Gorumara National Park

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

Why in News?

The population of one-horned rhinos has risen at the Gorumara National Park in Jalpaiguri with the birth of two rhinos in mid-August, senior foresters said recently.

- Gorumara is ***Bengal's second-largest rhino habitat*** after Jaldapara National Park in Alipurduar.
- **Located in -** Jalpaiguri, West Bengal.
- The park features forests and riverine grasslands in the *Terai region of the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas.*
- It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1949 and was declared a national park in 1992.
- **Fauna -** Indian rhinoceros, Asian elephant, Indian bison, leopard, sambar deer, barking deer, spotted deer, wild boar, and many species of birds, including peafowl, red jungle fowl and Indian hornbill.
- **Flora -** Sal forests with Common Teak, Rain Tree (Shirish or Albizia lebbeck), and Silk Cotton (Shimul or Bombax malabaricum) trees Bamboo groves, Terai grassland vegetation and tropical riverine reeds.
- Gorumara is home to numerous tropical orchids.
- **Rivers -** It is situated on the banks of ***River Murti and Raidak.***
- The major conservation focus of the park is to maintain a viable breeding community of Indian Rhinoceroses.

Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros

• **Scientific Name** - Rhinoceros unicornis.
• **Habitat -** Found in the Indo-Nepal terai, Northern West Bengal, and Assam, with Kaziranga National Park being a critical habitat.
• **Distribution -** It can be found in India and Nepal, particularly in the foothills of the Himalayas.
• **Appearance –** It is characterized by its large, bulky body covered in thick, grey-brown skin that forms distinctive armor-like folds, giving it an ancient appearance.
• It possesses a single, black horn on its snout made of keratin, a prehensile upper lip, and poor eyesight but excellent hearing and smell.
• They are the ***largest of the Asian rhinos***, with males being significantly larger than females.



• **Conservation Status - IUCN -** Vulnerable.
• **Major Threats**
  - **Poaching -** For their horns, which are highly valued in some cultures.
  - **Habitat Loss & Degradation -** Due to factors like invasive plant species.
• **Conservation Initiatives**
  - **Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020):** An ambitious campaign aiming to increase wild rhino numbers in Assam.
  - **National Rhino Conservation Strategy:** A plan involving India and Nepal to manage rhino populations across the political boundary.

Reference

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