Pangolins

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

Why in News?

Recently, the Sangtam community in Nagaland has resolved to protect pangolins, a heavily trafficked mammal, strengthening community-led conservation along the India-Myanmar border.

- **Pangolins –** Pangolins are ***mammals covered in scales, also known as scaly anteaters.***
- **Types – 4 Asian species -** Chinese, Sunda, Indian, and Philippine pangolins.
- **4 African species -** Temminck's Pangolin, giant pangolin, white-bellied, and black-bellied.
- **Habitat –** They live in tropical forests and grasslands.
- **Distribution –** They are found across tropical and subtropical regions of Africa and Asia
- **India –** ***India is home to two species***
  - The Indian Pangolin is found across the subcontinent.
  - The Chinese Pangolin in the Northeast Region.

The name "pangolin" originates from the Malay word pengguling, which translates to "rolling up".

- **Behaviour –** Nocturnal in nature, burrowing and insectivorous; rolls into a protective ball when threatened.
  - These animals are insectivores; they have no teeth, so they use their sticky tongues to pick up food.
- **Uniqueness –** They are the only mammals wholly covered in keratin scales, and they use those scales to protect themselves from predators in the wild.
- **Diet –** They eat ants, termites, and larvae, essential players in controlling insect populations within their ecosystems.

World Pangolin Day *is observed annually on the third Saturday of February.*

- **Threats –** ***Trafficked for scales and meat***, which are in high demand across Asia and Africa.

- Poaching, illegal wildlife trade, habitat fragmentation, and cross-border trafficking.
- **Conservation Status –**
- **IUCN Status –**
    - *Indian Pangolin – Endangered*
    - *Chinese pangolin – Critically Endangered*
- Both are,
    - **CITES –** Appendix I.
    - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 –** Schedule I.

Reference

TH | Sangtam community on pangolin conservation

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