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# International Day for Biological Diversity 2026: Acting Locally for Global Impact

22 May 2026 · **ENVIRONMENT** · **IR** · **GS3**

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# International Day for Biological Diversity 2026: Acting Locally for Global Impact

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## WHY IN NEWS:

The world observed the **International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) on May 22, 2026**. The **2026 theme** — “**Acting Locally for Global Impact**” — links community-level action with the **23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)** adopted at CBD COP-15 in December 2022. India’s national celebrations were anchored in **Odisha**, showcasing the **Bhitarkanika mangroves, Chilika lagoon, and Similipal Tiger Reserve** as exemplars of community-led conservation.

## WHY MAY 22?

The **United Nations General Assembly**, via **Resolution 55/201 in December 2000**, designated **May 22** as the International Day for Biological Diversity. The date commemorates the **adoption of the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at Nairobi on May 22, 1992** — distinct from the CBD’s later signing at the **Rio Earth Summit (UNCED) in June 1992**.

CBD MILESTONES	DATE
Text adopted	May 22, 1992, Nairobi
Opened for signature	June 5, 1992, Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)
Entered into force	December 29, 1993
India ratified	February 18, 1994
Total parties	196 — the four UN member states that are <b>not parties</b> are the <b>United States</b> (signed but not ratified), <b>Andorra, South Sudan</b> and the <b>Holy See / Vatican</b>
Secretariat	Montreal, Canada

## THE THREE OBJECTIVES OF THE CBD

The CBD is the first global treaty to take a comprehensive approach to biodiversity, founded on three mutually reinforcing pillars:

- ❶ **Conservation** of biological diversity.
- ❷ **Sustainable use** of its components.
- ❸ **Fair and equitable sharing** of benefits arising from the use of **genetic resources** — known as **Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)**.

## PROTOCOLS UNDER THE CBD

PROTOCOL	ADOPTED	IN FORCE	SUBJECT
<b>Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety</b>	2000	<b>2003</b>	Regulates <b>trans-boundary movement of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs)</b>
<b>Nagoya Protocol on ABS</b>	2010	<b>October 12, 2014</b>	Operationalises ABS for genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge
<b>Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol</b>	2010	<b>2018</b>	<b>Liability and redress</b> for damage from LMOs

**India is a party to all three protocols.**

## KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK (KMGBF)

The KMGBF was adopted at **CBD COP-15 in Montreal in December 2022**, under the **Chinese Presidency** (the COP was originally scheduled for Kunming but was held in Montreal due to COVID-19). It succeeded the **Aichi Targets (2011-2020)**, most of which were missed.

### Structure

- **4 long-term goals for 2050.**
- **23 action-oriented targets for 2030.**

## Headline Targets

TARGET	DETAIL
Target 3 — “30x30”	Protect <b>30%</b> of global land, inland waters, coastal and marine areas by <b>2030</b>
Target 18	Phase out or reform at least <b>\$500 billion per year</b> in incentives harmful to biodiversity
Target 19	Mobilise <b>\$200 billion per year</b> for biodiversity finance, including at least <b>\$30 billion per year</b> to developing countries by 2030
Target 1	All areas under participatory <b>biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning</b>
Target 22	Full and effective participation of <b>Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)</b>

## Digital Sequence Information (DSI)

KMGBF placed **DSI on genetic resources** — the genomic data of organisms — at the heart of the new ABS debate. Companies (pharma, cosmetics, agri-biotech) increasingly use DSI without physical specimens, undermining the Nagoya bargain. The **Cali Fund**, operationalised at COP-16, requires large DSI-using companies to **contribute a share of profits or revenues** to a multilateral fund.

### CBD COP-16 (CALI, COLOMBIA, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2024)

OUTCOME	DETAIL
<b>Cali Fund</b>	Multilateral fund for <b>DSI benefit-sharing</b> — operationalised
<b>Permanent Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j)</b>	The Working Group on IPLCs was <b>elevated to a permanent Subsidiary Body</b> — a historic recognition of indigenous communities
<b>India’s role</b>	Engaged actively with G77+China on ABS, finance, and DSI

### CBD COP-17 — ARMENIA 2026

**COP-17 is scheduled for 2026 in Yerevan, Armenia** — the first time the biodiversity COP is being hosted by a country outside the traditional biodiversity-heartland regions. The agenda will include monitoring KMGBF implementation through national reports and reviewing finance mobilisation.

## INDIA'S DOMESTIC BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

### Legal Architecture

- **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** – implementing legislation for the CBD; **amended in 2023**.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – last amended **2022** to align with CITES Appendix changes.
- **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** – amended **2023** as the **Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam**.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** – umbrella legislation.

### Three-Tier Institutional Structure under the BDA, 2002

LEVEL	BODY	LOCATION
National	National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)	Chennai
State	State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs)	All States and UTs
Local	Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)	At panchayat/municipal ward level (over 2.7 lakh BMCs)

The **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)** – documenting flora, fauna, traditional knowledge and uses at the panchayat/ward level – are prepared by BMCs and now number over **2.7 lakh** across India.

### BDA Amendment 2023 — Key Changes and Concerns

- **Eased compliance** for AYUSH practitioners and users of **codified traditional knowledge** – reducing NBA prior-approval requirements for some categories.
- **Decriminalisation** of certain offences (amendment to Section 55) – penalties shifted from criminal prosecution to civil penalties.
- **Critics' concerns**: weakening of biopiracy controls; commercial bypass of NBA approval; dilution of the Nagoya Protocol's spirit.

### India's NBSAP

- **Updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2024-2030** was submitted to the CBD Secretariat **at COP-16 Cali, October 2024**.
- Contains **23 national targets aligned with KMGBF**.

## INDIA'S BIODIVERSITY PROFILE

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Megadiverse status	<b>1 of 17 megadiverse countries</b> (Conservation International)
Biodiversity hotspots	<b>4 of 36 global hotspots</b> – Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats-Sri Lanka, Sundaland (Nicobar)
Share of world's recorded species	7-8% on just <b>2.4%</b> of global land area
Biosphere Reserves	<b>18</b> (of which <b>12</b> are inscribed in UNESCO's <b>World Network of Biosphere Reserves</b> )
National Parks	<b>106</b>
Wildlife Sanctuaries	<b>567</b>
Conservation Reserves	<b>~220</b>
Community Reserves	<b>~226</b>

## Flagship Species Conservation Programmes

PROJECT	YEAR	OBJECTIVE
<b>Project Tiger</b>	<b>1973</b>	Tiger conservation; 58 Tiger Reserves under NTCA
<b>Project Elephant</b>	<b>1992</b>	Asian elephant; 33 Elephant Reserves
<b>Project Lion</b>	<b>2020</b>	Asiatic lion conservation in Gir landscape
<b>Project Cheetah</b>	<b>September 17, 2022</b>	Reintroduction of African cheetahs at <b>Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh</b>
<b>Project Dolphin</b>	2020	Gangetic and marine dolphins

## UPSC RELEVANCE

### GS Paper 3 – Environment, Biodiversity, Conservation

- **Convention on Biological Diversity:** objectives, protocols (Cartagena, Nagoya), comparison with UNFCCC and UNCCD (the **three Rio Conventions**).

- **Kunming-Montreal GBF**: targets, finance architecture, DSI debate.
- **India's BDA 2002 / 2023 amendment**: three-tier structure, ABS, biopiracy.
- **India's biodiversity profile**: megadiverse status, hotspots, biosphere reserves.
- **Flagship conservation programmes** and protected area network.

### Probable Mains Questions

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- 1 *“The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is a far more ambitious successor to the Aichi Targets. Critically examine its delivery prospects in the Indian context.”* (GS-3, 15 marks)
- 2 *“The 2023 amendment to the Biological Diversity Act has been criticised for weakening India's ABS regime. Discuss.”* (GS-3, 10 marks)

### Prelims Pointers

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- **International Day for Biological Diversity** — observed **May 22** since **UNGA Resolution 55/201 (December 2000)**.
- **CBD text adopted**: May 22, 1992, **Nairobi**; opened for signature at **Rio, June 1992**; in force **December 29, 1993**.
- **Three Rio Conventions (1992)**: **CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD**.
- **Cartagena Protocol (2000/2003)** — LMOs; **Nagoya Protocol (2010/2014)** — ABS.
- **KMGBF**: adopted COP-15 Montreal (Dec 2022); **4 goals, 23 targets; 30x30 target**.
- **CBD COP-16**: Cali, Colombia (2024) — Cali Fund for DSI.
- **CBD COP-17**: Yerevan, Armenia (2026).
- **NBA HQ**: Chennai.
- **India** — **1 of 17 megadiverse countries; 4 biodiversity hotspots**.

**FACTS CORNER**

International Day for Biological Diversity: May 22 (UNGA Resolution 55/201, December 2000).

CBD text adopted: May 22, 1992, Nairobi; in force December 29, 1993.

CBD Secretariat: Montreal, Canada.

Non-parties to CBD: United States (signed, not ratified), Andorra, South Sudan, and the Holy See.

2026 theme: “Acting Locally for Global Impact”.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF): adopted at CBD COP-15, Montreal, December 2022 under Chinese Presidency.

KMGBF — 4 goals for 2050, 23 targets for 2030.

Headline 30x30 target: 30% of land and ocean protected by 2030.

CBD COP-16: Cali, Colombia, October-November 2024 — Cali Fund for DSI.

CBD COP-17: Yerevan, Armenia, 2026.

Biological Diversity Act: 2002 (amended 2023).

National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) HQ: Chennai.

India — 1 of 17 megadiverse countries; 4 biodiversity hotspots — Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats-Sri Lanka, Sundaland (Nicobar).

Project Tiger: 1973; Project Elephant: 1992; Project Cheetah: September 17, 2022, at Kuno NP, MP.

Sources: [CBD](#), [MoEFCC](#), [NBA](#)

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