

## 20 February 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

### 1. International protection for Great Indian Bustard, Bengal Florican and Asian Elephant

#### Context:

India's proposal to include the Great Indian Bustard, the Asian Elephant and the Bengal Florican in Appendix I of UN Convention on Migratory Species was unanimously accepted at the on-going thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in Gandhinagar.

#### About UN Convention on Migratory Species:

- Adopted in 1979 and entered in to force in 1983, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) aims to build and strengthen global conservation efforts for migratory species in the air, on land, and in the seas.
- CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, is an international and intergovernmental treaty backed by the United Nations Environmental Programme.
- Its current membership is 116 nations who work to conserve migratory species throughout their range and across national borders.
- The Convention divides species into two appendices:
  - **Appendix I: Lists species that are threatened with extinction.**
  - **Appendix II: Species that need or would benefit greatly from international cooperative conservation efforts.**
- Parties work to conserve the listed species and their habitats through formal Agreements, and less formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).
- The Agreements and MOUs work to incorporate all Range states of the target species, and not just parties to the convention.

#### Asian Elephant:

- The Government of India has declared Indian elephant as a National Heritage Animal.
- The Indian elephant is also provided the highest degree of legal protection by listing it in Schedule I of the [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#).
- Placing the Indian elephant in Schedule I of the CMS Convention will fulfil the natural urge of migration of the Indian elephant across India's borders and back safely and thereby promote conservation of this endangered species for the future generations.
- Intermixing of smaller sub populations in Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar will widen the gene base of these populations.
- It will also help to reduce human elephant conflicts in many parts of its migratory routes.
- Mainland Asian elephants/Indian elephants migrate over long distances in search of food and shelter, across states and countries. Some elephants are resident while others migrate regularly in annual migration cycles.
- The proportion of resident and migratory populations depends upon size of regional populations, as well as on extent, degradation and fragmentation of their habitats.
- The **challenges** confronting Asian elephant conservation in most elephant Range State are:
  - Habitat loss and fragmentation
  - Human-elephant conflict
  - Poaching
  - Illegal trade of elephants

#### Great Indian Bustard:

- The Great Indian Bustard, an iconic, critically endangered and conservation dependent species, exhibits transboundary movements, and its migration exposes it to threats such as hunting in boundary area of Pakistan-India and power-line collisions in India.
- Inclusion of the species in Appendix I of CMS will aide in transboundary conservation efforts facilitated by International conservation bodies and existing international laws and agreement.
- The species has a small population of about 100–150 individuals that is largely restricted to the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, India.
- The species has disappeared from 90% of this range; their population has reduced by 90% within 50 years (six generations); and their threats are expected to increase in future.

### **Bengal Florican:**

- The Bengal Florican, an iconic, critically endangered species of topmost conservation priority, exhibits transboundary movements, and its migration exposes it to threats such as land use changes, collision with power transmission line at boundary area of India-Nepal and probable power-line collisions.
- Inclusion of the species in Appendix I of CMS will aid in transboundary conservation efforts facilitated by International conservation bodies and existing international laws and agreement.
- Populations have declined as a result of habitat loss, hunting and the species no longer breeds outside Protected Areas in the Indian subcontinent, except in a few areas of Assam.

For more on the COP on CMS, check [PIB dated 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020](#).

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## **2. RailMadad**

### **Context:**

RailMadad gets Silver award under Category II of National e-Governance Awards – ‘Excellence in providing Citizen Centric Delivery’.

To recognize and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) presents National e-Governance Awards every year.

### **Details:**

- RailMadad is the single portal for grievances, inquiry & assistance of all categories of railway customers.
- It is the grievance redressal portal of the Indian Railways.
- RailMadad adds to ‘ease of living’ of Railway customers in the following ways:
  - **Convergence & Integration:** RailMadad is now the single portal for grievance, inquiry and assistance, for all railway customers – passenger, freight & parcel. Customers can also give their suggestions on RailMadad.
  - **Ease of Access:** Customers can access the portal through various avenues like internet, mobile App, helpline numbers and post. The phone line facility is available in 12 languages.
  - **Ease of registering complaints:** RailMadad is linked with Railways’ existing ticketing systems like PRS & NTES. Hence journey details of passengers are automatically fetched when passenger enters PNR details, making complaint registration process simpler and easy.
  - **Accountability:** For every registered grievance, the complainant gets a unique CRN (complaint reference number), using which he/she can check the status of the grievance.

After closure of complaint, the customer gets an SMS with a link to give feedback on the quality of redressal.

- **Citizen empowerment:** RailMadad incorporates [citizen's charter](#) commitment of Indian Railways.
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### 3. National Rail Transport Institute (NRTI)

#### **Context:**

Indian Railways announces the launch of joint research initiatives and teaching programmes with University of Birmingham at the National Rail Transportation Institute.

#### **Details:**

The MoU for the joint initiative was signed in December 2019. For more on this, check [PIB dated Dec 19, 2019](#).

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### 4. Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

#### **Context:**

4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission observed.

#### **Details:**

It is a scheme launched by the Government of India in 2016 to deliver integrated project-based infrastructure in the rural areas, which will also include the development of economic activities and skill development.

For more on this scheme, check [CNA dated Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020](#).

