28th Meeting of the Plants Committee (PC28) – CITES

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in News?

The 28th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC28) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is being held in Geneva.

- **PC28 –** 1st plant-focused meeting since CoP20 (Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Dec 2025) and marks the beginning of a new 3-year cycle leading up to CoP21 (Panama City, Nov 2028).
- **Plants Committee –** One of two permanent scientific bodies under CITES (the other is the Animals Committee).
- Provides scientific and technical advice on species subject to trade rules.
- **Membership –** Around a dozen members and alternates elected from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Oceania.
- **Agenda Topics**
  - Strategic and capacity-building matters.
  - Illegal trade and enforcement.
  - Exemptions and special trade rules.
  - Regional reports.
  - Nomenclature (standard scientific naming for consistent permits across 185 member countries).
- **New Dimension –** Fungi discussed as a separate agenda item for the first time.

Background – CoP20 Decisions

- **Held in** – Samarkand (Nov–Dec 2025).
- **Red doussié, African padauk, Parlatore's podocarp –** Protections retained.
- **Chilean palm** – Added to Appendix I (strictest protection).

- **Guggul (Commiphora wightii)** – Listed under Appendix II after debate; exemption for finished retail products (capsules, tablets, perfumes, incense).

  India argued for stronger scientific backing before listing guggul; supported by Central African Republic and Congo.

India's Stake

- **Guggul –** Listing under Appendix II affects India's Ayurvedic industry; exemptions soften impact.
- **Agarwood –** India earlier kept Aquilaria malaccensis out of the Review of Significant Trade, citing cultivation in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura.
- Secured a higher export quota; India is part of the working group refining agarwood trade guidance.
- **Other Species –** India is home to red sanders, sandalwood, orchids, and medicinal plants.
- Decisions on naming, monitoring, and sustainability will directly affect export quotas and enforcement rules.

Reference

Downtoearth | PC28

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering