Saraswathi Wildlife Sanctuary

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

Why in News?

The sanctuary recently gained prominence following the development of Nakshatra Vatika (Constellation Garden) in its Pehowa region.

- It is Located in Kaithal district of ***Haryana.***
- It is also known as Seonsar Forest.
- **Geography -** It is associated with the mythical ***Saraswati River.***
- It holds the distinction of being the 3rd-largest forest in the state, right after Kalesar National Park and Morni Hills.
- It lies in the ***Shivalik foothills of the Himalayas.***
- **Establishment-** Declared as a wildlife sanctuary in the year 1982.
- It is officially designated as a Conservation Reserve on ***October 11, 2007.***
- **Archaeological Finds -** Excavations within the sanctuary have unburied ancient rectangular bricks belonging to the ***Kushan and Gupta periods,*** proving human habitation dating back over 1,500 years.
- It also houses a 400-year-old ***Mughal-era water well*** built using small lakhauri bricks.
- **Flora-** Dominated by tropical dry deciduous forests.
- Common tree species include sal, shisham, arjun, and khejri.
- It also features scrub forest and grasslands.
- **Fauna- Mammals** - Leopards, jackals, wild boars, rhesus macaques, nilgai, barking deer.
- **Birds** - Peafowl, hornbills, and other native and migratory birds.
- **Reptiles**- Various snakes and lizards.
- **Threats -** Human encroachment, illegal logging, poaching, and habitat fragmentation.
- Efforts are ongoing for conservation and anti-poaching activities by forest department.

Reference

Times of India | Saraswathi Wildlife Sanctuary

