50th Anniversary of CITES

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

Why in news?

Recently, the CITES marked its 50th anniversary at CoP20 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

- **CITES –** The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments.
- **Aim –** To ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species.
- **Origins –** In 1963, the idea was proposed at an IUCN (World Conservation Union) meeting, it entered into force on ***1 July 1975***.
- **Membership –** As of 2025, CITES has ***185 Parties***, including India, making it one of the largest conservation agreements (most recent to join – Turkmenistan).

Key Aspects of CITES

- **Scope –** It covers over 40,000 species, including live specimens, parts, and derivatives (like skins, tusks, timber).
- **Secretariat –** It is administered by ***UNEP,*** located in ***Geneva, Switzerland.***
- **COP –** The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme consensus-based ***decision-making body***, comprises all its parties.
- **Appendices –**
  - **Appendix I** – Species threatened with extinction (trade strictly controlled).
  - **Appendix II** – Species not immediately threatened but could become so (trade monitored).
  - **Appendix III** – Species listed by specific countries to regulate trade.
- **Permits –** It requires CITES ***permits or certificates*** for legal,

sustainable trade, issued by national authorities.

- **Governing Body –** The CITES Secretariat manages the convention, with policy guidance from the Standing Committee (SC).
- **CITES in India –** Both the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (statutory body under the Ministry) are meant to combat wildlife crime.
- It assists and advises the customs authorities in the inspection of the consignments of flora and fauna as per the provisions of the ***Wild Life Protection Act of 1972***.

Quick Fact

COP 20 of CITES Summit
• **Hosted by –** Uzbekistan (Samarkand), 1st CoP in Central Asia. • **Theme –** "Bridging Nature and People" • **Anniversary** – Celebrated 50 years of CITES, reflecting on past successes and setting direction for the next 50 years. • **Decisions adopted** – Delegates adopted 353 decisions across 114 agenda items, - Granting new protections to dozens of species (including sharks, rays, hornbills, vultures, and songbirds), - Strengthening rules on elephants and caviar trade, and - Debating equity and livelihoods in wildlife governance.

References

1. SDG Knowledge Hub | %0th Anniversary of CITES
2. CITES | CITES
3. CITES | COP 20 of CITES

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