:**
    - There are **two subspecies** of African elephants, the **Savanna (or bush) elephant and the Forest elephant**.
    - **Global Population:** Around 4,00,000.
    - Earlier in July 2020, **Botswana (Africa) witnessed the death of hundreds of elephants**.
  - **Protection Status:**
    - **IUCN Red List Status:**
      - **African Savanna Elephant:** Endangered.
      - **African Forest Elephant:** Critically Endangered
    - **CITES:** Appendix II
- **Concerns:**
  - Escalation of poaching.
  - Habitat loss.
  - **Human-elephant conflict.**
  - Mistreatment in captivity.
  - Abuse due to elephant tourism.
  - Rampant mining, Corridor destruction.
- **Steps Taken for Conservation:**
  - Plans and programmes to **arrest their poachers and killers**.

- Declaration and **establishment of various elephant reserves** across the states. For example, Mysuru and Dandeli elephant reserves in Karnataka.
- **Cleaning areas from lantana and eupatorium ([invasive species](#))** as they prevent the growth of grass for elephants to feed on.
- Barricades to **prevent man-elephant conflicts**.
- Measures for establishment of a cell to study [forest fire](#) prevention.
- [Gaj Yatra](#) which is a **nationwide awareness campaign** to celebrate elephants and highlight the necessity of securing elephant corridors.
- The [Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants \(MIKE\) programme](#), launched in 2003, is an international collaboration that tracks trends in information related to the illegal killing of elephants from across Africa and Asia, to monitor effectiveness of field conservation efforts.
- **Project Elephant:** It is a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) and was launched in February 1992 for the [protection of elephants](#), their habitats and corridors.
  - The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides **financial and technical support to major elephant range** states in the country through the project.
- Even **mahouts** (people who work with, ride and tend an elephant) and their families play an important part in the welfare of elephants.
- Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) upheld the 2011 order of the Madras High Court (HC) on the Nilgiris elephant corridor, affirming the [right of passage](#) of the animals and the closure of resorts in the area.

[Source: TH](#)

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