



India to Host CMS COP 13 in 2020

The **13th Conference of Parties (COP)** of the **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)** will be **hosted by India** during 15th to 22nd February, 2020 at **Gandhinagar** in Gujarat.

- **Great Indian Bustard (GIB)** will be its **mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP)** of the UN Convention on the conservation of migratory species (CMS).
- Representatives from 129 Parties and eminent conservationists and international NGOs working in the field of wildlife conservation will attend the COP.
- Hosting of COP would give India an opportunity to showcase its conservation initiatives for wildlife species.
- It will provide a global platform for deliberations on the conservation and sustainable use of migratory wild animals and their habitat.

Migratory Species in India

- Migratory species are those animals that move from one habitat to another during different times of the year, due to various factors such as food, sunlight, temperature, climate, etc.
- The movement between habitats can sometimes exceed thousands of miles/kilometers for some migratory birds and mammals.
- A migratory route can involve nesting and also requires the availability of habitats before and after each migration.
- **India is a temporary home to several migratory animals and birds.** The important among these include **Amur Falcons, Bar-headed Geese, Black-necked cranes, Marine turtles, Dugongs, Humpbacked Whales**, etc.
- The **Indian sub-continent is also part of** the major bird flyway network, i.e, **the Central Asian Flyway (CAF)** that covers areas between the Arctic and Indian Oceans, and covers at least 279 populations of 182 migratory waterbird species, including 29 globally threatened species.
- India has also launched the National Action Plan for the conservation of migratory species under the Central Asian Flyway.

Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS)

- It is an environmental treaty **under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme**, CMS (**also referred to as the Bonn Convention**) provides a global platform for the **conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats**.
 - CMS brings together the States through which migratory animals pass, the Range States, and lays the legal **foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures** throughout a migratory range.
 - It is the only global convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and migration routes.
 - **India has been a Party to the CMS since 1983.** The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision-making organ of this convention.
 - **India has also signed non legally binding MOU with CMS on the conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008) and Raptors (2016).**
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100th Anniversary of ILO

In 2019, the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, the UN specialized agency celebrates its 100th anniversary.

- In the run up to the anniversary **seven Centenary Initiatives** are being implemented as part of a package of activities aimed at equipping the Organization to take up successfully the challenges of its social justice mandate in the future.

Seven Centenary Initiatives

- **The future of work initiative** : Initiating and cultivating a global dialogue on the future of work, to build the ILO's ability to prepare and guide governments, workers and employers to better meet the world of work challenges of the next century.
- **The end to poverty initiative**: Promoting a multidimensional response through the world of work, labor markets, and social and employment protection to eradicate global poverty.
- **The women at work initiative**: Reviewing the place and conditions of women in the world of work and engaging workers, employers and governments in concrete action to realize equality of opportunity and treatment.
- **The green initiative**: Scaling up the ILO's office-wide knowledge, policy advice and tools for managing a just transition to a low carbon, sustainable future.
- **The standards initiative**: Enhancing the relevance of international labour standards through a standards review mechanism and consolidating tripartite consensus on an authoritative supervisory system.
- **The enterprises initiative**: Establishing a platform for ILO engagement with enterprises which would contribute to their sustainability and to ILO goals.
- **The governance initiative**: Reforming the ILO's governance structures, assessing the impact of the 2008 Declaration as set out in its final provisions, and act on its finding.

Eight Core International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions

- **India has ratified six out of the eight core/fundamental ILO Conventions.** These are
 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29),
 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105),
 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100),
 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111),
 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and
 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).
- India has **not ratified** the core/fundamental Conventions, namely **Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)** and **Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)**.
- The main reason for non-ratification of ILO Conventions No.87 & 98 is **due to certain restrictions imposed on the Government servants.**
- The ratification of these conventions would involve granting of certain rights that are prohibited under the statutory rules, for the Government employees, namely, to strike work, to openly criticize Government policies, to freely accept financial contribution, to freely join foreign organizations etc.
- In India **Convention is ratified only when the national laws are brought fully into conformity with the provisions of the Convention.**
- Ratification of ILO Convention is a voluntary process and no time frame has been agreed for the same.

About International Labour Organization (ILO)

- International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations agency dealing with labour issues, particularly international labour standards, social protection, and work opportunities for all.
 - ILO was created in **1919**, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. It **became specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946**.
 - It is a tripartite organization, the **only one of its kind bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies**.
 - Since 1919, the International Labour Organization has maintained and developed a system of international labour standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.
 - In **1969, ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving fraternity and peace among nations**, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.
 - **India is a founder member of the International Labour Organization.**
 - The **Headquarter** of ILO is in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
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Ladakh Gets Divisional Status

The government of Jammu Kashmir has granted **Ladakh a divisional status**, thus creating **three administrative units** in the state which are **Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh**.

- The J&K government has approved the creation of a separate administrative and revenue Division for Ladakh. This **division will comprise Leh and Kargil districts** with its headquarters at Leh.
- **Ladakh was earlier a part of the Kashmir division.**
- Earlier the government established the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC) Leh and Kargil to give more autonomy to Ladakh region. These hill development councils have local administrative powers.
- Now the **Kashmir valley is geographically the smallest division at 15,948 sq. km, Jammu division at 26,293 sq. km and Ladakh, the biggest division, at 86,909 sq. km.**

Why a Separate Division?

- During winter months the entire Ladakh region, comprising both Leh and Kargil, remain **cut-off from rest of the country for almost six months** and air travel via Leh is the only mode of transport available to this region, which makes it impossible for people to visit other parts of the country for various purposes.
- Consequently, the region faces problems with respect to the delivery of developmental schemes, redressal of public grievances, the conduct of administrative affairs and governance as such.
- **The remoteness and inaccessibility of the area make the area eligible for establishing a separate Division.**

About Ladakh

- Ladakh is one of the most sparsely populated regions in Jammu and Kashmir and is the highest plateau in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, with most of it being over 9,800 feet above sea level.
- The Ladakh has a population of 1.33 lakh. The biggest ethnic group is **Buddhist having 77.30%** of the population followed by **Muslims with 13.78%** and **Hindus with 8.16%**.
- **The Jammu and Kashmir Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act, 1997**
 - Under the Act, the Hill Development Councils were established both for Leh and Kargil Districts.
 - An order to strengthen the respective Hill Development Councils Leh and Kargil, the LAHDC Act, 1997 have been amended further in 2018 to give them more powers

Asiatic Lion Conservation Project

A dedicated “Asiatic Lion Conservation Project” has been launched by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change(MoEFCC).

- MoEFCC has approved the project for three financial years from 2018 to 2021.
- The Asiatic Lion, endemic to Gir landscape of Gujarat is one of the 21 critically endangered species identified by the Ministry for taking up recovery programmes.
- The project envisages scientific management with the involvement of communities in coordination with multi-sectoral agencies for disease control and veterinary care for overall conservation of Asiatic lion.
- This project has “Species Conservation over a large landscape” approach.

Large Landscape Conservation

- Large landscape conservation is an approach to conservation and management that focuses on actions that are taken across large areas, such as entire watersheds. Large landscape conservation generally involves many forest divisions, government agencies, and conservation organizations.
- As Asiatic Lions are found only in the Gir Landscape, this project will focus on conservation efforts of Asiatic Lions over whole Gir Range.
- Modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is proposed in the conservation, protection and development efforts of the Greater Gir Region. Additional ICT will include the following:
 - GPS Based Tracking like Surveillance Tracking Animal Tracking and Vehicle Tracking
 - Automated Sensor Grid like Magnetic Sensors, Movement Sensors, and Infra-red heat sensors
 - Night vision capability enhancement
 - GIS-based real-time monitoring, analysis and report generation.

Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*)

- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- Males have only moderate mane growth at the top of the head so that their ears are always visible.
- The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.
- Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule 1
- CITES Appendix I
- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- Asiatic lions were once distributed to the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.
- At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.

US May Withdraw Zero Tariffs for India

- The US Trade Representative (USTR) is reviewing the preferential arrangement for India where the

US charges no tariff on certain exports from India to the US under the Generalized System of Preference.

Reasons

- India's FDI policy on e-commerce and mandatory data localization for global card payment companies have led to the US to review zero tariff policy.
- India revised its [FDI policy on e-commerce](#) banning online retailers like Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart from selling products of companies in which they have stakes in.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued guidelines stating that [all foreign payment companies such as MasterCard and Visa must store data locally](#) for their businesses in the country.

GSP (Generalized System of Preferences)

- The idea of granting developing countries preferential tariff rates in the markets of industrialized countries was originally presented at the first UNCTAD conference in 1964.
- The **GSP was adopted at UNCTAD in New Delhi in 1968 and was instituted in 1971.**
- There are currently 13 national GSP schemes notified to the UNCTAD secretariat.
- The **following countries grant GSP preferences:** Australia, Belarus, Canada, the European Union, Iceland, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States of America.
- GSP is the largest and oldest U.S. trade preference program. Established by the Trade Act of 1974, GSP promotes economic development by eliminating duties on thousands of products when imported from one of 120 designated beneficiary countries and territories.

Important Facts for Prelims (9th February 2019)

EC launches VVIP, cVIGIL and PwD Apps

- The **Election Commission of India** has launched a **Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP)** for **citizens for verifications of their names, new registrations, changes in the voter details and corrections in the Voter Id Cards** for the **upcoming General Elections 2019.**
- EC has also launched the **cVIGIL App**. This app provides **time-stamped, evidence-based proof of the Model Code of Conduct / Expenditure Violation, having live photo/video with auto location data.**
- Any citizen can lodge a complaint through the Mobile App. Flying Squads will then investigate the matter and the Returning Officer takes the decision.
- The status of cVIGIL can be shared with the cVIGIL complainant within a specified time limit.
- A '**PwD App**' is a **mobile application to enable Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to request for new registration, change in address, change in particulars and mark themselves as PwD** through the app was also launched. PwDs can also request for a wheelchair during polling.

National Deworming Day

- Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare conducted its eighth round of National Deworming Day.
- This year it is being observed from 8th February to 14th February.
- It was **launched in 2015 with aim to reduce the prevalence of Soil-Transmitted Helminths and parasitic intestinal worms.**
- The program is implemented with the **coordination of Ministries of Women and Child**

Development and Human Resource Development.

- It falls under the purview of the **Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan** and committed to improving the nutritional uptake in all children and adolescents.

Multinational Training Exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS'

- Recently, the **Indian Navy participated in CUTLASS Express exercise** from 27 Jan to 06 Feb 2019.
- Cutlass Express is an **exercise sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) and conducted by Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF).**
- The objective is to assess and improve maritime law enforcement capacity, promote national and regional security in eastern Africa, inform planning and operations, and shape security force assistance (SFA) efforts.
- Naval, Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from East African countries were jointly trained by mentors from USA, India, and Netherlands, with support of International Maritime Organization, Combined Maritime Force and European Naval Forces.

Helicopter-launched anti-tank missile 'Helina'

- Recently India has test-fired **Helina, the helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile** with a hit range of 7-8 km from an Army chopper.
- It is developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).**
- It is said to be one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.
- It is guided by an **infrared imaging seeker (IIR) operating** in the lock-on-before-launch mode and helps in further strengthening the defense capabilities of the country.

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