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**