

India Submits Sixth National Report To The Convention Of Biological Diversity

(CBD) In News

- India has submitted the sixth national report (NR6) to Convention on Biodiversity.
- The report provides an update of progress in achievement of 12 National Biodiversity Targets (NBT) developed under the Convention process in line with the 20 global Aichi biodiversity targets.

Key Highlights Of The Report

- India is among the first five countries in the world, the first in Asia and the first among the biodiversity rich mega diverse countries to have submitted such report.
- According to the report, India has exceeded/overachieved two NBTs, and it is on track to achieve eight NBTs.
- In respect of the remaining two NBTs, India is striving to meet the targets by the stipulated time of 2020.
- With well over 20 percent of its total geographical area under biodiversity conservation, India has exceeded the terrestrial component of **17 percent of Aichi target 11**, and 20 percent of corresponding NBT relating to **areas under biodiversity management**.
- Similarly, India has also made noteworthy achievement towards NBT relating to **access and benefit sharing (ABS)** by operationalising the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.
- India has done well on **raising awareness about biodiversity**, which is an important thrust area in several programmes of the Government.
- India is a megadiverse country harbouring nearly 7-8% of globally recorded species while supporting 18% of the global human population on a mere 2.4% of the world's land area.
- In this context, India's quest for inclusive economic development while maintaining integrity of its natural capital is being pursued through various programmes and strategies.
- Measures have been adopted for sustainable management of agriculture, fisheries and forests, with a view to provide food and nutritional security to all without destroying the natural resource base while ensuring intergenerational environmental equity.
- Programmes are in place to maintain genetic diversity of cultivated plants, farms livestock and their wild relatives, towards minimising genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.
- Mechanisms and enabling environment are being created for recognising and protecting the vast heritage of coded and oral traditional knowledge relating to biodiversity for larger human welfare while safeguarding the interests and rights of the local communities as creators and holders of this knowledge.

About CBD

- CBD, known informally as the Biodiversity Convention, is a multilateral treaty.
- The Convention has three main goals including: **the conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.**

National Biodiversity Targets of India

1. **Biodiversity awareness** - By 2020, a significant proportion of the country's population, especially the youth, is aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably
2. **Biodiversity Valuation and Poverty Alleviation** - By 2020, values of biodiversity are integrated in national and state planning processes, development programmes and poverty alleviation strategies.
3. **Safeguarding Natural Habitats** - Strategies for reducing rate of degradation, fragmentation and loss of all natural habitats are finalized and actions put in place by 2020 for environmental amelioration and human well-being. **Managing Invasive Species** - By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and strategies to manage them developed so that populations of prioritized invasive alien species are managed.
4. **Sustainable Landscape** - By 2020, measures are adopted for sustainable management of agriculture, forestry and fisheries
5. **Protected Areas** - Ecologically representative areas are conserved effectively and equitably, based on protected area designation and management and other area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes, covering over 20% of the geographic area of the country, by 2020
6. **Maintaining Genetic Diversity** - By 2020, genetic diversity of cultivated plants, farm livestock, and their wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.
7. **Ecosystem Services** - By 2020, ecosystem services, especially those relating to water, human health, livelihoods and well-being, are enumerated and measures to safeguard them are identified, taking into account the needs of women and local communities, particularly the poor and vulnerable sections.
8. **Access and Benefit Sharing** - By 2015, Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization as per the Nagoya Protocol are operational, consistent with national legislations.
9. **Inclusive Governance** - By 2020, an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity action plan is made operational at different levels of governance
10. **Protecting Traditional Knowledge** - By 2020, national initiatives using communities' traditional knowledge relating to biodiversity are strengthened, with the view to protecting this knowledge in accordance with national legislations and international obligations.
11. **Resource Mobilization** - By 2020, opportunities to increase the availability of financial, human and technical resources to facilitate effective implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the national targets are identified and the Strategy for Resource Mobilization is adopted.

- Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2019 has been released.
- CCPI is an annual publication by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network Europe. It evaluates the climate protection performance of 60 countries.

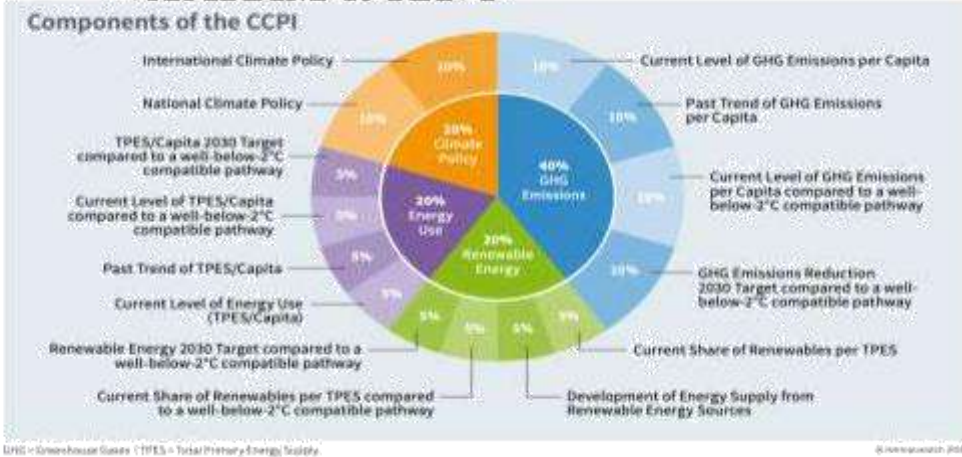
Key Highlights

- **Morocco** has been named the **second best performing country after Sweden** in the **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)**.
- The North African country significantly increased the share of renewables over the past five years and increased new renewable energy capacity.
- **Sweden is in top position, followed by Morocco and Lithuania in the CCPI 2019.**
- The bottoms five in the list are Saudi Arabia, U.S., Iran, South Korea and Taiwan.

- With the connection of the world's largest solar plant to the grid, Morocco is on track for achieving its target of 42% installed renewable energy capacities by 2020.

India Specific Observation

- India ranks 11th in this year's CCPI, improving its standing by three places compared to the previous edition.
- Most notably India **improved its performance in the Renewable Energy category**, joining the group of medium performers.
- Comparatively low levels of per capita GHG emissions and a relatively ambitious mitigation target for 2030 give India an overall high rating in the emissions category.



Agricultural Project with FAO

In News

The government has launched a **Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project** namely, “**Green – Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environment benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes**” in collaboration with the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)**.

Key Highlights

- The project has been launched in **high-conservation-value landscapes** of five States namely (i) **Madhya Pradesh**: Chambal Landscape, (ii) **Mizoram**: Dampa Landscape, (iii) **Odisha**: Similipal Landscape, (iv) **Rajasthan**: Desert National Park Landscape and v) **Uttarakhand**: Corbett-Rajaji Landscape.
- The project seeks to mainstream biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.
- The overall objective of the project is to catalyze transformative change of India's agricultural sector to support achievement of national and global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes.
- The project will support harmonization between India's agricultural and environmental sector priorities and investments.

About GEF

- The Global Environment Facility was established on the eve of the **1992 Rio Earth Summit** to help tackle most pressing environmental problems.
- Since then, the GEF has provided over **\$17.9 billion in grants** and **mobilized an additional \$93.2 billion in co-financing** for more than 4500 projects in 170 countries.
- GEF funds are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to

meet the objectives of the international environmental conventions and agreements.

- GEF support is provided to government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector companies, research institutions, among the broad diversity of potential partners, to implement projects and programs in recipient countries.

About FAO:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- It is headquartered at Rome, Italy.

Government Launches National Clean Air

Programme In News

- Union Environment Minister has launched the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** to combat air pollution in a **comprehensive and time-bound manner**.
- The programme's objective is to put in place mitigation actions for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution.

Key Highlights

- The tentative national level target of 20%–30% reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024 is proposed under the NCAP taking 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration.
- The programme will **augment the air quality-monitoring network** across the country and will strengthen the awareness and capacity building activities.
- The NCAP will **be a mid-term, five-year action plan with 2019 as the first year**.
- However, many studies indicate that significant outcome in terms of air pollution initiatives are visible only in the long-term.
- Hence, the programme may be further extended to a longer time horizon after a mid-term review of the outcomes.
- **The approach for NCAP includes collaborative, multi-scale and cross-sectoral coordination** between the relevant central ministries, state governments and local bodies.
- Dovetailing of the existing policies and programmes including the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and other initiatives of Government of India in reference to climate change will be done while execution of NCAP.
- There will be **use of the Smart Cities program** to launch the NCAP in the 43 smart cities falling in the list of the 102 non-attainment cities.
- The NCAP is **envisaged to be dynamic and will continue to evolve** based on the additional scientific and technical information as they emerge.
- **City specific action plans** are being formulated for 102 non-attainment cities identified for implementing mitigation actions under NCAP.
- **Institutional Framework** at Centre and State Level comprising of Apex Committee at the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change in the Centre and at Chief Secretary Level in the States are to be constituted.

- Other features of NCAP include, *increasing number of monitoring stations in the country including rural monitoring stations, technology support, emphasis on awareness and capacity building initiatives, setting up of certification agencies for monitoring equipment, source apportionment studies, emphasis on enforcement, specific sectoral interventions etc.*

Today cities occupy just 3% of the land, but contribute to 82% of GDP and responsible for 78% of Carbon dioxide emissions; cities though are engines of growth and equity but they have to be sustainable and it is in this context that NCAP being a very inclusive program holds special relevance.

Parliamentary Panel On Western Ghats

In News


- The **Committee on Government Assurances** in the Rajya Sabha had submitted its report.
- The panel examined **issues regarding the categorisation of Western Ghats parts as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs)** as per the recommendations of two different committees led by Madhav Gadgil and K. Kasturirangan.

The Committee on Government Assurances keeps track of assurances given by Ministers on the floor of the Upper House while replying to queries from parliamentarians.

Key Highlights

- Over 56,000 km of **ecologically sensitive areas in the Western Ghats** could not be earmarked as ‘no-go’ zones for polluting activities due to State governments’ ‘insensitivity’.
- Large-scale de-forestation, mining and construction activities were continuing unabated, hurting the ecology of the Western Ghats.
- **Floods a warning - The recent catastrophic monsoon floods in Kerala and parts of Karnataka should serve as alarm bells for administrations** in the six States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka that have failed to mark ecologically sensitive areas in the Western Ghats.
- The Committee is of the view **that implementation of recommendations of Kasturirangan report** is only possible with active support of local population.
- It also requires intrinsic consultation with the State Government at micro level to achieve the desired objectives of saving the Western Ghats.

WHAT THE REPORTS SAY



KASTURIRANGAN	GADGIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identified 37% (approx.) of the Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive area ➤ New building and construction projects of below 20,000 square meter, township and area development projects as well as other projects/activities will be allowed in ESA ➤ Ban of mining, quarrying, sand mining and thermal power plants brought under red category industries in ESAs ➤ Hydro power has been recommended to be allowed in the ESA subject to stringent conditions. Wind energy is permitted in the ESAs subject to applicable regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The WGEPP divided the Western Ghats region into three ecologically sensitive zones (ESZ). In ESZ-1, there will be a ban on the use of private forest land for non-forest purpose or agricultural activity allowing extension of village settlements ➤ ESZ-2 allows renovation and extension of existing structures ➤ In ESZ 1 and 2, introduction of organic farming and banning pesticides over a period of time ➤ Approval of Grama Sabhas for projects and is against mega- hydel projects, thermal projects, mining and quarrying in ESZ

India Demands Removal Of Rosewood From

CITES In News

India has proposed to **remove rosewood (*Dalbergia sissoo*)** from Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**).

Key Highlights

- The species is currently part of **Appendix II of CITES** that has species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival.
- However, India does not want that for rosewood. The species grows at a very fast rate and has the capacity to become naturalised outside its native range, even it is invasive in some parts of world.
- India sent the proposal **ahead of the 18th Conference of Parties (COP) of CITES, which will be held in Colombo from May 23 to June 3.**
- Apart from *Dalbergia sissoo*, India has also proposed to transfer **small clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*), smooth coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), Indian Star Tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*)** from Appendix II to Appendix I, thereby giving more protection to the species.
- The proposal also includes inclusion of *Gekko gekko* and Wedgefish (*Rhinidae*) in Appendix II of CITES. It says that *Gekko gekko* is traded highly for Chinese traditional medicine.
- Regulation of trade in the species is required to ensure that the harvest of specimens from the wild is not reducing the wild population to a level at which its survival might be threatened by continued harvesting or other influences.

CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. All import, export, re-exports and introduction from the sea of species covered by the convention has to be authorized through a licensing system. CITES is legally binding on the Parties, however, it does not take the place of national laws.

It has **three appendices**. **Appendix I** has species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. **Appendix III** contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES parties for assistance in controlling trade.

Ban On Plastic

In News

India won Global acclaim for its “**Beat Plastic Pollution**” resolve declared on World Environment Day last year. Under this resolve, it pledged to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.

Issue

- ✓ **The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016** are clear that producers, importers and brand owners must **adopt a collect-back system** for the plastic they introduce into the environment.
- ✓ Although the rules were notified in the same year, not much has been done to take the process forward.
- ✓ At the very least, local bodies should consult manufacturers or importers to assess the problem.
- ✓ Delaying such a measure has created the anomalous situation of small producers of plastics facing the ban, while **more organised entities** covered by the Extended Producer Responsibility clause **continue with business as usual**.

- ✓ Such enforcement failure is not an argument in favour of relaxing the prohibition on flimsy plastics that are typically used for under 15 minutes, but to recover thousands of tonnes of waste that end up in dumping sites.
- ✓ There is little doubt that plastics play a major role in several industries, notably in the automotive, pharmaceutical, health care and construction sectors.
- ✓ But it is the **fast moving consumer goods sector** that uses large volumes of packaging, posing a higher order challenge.

National Wildlife Board Clears ONGC Trishna Gas

Project In News

The National Wildlife Board has given its approval for the **Trishna Gas project** of ONGC which falls in the **Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in the Gomati district of Tripura**.

Trishna Gas Project

- ONGC has discovered 10-12 gas bearing wells in the Trishna Wildlife sanctuary. The gas extracted from these wells would be supplied to the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO) owned 100 MW gas-based thermal power project at Monarchak in Sonamura subdivision of Sipahijala district of Tripura.
 - **Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary:** The Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary **is located in Tripura**. It was established in 1988. The vegetations in the sanctuary fall under four broad categories of tropical semi-evergreen forest, the east Himalayan lower Bhanar sal, Moist mixed deciduous forest and the Savanah woodland.
- **National Wildlife Board:** National Board for Wild Life is a statutory organization constituted under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. It is an apex body to review all wildlife-related matters and approves projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.
 - The National Board for Wild Life is chaired by the Prime Minister, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the vice-chairman of the Board and the members include 15 non-government members, 19 ex-officio members and 10 government officials such as secretaries.

Odisha Takes Its First Step Towards Promoting Turtle Tourism

In News

- Odisha's Puri beach witnessed its first **turtle festival** on January 13, 2019.
- The aim of this festival was to promote eco-tourism, which in turn could help conserve Olive Ridley turtle.
- While Odisha has half of the world's Olive Ridley turtle population, 90 per cent of India's turtle population lives in the state. Despite that no actions have been taken for their conservation.
- **The Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant** of all sea turtles found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans and is categorized as **'Vulnerable'** by IUCN.
- The Olive ridley is the most numerous among the sea turtles found in India and is well **known for its arribadas, or annual mass nestings** when thousands of turtles migrate to the breeding ground to nest simultaneously.

Why The Need For Turtle Tourism?

- Turtles and tourism go together in Australia, Coast Rica, Mexico, Sri Lanka and other countries, where tourists visit beaches to see the turtles by paying hefty amounts. But, Odisha is yet to attract tourists for this.
- Four years back, the state government had announced an eco-tourism project in the rookeries of turtles, but it never took off. States like Goa and Kerala have already launched programmes to woo tourists by keeping few sea turtles in some pens near beaches.

Hawaiian Tree Snail**In News**

- Hawaiian tree snail has become the first species to be declared **officially extinct in 2019**.
- Climate change and invasive predators have taken a heavy toll on native animals and insects in the Hawaiian Islands
- The passing of **George**, a member of the ***Achatinella apexfulva* species** and a tree **snail** who fed on tree fungus, algae and bacteria, epitomizes the decline of biodiversity on the Hawaiian islands
- **Snails like George** used to be ubiquitous throughout the Hawaiian islands. In fact, the *Achatinella apexfulva* was the very first snail species to be written about by non-native scientists.

Bhitarkanika Now Has More Estuarine Crocodiles**In News**

The population of the saltwater or estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) has increased in the water bodies of Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park and its nearby areas in Kendrapara district, with forest officials counting 1,742 individuals in this year's annual reptile census.

Findings

- During the two day-long crocodile census, it was sighted 619 hatchlings, 347 yearlings, 273 juveniles, 178 sub-adults (six-eight feet long) and 325 adults (more than 8 feet long).
- The increase in population was primarily due to the far-sighted measures of the government. "In 1975, the Union Ministry of Forest and Environment, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, had started a crocodile breeding and rearing project in **Dangamala within the Bhitarkanika Park**.
- *Nine years back, the Guinness Book of World Records recorded a 23-foot-long saltwater crocodile in Bhitarkanika as the largest crocodile in the world.*

The three species of crocodilians—saltwater, Mugger and Gharial— breeding programmes had been started in 1975 in 34 places in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other states in India and Nepal. But the saltwater crocodile conservation programme in Bhitarkanika is the most successful one, as in 1975, Bhitarkanika was the home of only 96 crocodiles

Clean Ganga Fund**In News**

- The officials and partners of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) came together on one platform, to make personal donations to the Clean Ganga Fund on a voluntary basis.

- The Clean Ganga Fund was established as a Trust under the Indian Trusts Act with the Union Finance Minister heading the Board. DG, NMCG acts as the CEO of the Clean Ganga Fund.
- Domestic donors to the CGF are eligible for **100% income tax exemption** under Section 80 G (1) (i) of the Income Tax Act 1961.
- Contributions to CGF also fall **within the purview of CSR activity** as defined in Schedule VII to the Companies Act, 2013.

Project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management

Assures In News

- The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) -supported Project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management (SCATFORM) was officially **inaugurated in Tripura**.
- The objective of the Project is to manage and enhance forest area ecosystems in the project area thereby contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable socio-economic development in Tripura.
- It will be done by sustainable forest ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation, livelihood improvement support and strengthening institutional capacity.

Key Highlights

- Through this project, JICA focuses to **improve the quality of forests** in Tripura and to **conserve the ecosystem** through participatory and collaborative management.
- The Project will work towards enhancing forest ecosystems through catchment protection approach, thereby improving the quality of forest and lives of forest-dependent communities in the state.
- One of the unique approaches of this project is **co-financing by the State Government**.
- The **Tripura Forest Department (TFD)** is the Executing Agency of the Project.
- The Project will be implemented mainly in upper catchments where forest degradation and soil erosion are severe and livelihood improvement needs are high.
- The activities will include promotion of bamboo plantation, agroforestry based livelihood, eco-tourism development, development of value addition for bamboo and other **Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP)** in order to create alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities.
- Also, JICA aims to collaborate for the **enhancement of the bamboo industry** through the Project under the idea of "**Japan-India Act East Forum**".
- This forum's objective is to expand the cooperation between Japan and India in the North Eastern Region (NER).

New Global Alliance To Help End Plastic Waste

In News

Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW), comprising about 30 companies, aims to invest \$1.5 billion over the next five years in fight against plastic pollution.

Highlights of the Alliance:

- The aim is to develop solutions to mitigate plastic pollution and promote a circular economy by utilising used plastics.

- Designed as a non profit organization, the Alliance includes companies from across North and South America, Europe, Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa as well as the Middle East are part of the Alliance.
- Member companies include those that make, use, sell, process, collect and recycle plastics, as well as chemical and plastic manufacturers, consumer goods companies, retailers, converters, and waste management companies, also called the plastics value chain. **From India, Reliance Industries will advance efforts towards a sustainable future.**

Small Woodbrow butterfly

In News

- After a span of 120 long years, researchers at the Sikkim University in Gangtok have rediscovered the Small **Woodbrow butterfly species from Bakhim in Khanchendzonga National Park.**
- This finding has opened the possibility of occurrence of more species of butterflies in the region which is one of the 36 biodiversity hotspots of the world.

Key Highlights

- The **Small Woodbrow butterfly, scientifically known as *Lethe nicetella*** is named after its brown-coloured wings patched with white round spots.
- **It is amongst the smallest members of the genus *Lethe*, with wings that are up to 50 millimeters long.**
- The species is **endemic to the eastern Himalayas** and occurs in forests lying between elevations of 1,800-2,800 metres.
- Across the world, **species of *Lethe* are found in Sunda Islands, Japan, Siberia, Himalayas and peninsular India.**
- Of the 41 species of *Lethe* that are found in India, 32 species are reported from Sikkim alone.

Importance Of The Butterfly Species

- Butterflies are important components of the natural ecosystem. They help to pollinate flowers—a process which is necessary for plants to produce viable seeds.
- Also, some species of butterflies feed on plants, some on animal dung, and very few on smaller insects like aphids, making them important links of Nature's food chain.
- Butterflies are also used as indicator species—that is, species whose abundance and physical traits are used by scientists to study forest or ecosystem health.

The South Asian Nitrogen Hub

In News

The UK Government announces its commitment to fund a major international research programme to tackle the challenge that nitrogen pollution poses for the environment, food security, human health and the economy in South Asia.

Key Highlights

- **The South Asian Nitrogen Hub**, a partnership led by the **UK's Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.**
- 50 organisations from across the UK and South Asia have collaborated with funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under its **Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).**

- Nitrogen is a naturally occurring element that is a component of all proteins and essential for all life - humans, animals and plants. Unreactive nitrogen gas (N₂) makes up 78 per cent of the air we breathe.

Why Focus On Nitrogen

- Public debate about planetary health tends to focus on carbon.
- But nitrogen is also critically important as it is connected to air pollution, biodiversity loss, the pollution of rivers and seas, ozone depletion, health, economy and livelihoods.
- Nitrogen pollution is caused, for example, by emissions from chemical fertilizers, livestock manure, and burning fossil fuels.
- Previous efforts have addressed only specific aspects of the problem, while the Hub will bring these together in a more coherent approach.
- Nitrogen pollution presents **significant barriers to achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** on: Zero Hunger, Climate Action, Good Health & Well-being, Clean Water & Sanitation, Affordable & Clean Energy, Life Below Water, Life on Land, No Poverty, Responsible Consumption & Production, and Decent Work & Economic Growth.

Impact of Nitrogen Pollution

- **Nitrogen pollution comes in many forms, with multiple impacts - for humans, animals and plant life.**
- Gases such as ammonia (NH₃) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) contribute to poor air quality and can aggravate respiratory and heart conditions, leading to millions of premature deaths across the world.
- Similarly, nitrous oxide (N₂O) is a **greenhouse gas** that depletes the ozone layer.
- Nitrate from chemical fertilizers, manure and industry pollutes rivers and seas, posing a health risk for humans, fish, coral and plant life.
- Atmospheric nitrogen pollution stimulates growth of certain plants at the expense of more sensitive species with a high conservation value.
- There is a significant risk to global biodiversity hotspots such as the Himalayan foothills.
- The Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP) has the highest ammonia (NH₃) concentrations in the world, arising mainly from livestock excreta and urea fertilizer used in agriculture.

Golden Langur Breeding Project In Assam

In News

- Assam has announced the success of Golden Langur Conservation Breeding Programme in State.
- The golden langur conservation project was undertaken at the **Assam State Zoo in Guwahati** during the 2011-12 fiscal.

About the Programme

- The zoo authorities had shifted **a pair of golden langurs — Bolin and Lovely** — from the display enclosure to the isolated which resulted into birth of female infant.
- Villagers surrounding an area, which is a contiguous forest patch having Manas National Park on the west and Royal Manas National Park of Bhutan on the north, have extended their support for the creation of Golden Langur Habitat Conservation.

- Golden langur, which are on the list of **25 most endangered primates** of the world, have finally got a secure landscape of their own.
- Apart from a 60 square mile area in northwestern Assam, small populations of Golden Langur are found in Bhutan and Tripura.

India Cannot Handle More Tigers

In News

While conservation efforts are aimed at increasing the tiger count in India, global experts and officials in the government suggest that India must also prepare for a new challenge — of reaching the limits of its management capacity.

Issue:

- With dwindling core forest as well as the shrinking of tiger corridors (strips of land that allow tigers to move unfettered across diverse habitat), there were several challenges — alongside the traditional challenges of poaching and man-animal conflict — to India's success at tiger conservation.
- Recent attempts at translocating tigers to unpopulated reserves, such as Satkosia in Orissa, have ended badly, with one of the tigers dying.

Officially, India had 2,226 tigers as of 2014. An ongoing census is expected to reveal an update to these numbers.

However, according to head of the Global Tiger Forum, India's current capacity to host tigers ranged from 2,500-3,000 tigers.

E-waste

In News

Around 50 million tonnes of electronic waste, or e-waste, is being thrown away each year, according to a new joint United Nations report.

Highlights of the Report:

- To highlight the rising challenge posed by mountains of discarded electronics worldwide, seven UN entities came together to launch the report at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.
- The joint report, entitled, "**A New Circular Vision for Electronics – Time for a Global Reboot**", calls for a new vision for e-waste based on the "circular economy" concept.
- A **regenerative system created by circular economy** can minimize waste and energy leakage.
- **Despite growing e-waste, "A New Circular Vision" points to the importance of technologies from the so-called Internet of Things** – a network of devices that contain electronics and the connectivity that allows them to exchange data – through to cloud computing advances, which can all result in smarter recycling and tracking of e-waste.
- The report supports the work of the **E-waste Coalition, which includes** *the International Labour Organization (ILO); International Telecommunication Union (ITU); United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment); United Nations Industrial Development*

Organization (UNIDO); United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); United Nations University (UNU) and Secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.