Cape Verde Turtles and Climate Change

Recent study has warned that Loggerhead turtles born at a key breeding ground in Cape Verde (an island country in the central Atlantic Ocean) will all be turned **female** because of **climate change.**

- The sex of turtles is determined by the **temperatures** at which they are incubated and warm temperatures favour females.
- If high emissions continue, over **90%** turtles could be incubated at lethally high temperatures, killing youngsters before they hatch.
    - Even under a low emissions scenario, **99.86%** of hatchlings would be **female** by **2100.**
    - Currently 84% of hatchlings at Cape Verde are female.
- Cape Verde has the third largest population of nesting loggerhead turtles.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) status of Loggerheads turtle is **vulnerable**

Loggerhead Turtles

- Loggerhead sea turtles are named for their **large heads** that support powerful jaw muscles, allowing them to crush hard-shelled prey like clams and sea urchins.
- Unlike other sea turtles they are less likely to be hunted for their meat or shell.
- The accidental capture of marine animals in **fishing gear,** is a serious problem for loggerhead turtles because they frequently come in contact with fisheries.
    Many of their nesting beaches are under threat from tourism development.
- Loggerheads are the most common turtle in the **Mediterranean,** nesting on beaches from **Greece** and **Turkey** to **Israel** and **Libya.**
- **Sea turtles** are not only living representatives of a group of reptiles that has existed

on Earth for the last 100 million years but are also a **fundamental link** in **marine ecosystems** and help maintain the health of **coral reefs** and **seagrass beds.**