

22– 08 – 2022

News: Newest elephant reserve

- Recently, the **Government of India** has announced the notification of one more **Elephant Reserve (ER) Agasthyamalai** in Tamil Nadu.
- This will be the **32nd Elephant Reserve** in the country after **Singphan ER** in Nagaland was notified in 2018.
- **Agasthyamalai is Tamil Nadu's 5th Elephant Reserve** and also is a Biosphere Reserve.

Indian Elephant

- Indian Elephant is one of the 3 subspecies of Asian elephant and **native to mainland Asia**.
- More than **60% of the world's elephant population is in India**.
- IUCN protection status: **Endangered**.
- Indian Elephant is protected as per CITES in its **Appendix I** (African Elephant too) and Wildlife Protection Act in its **Schedule I**.
- It is found in **India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Malay Peninsula, Laos, China, Cambodia and Vietnam**.

- Major threats faced are **Poaching for ivory resulting in the death of male elephants and creation of imbalance in sex ratio as no. of females become high, Human – elephant conflicts, Habitat destruction and Accidents by railways.**
- The Elephant is protected through projects like **Surakshya Portal, Project Elephant, Plan BEE and MIKE.**
- **Elephant Census is conducted under the aegis of Project Elephant every 5 years (Quinquennial).**
- Most recent census shows that the **numbers of elephant in India are 27,312, most of which are in Karnataka (6049), followed by Assam (5719) and Kerala (3054).**
- Government recently proposed to merge the Elephant Census and Tiger Census from 2022 onwards.
- Recently, **Kerala government has decided to acquire private property and convert them into forests** to reduce the human – elephant conflict. 13 estates in six divisions are decided to be acquired.

News: UN Treaty on Ocean Biological Diversity

United Nations Treaty on the Ocean's Biological Diversity

- Recently, the United Nations organised the Intergovernmental Conference to draft the first ever treaty on the Ocean's Biological Diversity to conserve marine diversity in the High Seas.
- The conference was held in New York, USA.

Objectives of the Treaty

- The treaty seeks to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas of the ocean which are beyond the limits of national maritime zones.
- It will also address marine genetic resources, including questions on benefit-sharing, measures such as area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments, and the transfer of marine technology.
- The agreement will be deciding on the rights of companies that undertake exploration for biological resources in the high seas.
- With advances in biotechnology and genetic engineering, several companies see potential in exotic microbes and other organisms – several of them

undiscovered – that abide in the deep ocean and could be used for drugs, vaccines and a variety of commercial applications.

- Since marine life is already reeling from the impact of industrial fishing, climate change and other extractive industries, the **treaty seeks to protect our global oceans.**