

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY 2025 – ENVIRONMENT

NEWS: The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated every year on **22 May**.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Background of International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)

- **Commemoration:** The IDB is observed annually on **22 May** to commemorate the **adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** on this date in **1992**, during the historic **Rio Earth Summit**.
- **Purpose:** The day serves to **raise awareness** among global citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders about the **importance of biological diversity**, the **threats it faces**, and the **need for urgent conservation actions**.
- **Theme 2025:** The 2025 theme is **“Harmony with Nature and Sustainable Development,”** emphasizing the balance between human development and ecological integrity.



Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- **Origins:** The CBD was **opened for signature** during the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)** or **Rio Earth Summit in 1992**, and it entered into **force on 29 December 1993**.
- **First COP:** The first **Conference of the Parties (COP)** to the CBD was held in **1994 in the Bahamas** to initiate implementation measures.
- **Secretariat:** The **CBD Secretariat** is headquartered in **Montreal, Canada**, and manages coordination, reporting, and technical support.
- **Global Participation:** The CBD is **ratified by 196 parties**, making it one of the most **universally supported environmental treaties**. Notably, the **United States has signed but not ratified it**.

- **Objectives of CBD:**
 1. **Conservation of biological diversity.**
 2. **Sustainable use** of its components (e.g., ecosystems, species).
 3. **Fair and equitable sharing of benefits** from genetic resources (e.g., traditional knowledge, biotechnology).
- **Governing Body:** The **COP (Conference of the Parties)** meets **biennially** to make decisions on implementation, funding, and strategic priorities.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022)

- **Adoption:** Concluded at **COP15** of the CBD in **Montreal, 2022**, with leadership from **China (Kunming presidency)** and **Canada (host country)**.
- **Goal:** Aimed at reversing biodiversity loss and securing nature's contributions to people by 2050.
- **Components:**
 - **23 Action Targets by 2030** (e.g., reduce pesticide use, protect 30% of lands and oceans).
 - **4 Long-Term Goals for 2050** (related to ecosystem health, species conservation, benefit sharing, and financing).
- **Non-binding Nature:** Although globally agreed upon, the framework is **not legally binding**, but implementation is monitored through national biodiversity strategies.

India's Role and Biodiversity Profile

- **Biodiversity-rich Nation:** India is one of the **17 "mega-diverse" countries**, housing around **7-8% of the world's recorded species**, despite covering only **2.4% of Earth's land area**.
- **Ecological Regions:** Its **ten bio-geographic zones** include the Himalayas, Western Ghats, Deccan Plateau, Thar Desert, and coastal and marine ecosystems.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
 - Over **1,00,000 species of animals**.
 - Over **55,000 species of plants**, including endemic and medicinal species.

India's Conservation Efforts

A. Legal and Policy Framework

- **National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP):**
 - First adopted in **2008** and revised in **2014** to align with global biodiversity targets.
 - Outlines strategies for **ecosystem conservation, equitable benefit-sharing, and knowledge preservation**.

- **Biological Diversity Act, 2002:**
 - Provides a **regulatory structure** via:
 - **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** – for national coordination.
 - **State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs)** – for state-level regulation.
 - **Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)** – for local/community involvement.
 - Focuses on **access and benefit-sharing (ABS)**, ensuring fair usage of biological resources and traditional knowledge.
- **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs):**
 - Local-level documentation of **biological resources, traditional knowledge, and conservation practices**.
 - Serve as a tool for **community empowerment** and legal protection of local heritage.

B. Site-based Conservation

- **Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance):**
 - As of 2025, India has **89 Ramsar sites** covering over **1.35 million hectares**, the largest number in South Asia.
- **Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS):**
 - India has notified **49 such sites** under Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act.
 - These are ecologically sensitive areas with **significant cultural and biological value**.

Concluding Remarks

- **Nature-Human Link:** The International Day for Biological Diversity serves as a **critical reminder** of the **deep interdependence** between **human survival** and **ecological health**.
- **Global Challenge:** Biodiversity is declining at an **unprecedented rate** due to habitat destruction, pollution, over-extraction, climate change, and invasive species.
- **India's Unique Position:**
 - With its **biocultural diversity, ancient ecological wisdom, and active community participation**, India has the potential to **lead by example** in global biodiversity conservation.
- **Call to Action:** Meeting the goals of the **Kunming-Montreal framework** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** requires **coordinated local, national, and international efforts** toward ecosystem protection and inclusive development.

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