

News Analysis (13 Jan, 2021)

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India at UNSC: Previous Contribution & Current Challenges

Why in News

India, for the eighth time, has entered the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** as a **non-permanent member** recently. It will stay on the council for two years i.e **2021-22.**

Key Points

- Contributions of India at UNSC: India has served seven times in the UN Security Council.
 - 1950-51: India, as President of UNSC, presided over the adoption of resolutions calling for cessation of hostilities during the Korean War and for assistance to the Republic of Korea.
 - **1967-68:** India **co-sponsored Resolution 238** extending the mandate of the **UN mission in Cyprus.**
 - 1972-73: India pushed strongly for admission of Bangladesh into the UN.
 - 1977-78: India was a strong voice for Africa in the UNSC and spoke against apartheid and for Namibia's independence in 1978.
 - 1984-85: India was a leading voice in UNSC for resolution of conflicts in the Middle East, especially Palestine and Lebanon.
 - **1991-92:** Participated in the **first ever summit-level meeting** of the UNSC and **spoke on its role in maintenance of peace and security.**
 - **2011-2012:** India was a **strong voice for developing world,** peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and Africa. First statement on Syria was during India's Presidency at the UNSC.
 - During the 2011-12 term, India chaired the UNSC 1373 Committee concerning Counter-Terrorism, the 1566 Working Group concerning threat to international peace and security by terrorist acts, and Security Council 751/1907 Committee concerning Somalia and Eritrea.
 - Earlier in 1996, India took the initiative to pilot a draft <u>Comprehensive</u>
 <u>Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)</u> with the objective of providing a comprehensive legal framework to combat terrorism.
 - India worked closely with its partners in the UNSC to ensure the listing of Pakistan-based terrorist Masood Azhar under the UNSC's 1267 Sanctions Committee (May 2019) concerning al-Qaeda and ISIS and associated individuals and entities, which was pending since 2009.

• Challenges at UNSC:

• China Challenge:

- India is entering the UNSC at a time when Beijing is asserting itself at the global stage much more vigorously than ever. It heads at least six UN organisations and has challenged the global rules.
- China's aggressive behaviour in the <u>Indo-Pacific</u> as well as the <u>India-</u> China border has been visible in all of 2020.
- China has tried to raise the **issue of Kashmir** at the UNSC.

Post Covid World Order:

As the global economy is in shambles with various countries facing **recession and health emergencies.** To handle all these situations need **careful strategy** to move the world out of this burdening challenge.

• Balancing USA and Russia and Unstable West Asia:

With the situation deteriorating between <u>USA and Russia</u> and increasing tensions between <u>USA and Iran</u>, it will be tough situation to handle for India. India needs to uphold rule based world order with due respect to human rights ensuring the national interest.

United Nation Security Council

- The United Nations Charter established **six main organs of the United Nations**, including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Article 23 of the UN Charter concerns the composition of the UNSC.
- The UNSC has been given primary responsibility for maintaining **international peace and security to the Security Council**, which may meet whenever peace is threatened.
- While other organs of the United Nations make recommendations to member states, only the Security Council has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.

- **Permanent and Non-Permanent Members:** The UNSC is composed of **15** members, **5** permanent and **10** non-permanent.
 - **Five permanent members:** China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
 - Ten non-permanent members: Elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.
 - Each year, the General Assembly elects **five non-permanent members** (out of ten in total) for a **two-year term.** The ten non-permanent seats are distributed on **a regional basis.**
 - As stipulated in rule 144 of the rules of procedure, a retiring member is not eligible for immediate re-election.
 - In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election is **held by secret ballot and there are no nominations**. Under rule 83 of the rules of procedure, the non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected by a two-thirds majority.
 - Five for African and Asian countries.
 - One for Eastern European countries.
 - Two for Latin American and Caribbean countries.
 - Two for Western European and other countries.
- India has been advocating a permanent seat in UNSC.
- India has the following objective criteria, such as population, territorial size,
 <u>Gross Domestic Product</u>, economic potential, civilisational legacy, cultural diversity, political system and past and ongoing contributions to UN activities especially to <u>UN peacekeeping operations</u>.

Source:IE

Scandalising the Courts: A Ground for Contempt

Why in News

The Karnataka High Court has issued notice to the Union government on a **PIL petition**, challenging the **constitutional validity of a provision of the Contempt of Courts Act**, 1971, that makes "scandalising or tends to scandalising courts" as a ground for contempt.

<u>Public Interest Litigation (PIL)</u> stands for a legal action taken by a public spirited person in order to protect public interest (any act for the benefit of the public).

Key Points

- Grounds for Contempt:
 - Contempt is the power of the court to protect its own majesty and respect. The power is regulated but not restricted in the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.
 - The expression 'contempt of court' has not been defined by the Constitution.
 - However, Article 129 of the Constitution conferred on the <u>Supreme</u>
 <u>Court</u> the power to punish contempt of itself. Article 215 conferred a corresponding power on the <u>High Courts</u>.
 - The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 defines both civil and criminal contempt.
 - Civil contempt [Section 2(b)] refers to wilful disobedience to any judgment of the court.
 - **Criminal contempt** can be invoked if an act:
 - Tends to scandalise or lower the authority of the court [Section 2 (c)(i)]; or
 - Tends to interfere with the due course of any judicial proceeding [Section 2 (c)(ii)]; or
 - Obstruct the administration of justice [Section 2 (c)(iii)].
 - Section 5 of the Act provides that "fair criticism" or "fair comment" on the merits of a finally decided case would not amount to contempt. But the determination of what is "fair" is left to the interpretation of judges.
 - The Act was **amended in 2006** to include the **defence of truth** under Section 13 of the original legislation. Implying that the court must permit justification by truth as a valid defence if it is satisfied that it is in the public interest.
- Arguments of the Petitioners:
 - Section 2(c)(i) of the Act violates the right to free speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) and does not amount to a reasonable restriction under <u>Article 19(2)</u>.
 - Though the petitioners have not challenged the constitutional validity of Section 2(c) (ii) and Section 2(c)(iii) of the Act, they have contended that rules and guidelines must be framed defining the process that superior courts must employ while taking criminal contempt action, keeping in mind principles of natural justice and fairness.
 - In the contempt jurisdiction, the petitioners have contended, the judges may often be seen to be acting in their own cause, thus violating the principles of natural justice and adversely affecting the public confidence they seek to preserve through the proceeding.

- Issues that Get Highlighted:
 - Subjectivity:
 - The word 'scandalising' is subjective and depends on the perception of the concerned person. As long as the words 'scandalising the court' are present (in the statute book), it will be susceptible to arbitrary exercise of power.
 - One of the disturbing trends is the **propensity of the court to treat personal attacks on their character as contempt.**

It is often forgotten that the law of contempt is **not meant for protecting the judges**, **but it is for the protection of the institution of the judiciary**.

- Violation of Freedom of Expression:
 - A strong judiciary in a democratic republic is the bulwark of masses of this country. It must work towards fulfilling the goals set out in the constitution - to secure social economic and political justice for the masses and to uphold their fundamental rights.
 - If the judiciary is not functioning keeping in mind these objectives, an individual should have the freedom to point out the same and it cannot be said to be criminal contempt. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right.
- United Kingdom's Decision to abolish 'scandalising the judiciary' as a form of contempt of court:
 - India's contempt of court law is derived from British law, but in 2013, the United Kingdom abolished 'scandalising the judiciary' as a form of contempt of court on the grounds that this went against freedom of expression while retaining other forms of contempt like behaviour causing disruption or interference with court proceedings.
 - One of the reasons why the UK repealed scandalising judiciary as a ground for contempt is to allow constructive criticism.
- Does not recognise one of the basic principles of natural justice, i.e., no man shall be a judge in his own cause.

Thus, in contempt proceedings, the court arrogates to itself the powers of a judge, jury and executioner which often leads to perverse outcomes.

Way Forward

• Freedom of speech is the most fundamental of the fundamental rights and the restrictions thereupon have to be minimal. The law of contempt of court can impose only such restrictions as are needed to sustain the legitimacy of the judicial institutions. The law need not protect the judges. It has to protect only the judiciary.

- A contempt notice issued without proper scrutiny could cause great hardship to people who are engaged in public life. Freedom must be the rule and the restriction must be an exception.
- In contemporary times, it is more important that **courts are seen to be concerned about accountability**, that allegations are scotched by impartial probes rather than threats of contempt action, and processes are transparent.

Source: TH

Five Years of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Why In News

Recently, the **flagship crop insurance scheme** of the Government of India - **the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** - has completed five years of its launch.

- PMFBY was launched on 13th January 2016.
- The scheme was conceived as a milestone initiative to provide a **comprehensive risk solution** at the **lowest uniform premium** across the country for farmers.

Key Points

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):
 - It provides **a comprehensive insurance cover** against failure of the crop thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers.
 - **Scope:** All food & oilseed crops and annual commercial/horticultural crops for which past yield data is available.
 - **Premium:** The prescribed premium is **2%** to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and **1.5%** for all rabi crops. In the case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium is **5%**.
 - Premium cost over and above the farmer share was equally subsidized by States and GoI.
 - However, GoI shared 90% of the premium subsidy for North Eastern States to promote the uptake in the region.
 - The scheme was **compulsory for loanee farmers** availing Crop Loan/<u>Kisan</u> <u>Credit Card</u> (KCC) account for notified crops and voluntary for others.

• PMFBY 2.0:

- In order to ensure more efficient and effective implementation of the scheme, the central government **had revamped PMFBY in the 2020 Kharif season.**
- This overhauled PMFBY is often called **PMFBY 2.0**, it has the following features:
 - **Completely Voluntary:** Enrolment 100% voluntary for all farmers from 2020 Kharif.
 - **Limit to Central Subsidy:** The Cabinet has decided to cap the Centre's premium subsidy under the scheme for premium rates up to 30% for unirrigated areas/crops and 25% for irrigated areas/crops.
 - More Flexibility to States: The government has given the flexibility to states/UTs to implement PMFBY and given them the option to select any number of additional risk covers/features.
 - **Investing in ICE Activities:** Insurance companies have to now spend o.5% of the total premium collected on information, education and communication (IEC) activities.

• Use of Technology under PMFBY:

- Crop Insurance App:
 - Provides for easy enrollment of farmers.
 - Facilitate easier reporting of crop loss within 72 hours of occurrence of any event.
- Latest Technological Tools: To assess crop losses, satellite imagery, remote-sensing technology, drones, artificial intelligence and machine learning are used.
- **PMFBY Portal:** For integration of land records.

• Performance of the Scheme:

- The Scheme covers over **5.5 crore farmer applications on average per year.**
- <u>Aadhar seeding</u> (linking Aadhaar through Internet banking portals) has helped in speedy claim settlement directly into the farmer accounts.
- One notable example is mid-season adversity claims of nearly Rs. 30 crore in
 Rajasthan during Rabi 2019-20 <u>Locust attack.</u>

Way Forward

- Rationalising waivers and service delivery: Loan waiver schemes announced by state governments along with mandatory Aadhar linkage should be rationalised to enable PMFBY of greater coverage.
- **Enable Timely Compensation:** There has been reports of delayed compensation by some of the states.
- **Bringing Behavioural Change:** Apart from this, a lot more needs to be done in bringing about a behavioural change regarding the cost of insurance being a necessary input and not a money-back investment.

- Streamlining with Similar Schemes: PMFBY needs to be streamlined with state crop insurance schemes and schemes like <u>Restructured Weather Based Crop</u>
 <u>Insurance Scheme</u> to include more risk areas not covered under them.
- **Proper Implementation:** Successful implementation of PMFBY is an essential benchmark in agricultural reform in India to make farmers self-sufficient in times of crisis and support the creation of an **Aatmanirbhar** Kisan.

Source: PIB

Data on Retail Inflation and Factory Output

Why in News

Separate data on **retail** <u>inflation</u> and factory output have been recently released by the **Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation** (MoSPI).

Key Points

• Retail Inflation:

- Measured by the <u>Consumer Price Index</u> (CPI), **eased to 4.59%** in the month of December 2020.
- The retail inflation for the **month of November** was 6.93%.
- The December CPI data has come within the **Reserve Bank of India's** (RBI) upper margin of 6%.
 - The government has **mandated the central bank** to keep retail inflation within the **range of 4% with a margin of 2% on either side as per its inflation targeting.**
 - CPI inflation has been above RBI's upper bound inflation target of 4 +/-2% for more than 11 months.
- RBI primarily factors in retail inflation while making its **bi-monthly monetary policy.**

In its <u>bi-monthly monetary policy</u> meeting in <u>December 2020</u>, the Indian central bank had kept its key interest rates unchanged (repo and reverse repo rates) and decided to maintain an 'accommodative stance' as long as necessary at least through the current financial year.

• Causes of decline:

Decline in food prices: Inflation in the food basket eased to 3.41% in the month of December, down from 9.50% in November.

• Factory Output:

- India's factory output, which is measured in terms of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), witnessed a contraction of -1.9% during the month of November 2020.
- The industrial growth so far in the fiscal year 2020-21 (April-November) has contracted **-15.5%**, compared to a **0.3%** rise in the corresponding period in 2019.
- Causes of Contraction:

Mining and Manufacturing sectors.

- The **mining sector** saw a decline of -7.3% in November, while the **manufacturing sector** witnessed a fall of -1.7%.
- However, the **electricity sector grew** 3.5%.
- In **November 2019**, the **manufacturing sector** had witnessed a **growth of 3.0%**. During the same period, the **mining sector had risen 1.9%**, while the **electricity sector** had witnessed a **fall** of **-5.0%**.

Consumer Price Index

- It measures **price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer.** It is released by the **National Statistical Office** (NSO).
- The CPI calculates the difference in the price of commodities and services such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- The CPI **has several sub-groups** including food and beverages, fuel and light, housing and clothing, bedding and footwear.
- At present, India has **five consumer price indexes** (CPIs), **three** of which are **working-class specific.** These are:
 - CPI for Industrial Workers (IW).
 - CPI for Agricultural Labourer (AL).
 - CPI for Rural Labourer (RL).
 - These three indexes are compiled by the **Labour Bureau** in the **Ministry of Labour and Employment.**
 - CPIs AL and RL are used to fix minimum wages of agricultural labourers and rural unskilled employees.
 - The **CPI-IW** is mainly used for **determining dearness allowance** (DA) paid to central/state government employees and workers in the industrial sectors besides measuring inflation in retail prices, fixation and revision of minimum wages in scheduled employments.

The Base Year for CPI-IW has **recently** been **changed to 2016** from **previous 2001.**

• The Labour Bureau is also expected to bring out the new series of the CPI- AL/RL, which currently has the base year of **1986-87** by August 2021.

• The other two are **CPI-Urban and CPI Rural.** These two indexes are compiled by the **National Statistical Office (NSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**

The combined rise in retail prices is captured by CPI Combined.

Index of Industrial Production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index that **shows the growth rates in different industry groups** of the economy in a **fixed period of time.**
- It is compiled and published monthly by the **National Statistical Office** (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- IIP is a composite indicator that measures the **growth rate of industry groups** classified under:
 - Broad Sectors:

Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity.

• Use-based sectors:

Basic Goods, Capital Goods, and Intermediate Goods.

• The eight core sector industries represent about **40%** of the **weight of items that are** included in the IIP.

The eight core industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products (28.04 %)> Electricity (19.85 %)> Steel (17.92 %) > Coal (10.33 %)> Crude Oil (8.98 %)> Natural Gas (6.88 %)> Cement (5.37 %)> Fertilizers (2.63 %).

• Base Year for IIP calculation is 2011-2012.

Source:IE

Dzukou Valley

Why in News

The two-week long <u>forest fire</u> in Dzukou valley on Nagaland-Manipur border has been doused.

The 90-sq km green valley has been prone to forest fires for decades - in 2015, 2012, 2010 and 2006.



Key Points

• Location: The Dzukou Valley, popularly known as the 'valley of flower', is located at the border of Nagaland and Manipur.

• Features:

• Situated at **an altitude of 2,438 metres** behind the **Japfu mountain range**, it is one of the most **popular trekking spots** in the North East.

Dzukou valley and Japfu peak are located **adjacent to the Pulie Badze** Wildlife Sanctuary (Nagaland).

- There are no human habitations within the forests, but they are home to rare and 'vulnerable' (as per the <u>IUCN Red List</u>) birds Blyth's
 Tragopan (Nagaland's state bird), the Rufous-necked Hornbill and the Dark-rumped Swift, among many others. Also found in the forests are endangered Western Hoolock Gibbons.
- It is **covered with <u>bamboo</u>** and other grass species. The valley harbours many species of flowering plants including the **endemic Dzukou Lily- Lilium chitrangada.**
- The valley is a **source of conflict** for ownership between local tribes and the state governments of Manipur/Nagaland.
- It is home to the **Angami people.**

Forest Fires

• Description:

Wildfire, also called **forest**, **bush or vegetation fire**, can be described as any **uncontrolled and non-prescribed combustion** or burning of plants in a natural setting such as a forest, grassland, brush land or tundra, which consumes the natural fuels and **spreads based on environmental conditions** (e.g., wind, topography).

• Causes:

- Wildfire **can be incited by human actions,** such as land clearing, extreme drought or in rare cases by **lightning.**
- One of the major reasons for forest fires in the north-east is slashand-burn cultivation, commonly called jhoom or jhum cultivation.

The fires happen between the months of January and March. The north-east has tropical evergreen forests and, unlike the dry deciduous forests of central India, these are not likely to catch fire easily.

• Impact:

Globally, forest fires release billions of tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere, while hundreds of thousands of people are believed to die due to illnesses caused by exposure to smoke from forest fires and other landscape fires.

- Some Findings from the 2019 Report by the Forest Survey of India (FSI):
 - About <u>21.40% of forest cover in India is prone to fires</u>, with forests in the north-eastern region and central India being the most vulnerable.
 - While the **overall green cover has increased** in the country, the **forest cover in the north-east** particularly in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland has **decreased. Forest Fires** could be **one of the causes.**

• Measures Taken:

- National Action Plan on Forest Fires (NAPFF) 2018
- Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme.

Source: TH

Kayakalp Awards

Why in News

Recently the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has conferred **5**th **National Kayakalp awards** to **Public and Private Health Facilities** for high standards of Sanitation and Hygiene.

Key Points

• Background:

Government of India launched a **National Initiative 'Kayakalp'** on 15th May 2015 to ensure **hygiene**, **sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India**.

• About:

Those District Hospitals, Sub-divisional hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres and Health & Wellness Centres in the public healthcare system who have achieved high levels of cleanliness, hygiene and infection control were **recognised and felicitated with awards.**

• Objectives:

- To promote **cleanliness**, **hygiene and infection control practices in public healthcare facilities**, through incentivizing and recognizing such public healthcare facilities that show exemplary performance in adhering to standard protocols of cleanliness and infection control
- To inculcate a **culture of ongoing assessment** and peer review of performance related to hygiene, cleanliness, and sanitation.
- To create and share **sustainable practices related to improved cleanliness in public health facilities** linked to positive health outcomes

- Other Initiatives under Kayakalp:
 - Mera Aspataal:

The Mera Aspataal Initiative was launched to **capture patient reaction** to the **services offered in the hospital and help improve the services** by taking corrective measures.

• Swachh SwasthSarvatra (SSS):

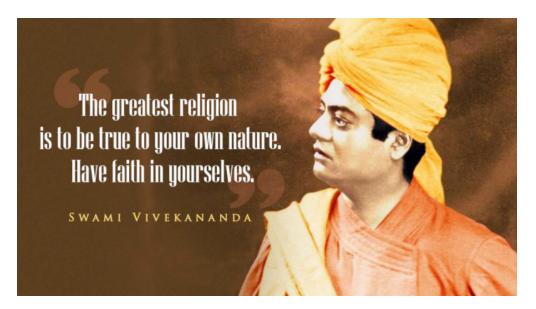
MoHFW had collaborated with **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation** and launched **SSS program**, under which, **one community health centre** (CHCs) situated within <u>Open Defectaion Free</u> block **receives one-time grant** of Rs. **10.00 lakhs** under the <u>National</u>
<u>Health Mission</u> for undertaking improvement activities, so that the CHC becomes Kayakalp CHC.

Source:PIB

National Youth Day

Why in News

National Youth Day is held every year on 12th January to observe the **birth anniversary** of **Swami Vivekananda**.



Key Points

• The day is also referred to as **Swami Vivekanand Jayanti** and was designated as the **National Youth Day in 1984.**

• 24th National Youth Festival:

- Celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Swami Vivekananda**, the **National Youth Festival** is an annual gathering of youth with various activities including competitive ones.
- Theme of 2021 Festival: 'YUVAAH Utsah Naye Bharat Ka".
- It will be celebrated from 12th to 16th January
- It is organized by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, **Government of India in collaboration with one of the State Governments**.
- As part of the **National Youth Festival**, the **National Youth Parliament Festival** (NYPF) has also been organized **since 2019**.

• National Youth Parliament Festival:

- Objective:
 - To hear the voice of youth in this age bracket of 18-25 who are allowed to vote but cannot contest in elections.
 - To encourage the youth to engage with public issues, understand the common man's point of view, form their opinion and express these in an articulate manner.
- Organized by:

National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

- The first festival of the NYPF was organised from 12th January to 27th February, 2019, with the theme "Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and Contribute to Policy".
- This is the **second NYPF festival** started in **December 2020.**

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

- He was born as Narendranath Datta on 12th January, 1863.
- Introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of **Vedanta and Yoga.**
- He was the chief disciple of the 19th-century mystic **Ramakrishna Paramhansa**.
- Laid the greatest emphasis on **education** for the **regeneration of our motherland.** He advocated a **man-making character-building education.**
- Established the **Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.** It is an organization which works in the area of **value-based education**, **culture**, **health**, **women's empowerment**, **vouth and tribal welfare and relief and rehabilitation**.
- He died at **Belur Math in 1902.** Belur Math, located in West Bengal, is the **headquarters of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission.**

Source PIB

Asian Houbara Bustard

Why in News

Recently, the Pakistan government has **issued special permits** to Dubai royal family members, allowing them to hunt the **internationally protected bird <u>houbara bustard</u>** during the 2020-21 hunting season.

Key Points

- Bustards are large, **terrestrial birds** that belong to several species, including some of the largest flying birds.
- Two Distinct Species of Houbara Bustard: The <u>International Union for</u> <u>Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</u> recognises two distinct species found in:
 - North Africa (Chlamydotis undulata) and
 - Asia (Chlamydotis macqueenii).



• Habitat of Asian Houbara:

- The population of the Asian houbara bustards extends from northeast Asia, across central Asia, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula to reach the Sinai desert (Egypt).
- After breeding in the spring, the Asian bustards migrate south to spend the winter in Pakistan, the Arabian Peninsula and nearby Southwest Asia.
- **Reasons for Decline:** Poaching, unregulated hunting, along with degradation of its natural habitat.
- Conservation Status:
 - IUCN Status- Vulnerable
 - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)- Appendix I
 - Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)- Appendix II

Source: TH