India’s Proposals at CMS

Why in News?

India has proposed inclusion of some species on Appendix-I of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

What were India’s proposals?

- Those species that India wants to include are the Great Indian bustard, Asian elephant and Bengal florican.
- It was accepted by a committee at the 13th Conference of the Parties to CMS (CMS COP13) held in India for the first time.
- [Appendix-I lists species threatened with extinction.
- Appendix-II lists those species in need of global cooperation for favourable conservation status.]
- If listed on Appendix-I, it would facilitate trans-boundary conservation efforts of these species.

What does the Convention seek to do?

- CMS is a treaty functioning under the UN Environment Programme.
- It works for protection and conservation of species that migrate across frontiers and are facing threats of extinction or require urgent attention.
- It aims to bring together different countries that are part of range of a given species.
- It will also facilitate coherent conservation and protection regimes in a group of countries.

Why do migratory species need special attention for conservation?

- With a change in season, many species move from one country to another in search of food and shelter, and for breeding.
- However, wildlife laws and protection regimes for these species can be different in each country.
- This makes them vulnerable to taking, hunting, poisoning etc.
- Many migratory species are threatened with extinction due to habitat degradation, barriers in their migration routes, and other pressures.
- Therefore, these species need special attention by all countries that are part of their range.

How does listing on a CMS Appendix help a species?

- Listing generally leads to concerted actions in different national jurisdictions in which a species ranges.
- Actions may include cooperation among range countries, harmonization in policies etc through regional agreements.
- CMS has **working groups** specializing in various fauna families.
- It also has a **Scientific Council** that advises research-based solutions for conservation.
- Many countries started shifting towards renewable energy by building infrastructure like wind turbines, solar parks; these pose risks to wildlife.
- CMS set up in 2014 an **Energy Task Force** that advises contracting parties on how to keep their energy projects wildlife-friendly.

So, what changes for the species in India's proposals?

- If the plenary eventually adopts these proposals and the listing goes through, a formal regional cooperation among range countries would become possible.
- Once the listing is done, contracting parties within the range of a species are obliged to cooperate in trans-border conservation efforts.
- Bangladesh welcomed the proposals on the elephant and the florican.
- However, Pakistan did not express any views on the proposal on the great Indian bustard.
- Conservation efforts would also gain from the international expertise of the CMS family.
- It could increase pressure on Pakistan for preventing alleged hunting of the great Indian bustard.

What else is on the agenda of the conference?

- Besides the three species, proposals have been moved for including **seven other species** for listing on CMS Appendices.
- COP13 also discussed marine noise pollution, plastic pollution, light pollution, insect decline etc.
- India has invited the COP13 to adopt the '**Gandhinagar Declaration**'.
- This declaration will urge the world community to strive for ensuring ecological connectivity, especially for sustainable management and conservation of migratory species.
- India has proposed that once adopted, CMS forward this declaration to the 15th meeting of UN Convention on Biological Diversity conference in China in October this year.
- This will prepare post-2020 global bio-diversity framework.

Source: The Indian Express

