

**LAST MINUTE
PRELIMS
RECKONER
2023**

SPECIES IN NEWS

IMPORTANT SPECIES IN NEWS

1. CLOUDED LEOPARD

- ✓ They are included in the **Vulnerable** species around the world because they face the threat of extinction.
- ✓ Clouded Leopard is a shy and elusive wildcat and can be spotted in the Tropical dense rainforest.
- ✓ **Dampa** tiger reserve in Mizoram has one of the highest population densities.



2. ORIENTAL DARTER

- ✓ The Oriental darter or Indian darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*) is a water bird of tropical South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- ✓ It is characterized by a long and slender neck with a straight pointed bill, and it hunts for fish with its body submerged in water.
- ✓ They are classified as “**near-threatened**” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



3. HALARI DONKEY

- ✓ Halari donkeys are white and are **native to Gujarat’s Saurashtra** region.
- ✓ They are very docile and are used as pack animals during the migration of pastoralists and also for transportation as donkey carts.
- ✓ Halari donkey is an **endangered species**. A survey conducted in 2021-22 showed that their numbers in Saurashtra dipped to 439 down from 1,200 as found in the survey of 2015.



4. SAWFISH

- ✓ Sawfish also known as **carpenter sharks** are a family of rays. They are characterized by long, narrow, flattened rostrum or nose extension, lined with sharp transverse teeth resembling saw.
- ✓ Sawfish are closely related to sharks and have shark-shaped bodies, hence, they are also called flat sharks.
- ✓ IUCN Status: Different Families of Sawfish are categorised in “Endangered” and “Critically Endangered”.
- ✓ It is also listed in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972**.



5. HIMALAYAN GRIFFON VULTURE

- ✓ It is one of the two largest Old World vultures and true raptors.
- ✓ **Common name:** Himalayan vulture.
- ✓ **Distribution:** This species is found along the Himalayas and the adjoining Tibetan Plateau.
- ✓ IUCN status: **Near Threatened**

6. DROSOPHILA MELANOGASTER

- ✓ Drosophila is a genus of flies, belonging to the family Drosophilidae, whose members are often called “small fruit flies” or pomace flies, vinegar flies, or wine flies.
- ✓ One species of Drosophila in particular, *D. melanogaster*, has been **heavily used in research in genetics** and is a common model organism in developmental biology.



7. ROUGH-TOOTHED DOLPHIN

- ✓ The scientific name of this species is *Steno bredanensis*.
- ✓ This species is the only member of the genus *Steno*. *Steno* in Greek means narrow, which describes the beak of this animal. This animal **has no sub-species**.



8. HORNBILL

- ✓ Hornbills (Bucerotidae) are a family of bird found in tropical and subtropical Africa, Asia and Melanesia.
- ✓ They get their name from the horn-like structure on the top of their beak the casque. Globally,
- ✓ Hornbill distribution is limited to Sub-Saharan Africa, Indian Subcontinent, Philippines, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands.
- ✓ In India, they are found in the Western Ghats and the northeastern states.
- ✓ **Habitat**– Great hornbills inhabit the canopy of tall evergreen forests.
- ✓ **Diet**: Hornbills are one of the biggest frugivores (fruit-eating birds) in the Asian rainforest. Around 40-70% of their diet consists of large ficus fruits, figs, drupes and berries, usually red or black in colour.
- ✓ **Conservation status**: India is home to **9 species of hornbill**. All species except the oriental pied hornbill are listed under **schedule I** of the wildlife protection act (1972).
- ✓ These species are:
 - Indian Grey Hornbill (Least Concern)
 - Malabar Grey Hornbill (Vulnerable)
 - Malabar Pied Hornbill (Near Threatened)
 - Great Hornbill (Vulnerable); Also in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
 - Narcondam Hornbill (Vulnerable) is found only in the Narcondam Island of Andaman Sea.
 - Rufous-necked Hornbill (Vulnerable)
 - Wreathed-Hornbill (Vulnerable)
 - White-throated Hornbill (Near Threatened) and
 - Oriental Pied Hornbill (Least Concern)



9. OLIVE RIDLEY - Operation SaveKurma

- ✓ The Olive Ridley turtles are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles** found in the world.
- ✓ They are carnivores and get their name from their olive-colored carapace, which is heart-shaped and rounded.
- ✓ They are best known for their unique mass nesting called **Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- ✓ **Habitat:** They are mainly found in the warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- ✓ **Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary** is known as the world's largest rookery (a colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.
- ✓ **Conservation status:**
 - IUCN Red List: **Vulnerable**
 - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule 1
 - CITES Appendix I
- ✓ **Operation Olivia:** Every year, the Indian Coast Guard's "Operation Olivia", initiated in the early 1980s, helps protect Olive Ridley turtles as they congregate along the Odisha coast for breeding and nesting from November to December.



10. EMPEROR PENGUIN

- ✓ It is the tallest and heaviest of all living penguin species and is endemic to **Antarctica**.
- ✓ They are the world's deepest-diving birds. They are capable of diving to depths of approximately 550 metres (1,800 feet).
- ✓ Their population is decreasing due to the climatic changes associated with global warming. It is listed as **Near Threatened** in the IUCN Red List.



11. TRIMERESURUS MAYAAE

- ✓ Locally it is known as U Thlen.
- ✓ It looked very similar to Pope's Pit Viper but the colour of the eyes was different.
- ✓ This **new species** was relatively common in Meghalaya, Mizoram and even in Guwahati.



12. MONEY SPIDER

- ✓ It is commonly found in **European meadows**. It belongs to the family of dwarf spiders under the genus Prosoptonoides.
- ✓ Both sexes are dark brown and have irregular silver patches and black spots on the elliptical abdomen.



13. WILD BOAR

- ✓ It is the largest of the wild pigs.
- ✓ It is native to forests ranging from western and northern Europe and North Africa to India and China.
- ✓ It is listed as **Least Concern** in the IUCN Red list and under **Schedule III** in the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972.



14. SELA MACAQUE

- ✓ A new species of old-world monkey recorded from **Arunachal Pradesh** has been **named after Sela Pass**, as Sela Macaque.
- ✓ They are genetically closer to the Arunachal macaque and both species have many similar physical characteristics such as heavy built and long dorsal body hair.
- ✓ This species is a major **cause of crop damage** in West Kameng district.

**15. FISHING CAT**

- ✓ Recently, the world's first population estimation of the fishing cat has been conducted outside the protected area network.
- ✓ The fishing cat is **nocturnal** (active at night) and apart from fish also preys on frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals. The species breed all year round.
- ✓ In India, fishing cats are mainly found in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans, Chilika lagoon, on the foothills of the Himalayas along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys and in the Western Ghats.
- ✓ IUCN Status: **Endangered**.

**16. SARAS CRANE**

- ✓ It is a large **non-migratory crane** found in parts of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and Australia.
- ✓ It is the **tallest flying bird in world** standing 152-156 cm tall with a wingspan of 240cm. It is easily distinguished from other cranes in the region by its overall grey colour and the contrasting red head and upper neck.
- ✓ It is listed as **Vulnerable** on IUCN Red List and in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

**17. BLUE DUKE**

- ✓ It is a native **butterfly species of Sikkim**. It is also called Bassarona durga.
- ✓ It was first discovered in Sikkim in 1858. It is listed in **Schedule 2** of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

18. CHENKURINJI

- ✓ It is a species of a tree, **endemic to the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve**.
- ✓ It was once abundant in the hills on the southern parts of the Aryankavu Pass in Kerala's Kollam district.
- ✓ It is very susceptible to climate change and the present condition of the species is quite bad with low regeneration performance.
- ✓ It has medicinal properties and is used to **lower blood pressure** and treat arthritis.



19. EDSCANSOR COBRENSIS

- ✓ A team of researchers published paper on its fossil discovery.
- ✓ It is a reptile, belonging to Pennsylvanian subperiod of Carboniferous period, around 305 million years ago.
- ✓ It used to live in area around present-day New Mexico. The species belong to Varanopidae, which is an extinct family of reptiles.
- ✓ They were similar to monitor lizards. The ancient reptile was 24.5 cm in length and 58.3 g in weight.



20. MONARCH BUTTERFLY

- ✓ It has been recently classified **endangered** in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
- ✓ Most of these butterflies are found in winter in the California coast and forests in central Mexico.
- ✓ A smaller population of the species is also found in countries like Australia, Hawaii and India. They breed in only one particular plant The Milkweeds.



21. RED-EARED SLIDER TURTLE

- ✓ It is a very popular aquatic turtle, native to Southeastern USA and Mexico.
- ✓ It is **classified as controlled pest animal** under the Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- ✓ It emerges from the water for basking on rocks and logs. When basking, red-eared sliders commonly pile on top of each other.
- ✓ They can tolerate a wide range of habitats and are sometimes found in estuaries and coastal wetlands with brackish water.
- ✓ It is listed as **Least Concern** in the IUCN Red List.



22. TASMANIAN TIGER

- ✓ Also known as the **thylacine** (a dog headed pouched dog), it is an **extinct** carnivorous marsupial.
- ✓ It was native to the **Australian mainland** and the islands of Tasmania and New Guinea.
- ✓ The last known thylacine died in captivity 80 years ago, in 1936 at the Hobart Zoo in Tasmania.
- ✓ It disappeared mainly due to over-hunting by humans, diseases and competition from the dingo, a wild dog native to Australia.



23. AZOOXANTHELLATE CORALS

- ✓ The azooxanthellate corals are a group of corals that **do not contain zooxanthellae** and derive nourishment not from the sun but from **capturing different forms of planktons**.
- ✓ They are deep-sea representatives with the majority of species being reported from depths between 200 metres and 1,000 metres.
- ✓ They are also reported from shallow waters unlike zooxanthellate corals that are restricted to shallow waters. Azooxanthellate corals are a group of **hard corals**. Hard corals are the prime and intrinsic part of the coral reef ecosystem.



24. HAPLOPTYCHIUS SAHYADRIENSIS

- ✓ A **new species of snail** has been found in northern **Western Ghats of Maharashtra**.
- ✓ The species is endemic to Vishalgad Conservation Reserve in Kolhapur.
- ✓ It has been named after the type locality of the species in the northern part of the Western Ghats, which is Sahyadri in Sanskrit.
- ✓ India has nearly 1,450 snails and slugs with the highest diversity in north-eastern India followed by the Western Ghats.



25. GREY SLENDER LORIS

- ✓ India's first ever sanctuary for the endangered Slender Loris is to be set up in **Karur & Dindigul districts of Tamil Nadu**.
- ✓ Slender Loris is a small **nocturnal mammal** that spends most of its life on trees.
- ✓ They are native to **India and Sri Lanka** and are also amongst the world's top 25 endangered primates.
- ✓ IUCN Status: **Endangered**
- ✓ They are also protected under **Schedule 1** of the Indian legislation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA), 1972.
- ✓ They act as biological predators of pests that harm agricultural crops and help farmers.
- ✓ As per reports, there are 14,000 Slender Loris in the Dindigul and Karur forests in Tamil Nadu.



26. DENISON BARB

- ✓ Denison barb, a **native freshwater fish** species commonly found in parts of Karnataka and Kerala, has been included in **Schedule I** of the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021.
- ✓ It is an endangered species of freshwater fish endemic to the fast-flowing hill streams and rivers of the **Western Ghats** in India.
- ✓ **Threats:** Aquarium trade; pet collection.
- ✓ **Conservation status:** **Endangered** under IUCN Red list



27. GLYCOSMIS ALBICARPA

- ✓ A team of scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) has discovered a **new gin berry species** named Glycosmis albicarpa from the Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The species is **endemic to the southern Western Ghats**. The species belongs to the Orange family, Rutaceae.
- ✓ Many of the related plants of these taxonomic groups are being utilised for their medicinal values and food. Most commonly related species of these plants are collected from the wild, mainly for local use as food and medicine.



28. SPINY HORNTAIL

- ✓ Dragonfly enthusiasts have recorded the presence of a rare dragonfly species named "Spiny Horntail" that was not seen in Kerala until now.
- ✓ Spiny Horntail (*Burmagomphus chaukulensis*) is a **dragonfly species**.
- ✓ This species is known to **be endemic to the Western Ghats and was discovered in Maharashtra** earlier this year (2022).



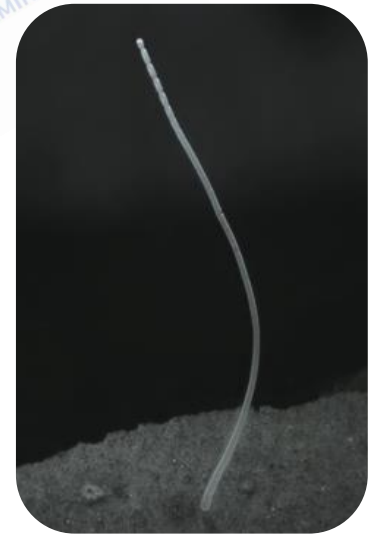
29. UTRICULARIA FURCELLATA

- ✓ It is a **rare carnivorous plant species found in Uttarakhand's Mandal valley, Chamoli district**.
- ✓ This plant was last seen in the country in **Meghalaya** state in 1986.
- ✓ These plants are mostly found in **freshwater and wet soil**.
- ✓ The plants of this genus use one of the most sophisticated and developed plant structures for traps and its targets range from protozoa to insects, mosquito larvae and even the young tadpoles.
- ✓ This is the first sighting of this plant in western Himalayan region.



30. LARGEST BACTERIUM (THIOMARGARITA MAGNIFICA)

- ✓ Scientists have discovered the world's largest known bacterium, first to be visible with the naked eye in the brackish waters of a red mangrove swamp in Guadeloupe in the **Lesser Antilles**.
- ✓ Usually bacteria are so small that they can only be seen through a microscope.
- ✓ This latest discovery of bacteria is **the first that is visible to naked eye** and it is in the form of white filaments, almost the size of human eyelashes.
- ✓ The giant white bacterium was found lurking on the rotting leaves sunken in the swamp.
- ✓ The discovery is important and unusual as according to models of cell metabolism, bacteria should not simply grow so big.
- ✓ Scientists had previously suggested an upper possible size limit about 100 times smaller than the new bacteria.
- ✓ The researchers aren't certain why the bacterium is so large, but according to a co-author of the study, it may be an adaptation to help it avoid being eaten by smaller organisms.



31. RED PANDAS :

- ✓ Red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) is a small mammal native to the **eastern Himalayas and southwestern China**.
- ✓ It is solitary and largely arboreal.
- ✓ It is the state animal of Sikkim.
- ✓ Conservation status:
 - IUCN Red List: **Endangered**
 - CITES: **Appendix I**
 - Wildlife Protection Act 1972: **Schedule I**



- ✓ The red panda inhabits coniferous forests as well as temperate broadleaf and mixed forests, favouring steep slopes with dense bamboo cover close to water sources.
- ✓ **Almost 50% of the red panda's habitat is in the Eastern Himalayas.** The loss of nesting trees and bamboo is causing a decline in red panda populations across much of their range because their forest home is being cleared.

32. KHEJRI TREES

- ✓ Khejri, the tree that inspired **Chipko movement**, is dying a slow death.
- ✓ Khejri (*Prosopis cineraria*) is one of the most **common tree species found in India** (in the dry regions of **Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh**), **Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.**
- ✓ It plays a **vital role in preserving the ecosystem of arid and semi-arid areas, mainly in the Thar Desert.**
- ✓ The tree is **frost and drought resistant and tolerates extreme temperature ranging from 40–45 °C in summer to less than 10 °C in winter.**
- ✓ It is capable of growing in areas of **rainfall ranging from 100–600 mm.**
- ✓ The tree **can withstand the hottest winds, the driest season** and stay alive where other plants cannot survive.
- ✓ The tree grows on a variety of soil but **prefers alluvial**, consisting of various mixtures of sand and clay. It **can tolerate moderate salinity of soil but dries up in very high salinity.**
- ✓ It also acts as an **effective soil binder** and is a great stabilising agent in sandy soils. Khejri though is **rarely seen in hilly areas.** When it grows on hilly soil in high rainfall zones, its growth is stunted and fruiting is poor.
- ✓ Culturally the tree has a reputed status in the society. **Green twigs of khejri are worshipped on Janmashtami** (birth day of Lord Krishna)



33. GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

- ✓ It is **one of the heaviest flying birds** (weighing up to 15kgs). They inhabit dry grasslands and scrublands on the Indian subcontinent.
- ✓ **Conservation Status:**
 - IUCN Red List: **Critically Endangered**
 - CITES: **Appendix I**
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: **Schedule I**
- ✓ **Habitat:**
 - It is endemic to the Indian subcontinent. It is found in **Rajasthan (Desert National Park)**, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, **Maharashtra (Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary)** and Andhra Pradesh in India and parts of Pakistan
- ✓ **Threats:**
 - Death by collision with infrastructure, particularly **power lines and wind turbines**
 - **Depletion of grasslands**
 - **Hunting**
 - Development of mines and human habitation in and around their habitats among others.



- ✓ Conservation Initiatives:
 - **Project Great Indian Bustard:** It was launched by **Rajasthan Government** with the objective of conservation of the remaining population of critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) locally called **Godawan**.
- ✓ **Firefly bird diverters:**
- ✓ These are **flaps installed on power lines**, a reason for many deaths among GIB. They work as reflectors for bird species like the GIB. **Birds can spot them from a distance of about 50 meters and change their path of flight to avoid collision with power lines.**

34. MITHUN BOVINE SPECIES

- ✓ Mithun or *Bos frontalis* is a **semi-domesticated bovine species** known to have originated 8000 years ago.
- ✓ Mithun bovine species is found in the **northeastern regions of India** and is known to live at an altitude of 300 to 3000m above mean sea level.
- ✓ They enjoy cool climates and avoid direct bright sunlight.
- ✓ The Mithun population is highest in **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- ✓ IUCN status – **Vulnerable**.
- ✓ State animal of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland



35. PURSLANE

- ✓ Purslane is a succulent plant that grows in many countries because it **thrives in poor soil**.
- ✓ It has an extensive distribution extending from North Africa and Southern Europe through the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent to Malaysia and Australasia.
- ✓ Purslane possesses evolutionary adaptations that allow it to be both **highly productive and drought tolerant**.



36. WHALE SHARK

- ✓ The **whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)** is the **largest fish on Earth and a keystone species in marine ecosystems**.
- ✓ It can grow to a length of approximately **18 metres and weigh as much as 21 tonnes**.
- ✓ They are **ovoviviparous**
- ✓ They **give birth to live young rather than lay eggs** – and can reach sexual maturity at around 10 years old.
- ✓ It is **distributed widely across tropical and warm temperate seas**.
- ✓ The whale shark is distributed **all along the Indian coast**. However, the largest whale shark aggregation is along the **Gujarat coast**.
- ✓ **Status:**
 - Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972: **Schedule I**
 - IUCN Red List: **Endangered**.
- ✓ **Threat:**
 - The main threat is **accidental entanglement in fishing nets**. This can result in mortality.



37. TILAPIA FISH

- ✓ Tilapia' (also called "aquatic chicken" due to its quick growth and low maintenance) is one of the most productive and internationally traded food fish in the world.
- ✓ It belongs to the family Cichlidae, native to Africa and the Middle East
- ✓ It can adapt to a wide variety of conditions and has omnivorous food habits'
- ✓ It has also **turned 'invasive' in some parts of India.**



38. SEA CUCUMBERS

- ✓ Sea cucumbers are marine invertebrates that live on the seafloor. They're named for their unusual oblong shape that resembles a fat cucumber.
- ✓ They are part of a larger animal group called **echinoderms**, which also contains starfish and sea urchins.
- ✓ They live on the sandy bottoms of oceans (largely in tropical regions), where they perform the important ecological function of **nutrient cycling**.
- ✓ However, their larvae are planktonic, meaning they float in the ocean with the currents.



39. BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER

- ✓ Broad-billed sandpiper is a **migratory bird species** found in Northern Europe, particularly in the Nordic Countries such as Norway, Sweden, Finland, and in Siberia.
- ✓ The bird spends its non-breeding season foraging on insects and crustaceans in the shallow waters and mud flats, mostly in the coastal belt of the eastern part of Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- ✓ IUCN Status: **Least Concern**



40. HIMALAYAN GREY LANGUR

- ✓ This langur is basically folivorous (leaf-eater) and feeds on a combination of fruits, buds, leaves, stems, barks, roots and flowers but has also been observed eating insects
- ✓ It was once considered a subspecies of the Bengal Sacred Langur or Hanuman Langur, but it was separated as a species in 2005.
- ✓ Its population is estimated to be less than 1,500 mature individuals in 15-20 groups. They are listed as **Endangered** as per IUCN Red List



41. AMUR FALCON

- ✓ Amur falcons are **world's longest travelling raptors** (22,000-kilometre). Its migratory route start travelling with the onset of winters.



- ✓ The raptors breed in southeastern Siberia and northern China, and migrate in millions across India and then over the Indian Ocean to southern Africa before returning to Mongolia and Siberia.
- ✓ They get their name from the Amur River that forms the border between Russia and China.
- ✓ The birds are the **least concern** under the IUCN Red List.

42. SENNA SPECTABILIS

- ✓ *Senna spectabilis* was introduced in India as an ornamental species and for use as firewood from South and Central America.
- ✓ The plant has become an **invasive alien species** in parts of Africa, India and other countries.
- ✓ The **thick foliage** of the tree arrests the growth of other indigenous tree and grass species. Hence, it **causes food shortages for the wildlife population**, especially herbivores.
- ✓ It also adversely affects the germination and growth of native species.



43. APIS KARINJODIAN

- ✓ A **new species of endemic Honeybee** has been discovered in the Western Ghats.
- ✓ It has been named *Apis karinjodian* and given the common name Indian Black Honeybee.
- ✓ The ability of the Indian black Honey Bee to produce higher quantities of honey, which is thicker in consistency, opens up new avenues for increasing honey production.
- ✓ The species has been classified as **Near Threatened (NT)** in the State based on the IUCN Red List.



44. SNOW LEOPARD

- ✓ The first-ever recording of the snow leopard from the Baltal-Zojila region has renewed the hope for the elusive predator in the higher altitudes of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- ✓ It acts as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live.
- ✓ **Ladakh** recently adopted snow leopard as their official animal.
- ✓ Habitat: Higher Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ✓ **Hemis, Ladakh** is known as the Snow Leopard's capital of the world.
- ✓ Snow leopards have been categorized as "**vulnerable**" in the IUCN Red List.
- ✓ It is also included in: Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES)
- ✓ **Schedule I** of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- ✓ Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)



45. DALBERGIA SISSOO

- ✓ India has got rules for the export of Shisham or North India Rosewood (*Dalbergia sissoo*) eased under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES).

- ✓ Dalbergia sissoo is commonly known as **North Indian Rosewood** or Shisham.
- ✓ It is a fast-growing, hardy, deciduous rosewood tree native to the Indian subcontinent and southern Iran.
- ✓ It is **native to the foothills of the Himalayas**. It is primarily found growing along river banks.
- ✓ Though the rules have been relaxed, Shisham (Dalbergia sissoo) is not delisted from **Appendix II of the convention**; thereby requiring countries to follow CITES regulations for the trade of the species
- ✓ India and other countries are asking for delisting Dalbergia sissoo from CITES Appendix II.

46. BLACK CORALS

- ✓ Researchers at Washington have discovered five new species of black corals living as deep as 2,500 feet (760 metres) below the surface in the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea off the coast of Australia.
- ✓ Black Corals are also known as **Antipatharians or thorn corals**. They are an **order of soft deep-water corals**.
- ✓ These corals can be recognized by **their jet-black or dark brown chitin skeletons, surrounded by polyps** (part of coral that is alive).
- ✓ Unlike the colourful corals that rely on the sun and photosynthesis for energy, black corals are **filter feeders and eat tiny zooplankton** that are abundant in deep waters.



47. LEITH'S SOFTSHELL TURTLE

- ✓ India's proposal for transferring Leith's Softshell Turtle from Appendix II to Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) has been adopted by the Conference of Parties (CoP) to CITES.
- ✓ It is a large freshwater soft-shelled turtle.
- ✓ **Protection Status:**
 - IUCN Status: **Critically Endangered**
 - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: **Schedule IV** which gives it protection from hunting as well as trade.
- ✓ It is endemic to Indian Peninsular. They inhabit rivers and reservoirs mainly in states like Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.



48. HIMALAYAN YAK

- ✓ The Himalayan yak has been **accepted as a 'food animal'** by the scientific panel of Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI), after recommendation from Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD).
- ✓ The Yak belongs to **the Bovini tribe**, which also includes bison, buffaloes, and cattle.
- ✓ It can tolerate temperatures as low as **-40 °C**
- ✓ Adapted for living at high altitudes, they have long **hair** that hangs off their sides like a curtain, sometimes touching the ground.



49. BADRI COW

- ✓ **Uttarakhand Government** is planning for **genetic enhancement of Badri Cow** through sex-sorted semen and embryo transfer technology with the aim to increase its productivity.
- ✓ The Badri breed derived its name from the **holy shrine of Char Dham at Badrinath**.
- ✓ It is found only in the hill districts of **Uttarakhand and was earlier known as the 'pahadi' cow**.
- ✓ The cattle breed is **small in size with long legs and varied body colours**— black, brown, red, white or grey.
- ✓ The uniqueness of Badri cow's produce is indigenoussness and environment (in the Himalayas), as **it eats medicinal herbs and is far away from toxic pollution**, polythene and other harmful things that cows in the plains are subject to.
- ✓ The milk also has rich medicinal content and high organic value as it grazes only on herbs and shrubs available in the mountains.
- ✓ It is also comparatively **more resistant to diseases**, mostly due to its eating habits.



50. NILGIRI TAHR

- ✓ Recently Tamil Nadu undertook project to conserve Nilgiri Tahr. The project would be implemented during a 5-year period from 2022-2027.
- ✓ Nilgiri Tahr also known as Varaiyaadu has been listed as an **endangered species** and is protected under **Schedule-I** of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972.
- ✓ The animal inhabits meadows with steep cliffs at elevations between 300 metres and 2,600 metres above sea level.
- ✓ Currently there are only 3,122 Tahrs in the wild.
- ✓ It has become locally extinct in around 14% of its traditional shola forest-grassland habitat.
- ✓ The species once inhabited a large portion of Western Ghats, but it now restricted to a few pockets in **Tamil Nadu and Kerala**.

