

1. PROTECTION STATUS AT CITES

Context: India has submitted proposals regarding changes to the listing of various wildlife species in the CITES secretariat meeting in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

- ▶▶ The proposals submitted are regarding changes in the listing of the **smooth-coated otter, small-clawed otter, Indian star tortoise, Tokay gecko, wedge fish and Indian rosewood**.

About CITES:

- ▶▶ CITES - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species on Wild Fauna and Flora**.
- ▶▶ It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.
- ▶▶ The convention was opened for signature in 1973 and CITES entered into force on 1 July 1975.
- ▶▶ **Aim:** It is an **international treaty** to ensure that **trade in wild animals and plants do not threaten their survival**.
- ▶▶ The country seeks to boost the protection of all the five animal species as they are facing a high risk of international trade.
- ▶▶ For the Indian rosewood, the proposal is to remove the species from CITES Appendix II
- ▶▶ India is among the parties proposing the re-listing of the star tortoise from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I.
- ▶▶ The species faces two threats: loss of habitat to agriculture and illegal harvesting for the pet trade
- ▶▶ With regard to the two otter species, India, Nepal and the Philippines have proposed that the listing be moved from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I for the more endangered species.
- ▶▶ A similar proposal has been made to include the Tokay gecko in Appendix I.

2. FIVE SPECIES: PRESENT STATUS

1. Indian Star Tortoise:

- ▶▶ The Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*) is a threatened species of tortoise found in dry areas and scrub forest in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
CITES	APPENDIX II
WPA 1972	Schedule IV

2. Smooth-coated otter:

- ▶▶ The smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) is an otter species occurring in most of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, with a disjunct population in Iraq.

IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
CITES	APPENDIX II
WPA 1972	Schedule II

3. Small-clawed otter:

- ▶▶ The Asian small-clawed otter (*Amblonyx cinerea*), also known as the oriental small-clawed otter or simply small-clawed otter, is a semiaquatic mammal native to South and Southeast Asia.

IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
CITES	APPENDIX I
WPA 1972	Schedule II

4. Tokay Gecko:

- ▶▶ The tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*) is a nocturnal arboreal gecko in the genus *Gekko*, the true geckos. It is native to Asia and some Pacific Islands.

WPA 1972	Schedule IV
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5. Indian Rosewood:

- ▶▶ *Dalbergia sissoo*, known commonly as North Indian rosewood, is a fast-growing, hardy deciduous rosewood tree native to the Indian Subcontinent and Southern Iran.

IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
CITES	APPENDIX II

3. Virasat-e-khalsa

Context: The **Virasat-e-Khalsa** museum in Punjab's Anandpur Sahib town is all set to find a place in the **Asia Book of Records** for becoming the most visited museum in the Indian sub-continent

- ▶▶ The museum had witnessed a record footfall of 20,569 visitors on a single day on March 20, becoming the most visited museum in the Indian sub-continent on a single day



About:

- ▶▶ Virasat-e-Khalsa was built to commemorate the rich history and culture of Punjab and Sikhism and was inaugurated in November 2011.
- ▶▶ With its name in the Asia Book of Records, it would be the third entry for the museum in record books.
- ▶▶ Earlier, Virasat-e-Khalsa made it to Limca Book of Records in the February 2019 edition and India Book of Records.
- ▶▶ The Limca Book of Records and India Book of Records had listed '**Virasat-e-Khalsa**' as **the country's top-ranked museum in terms of the number of visitors.**
- ▶▶ The museum has been conferred an award by the **Punjab Energy Development Agency** in a State-level energy conservation competition, for **cutting down electricity consumption.**

4. WORLD BIOFUEL DAY

Context: World Biofuel Day is observed every year on 10th of August and organized by **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.**

Aim: To create awareness about the **importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels** and highlight the various efforts made by Government in the biofuel sector.

- ▶▶ Theme of the World Biofuel Day: "**Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)**".

Benefits:

- ▶▶ Reduction of import dependence
- ▶▶ Cleaner environment
- ▶▶ Additional income to farmers and
- ▶▶ Employment generation

Present Scenario:

- ▶▶ In India, the same cooking oil is used for repeated frying which adversely affects the health due to formation of polar compounds during frying.
- ▶▶ These polar compounds are associated with diseases such as **hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, liver diseases** among others.
- ▶▶ The National Policy on Biofuels, released by the Government of India in 2018, envisages production of biofuel from UCO.
- ▶▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is implementing a strategy to divert UCO from the food value chain and curb current illegal usage
- ▶▶ The National Policy on Biofuels - 2018 envisages a target of **5% blending of Biodiesel in HSD by 2030.**

5. NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARDS

Context: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship announces fourth edition of **National Entrepreneurship Awards, 2019**

- ▶▶ As an important step to catalyse a cultural shift in youth for entrepreneurship, the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** has instituted the National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA)
- ▶▶ **Aim:** To recognize and honour outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders for their exceptional contribution in entrepreneurship development.
- ▶▶ The National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA 2019) is the **4th edition** in the NEA series.
- ▶▶ The awards seek to instill and entrench the entrepreneurial attitude among the future generations and the Youth of India.

6. SARDAR SAROVAR DAM

Context: The Gujarat government on August 9 opened 26 of the 30 gates at the Sardar Sarovar Narmada dam for the first time after they were installed in 2017 to maintain the water level of 131.18 m allowed by the **Narmada Control Authority (NCA)** in the reservoir

About Sardar Sarovar Dam:

- ▶▶ It is a **gravity dam** on the **Narmada river** near Navagam, Gujarat in India.
- ▶▶ Four Indian states, **Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan,** receive water and electricity supplied from the dam.
- ▶▶ The foundation stone of the project was laid out by **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** on 5 April 1961.

- ▶▶ The project took form in 1979 as part of a development scheme funded by the **World Bank** through their **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development**, to increase irrigation and produce hydroelectricity, using a loan of US\$ 200 million

7. SAMAGRA SHIKSHA-JAL SURAKSHA' DRIVE - WATER CONSERVATION

Context: Union HRD Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' will launch '**Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha**' drive to **create awareness about Water Conservation** among all school students in the country.

Objective:

- ▶▶ To educate students learn about conservation of water
- ▶▶ To sensitize Students about the impact of scarcity of water
- ▶▶ To empower Students to learn to protect the natural sources of water
- ▶▶ To help every Student to save at least one litre of water per day.
- ▶▶ To encourage Students towards judicious use and minimum wastage of water at home and school level.

Highlights:

- ▶▶ It is a time bound campaign with a mission mode approach.
- ▶▶ This concept of water conservation is essential for students so that they can understand the importance of water and how it is shaping their lives meaningfully, thereby enabling them to participate in water conservation activities in their day to day lives.
- ▶▶ MHRD has launched the 'Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha' drive to promote water conservation activities for School Students, so that they can become competent, conscientious and committed water citizens of our nation.