Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Prelims – *Current events of National and International importance| Bio-diversity.*

Why in News?

Recently, the Odisha Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is set to become India's newest Tiger reserve.

- Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is popularly known as ***The Land of Bisons*****.**
- It was declared a ***wildlife sanctuary in 1985.***
- **Location –** It is situated in the Bargarh district of Odisha.
- **Rivers and Dams –** The sanctuary's lifeline is the Mahanadi River, whose waters are harnessed by the Hirakud Dam.

  Hirakud Reservoir is a Wetland, Ramsar Site, and International Bird Area one of the largest man-made reservoirs and the longest dam in India.

- **Vegetation –** It is a *dry deciduous forest* with varied flora that dominates the sanctuary area.
- **Flora –** Sal, Sisoo, Bandhan, Mahul, Dhaura, Karada, Harda, Ainla, Bahada, Domkurdu, etc.
- ***Salia bamboo*** is scattered throughout the sanctuary.
- **Fauna –** Tiger, Leopard, Indian Bison (Gaur), Sambar, Spotted Deer, Chousingha (Four-horned antelope), Sloth bear, Wild boar, Langur, Percupine.
- **Migratory birds** such as Great crested grebe, Brahminy duck, Pintail, Shoveller, Godwal, Tufted pochard and several other water ducks are seen during winter.
- **Historical significance –** The sanctuary uniquely integrates India's freedom struggle history with wildlife conservation.
- ***Veer Surendra Sai*** used these rugged terrains as his operational base

against British colonial rule, making the landscape as significant historically as it is ecologically.

- **Pilgrimage – The Bara Bakra pilgrimage site** inside the sanctuary continues to attract over 5,000 annual visitors during Sankranti.
- **Technology-enabled conservation –** The sanctuary is deploying advanced monitoring systems, including camera traps and AI-based wildlife tracking.
- **Dark sky tourism –** Debrigarh has emerged as India's foremost dark sky destination, with around 1,000 sq km of habitation-free landscape.

Reference

Deccan Herald| Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.

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