

National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC)

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In news

After the monsoon, work on India's first dolphin research centre (NDRC) will begin in Patna.

About the National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC)

- NDRC is a big step for the conservation of the endangered Gangetic river dolphin.
- It is coming up on the 4,400 square metre plot of land on the premises of Patna University, near the banks of the Ganga (200 metres from the Ganga).
- Bihar urban development department has recently cleared the construction of NDRC building.
- It will be set up by 2022.
- NDRC would be beneficial for project Dolphin.
- Montek Singh Ahluwalia, then-deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, had approved the proposal during his visits in mid-2011 to Bihar.

Significance

NDRC would boost conservation efforts of dolphins and would provide an opportunity for in-depth research on dolphins including its changing behaviour, survival skills, food habits, cause of death and other aspects.

What is Project Dolphin?

- The project was launched in 2020 for the conservation and protection of the Dolphins in the country.
- The Project Dolphin will involve conservation of Dolphins and the aquatic habitat through use of modern technology specially in enumeration and anti-poaching

activities.

- The project will engage the fishermen and other river/ocean dependent population and will strive for improving the livelihood of the local communities.
- The conservation of Dolphin will also envisage activities which will also help in the mitigation of pollution in rivers and in the oceans.
- It will be implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.



Gangetic river dolphin

- It is India's national aquatic animal.
- It is found mainly in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems.
- It is a Schedule I animal under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It has been declared an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- The Gangetic river dolphin is one of four freshwater dolphin species in the world.
- The other three are found in the Yangtze river in China (now extinct), the Indus river in Pakistan and the Amazon river in South America.

- The dolphin is found in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- In India, these dolphins are sighted in long deep river reaches in Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- It is blind and finds its way and prey in river waters through echolocation/using ultrasonic sound waves.
- Dolphins prefer water that is at least five to eight feet deep.
- They are usually found in turbulent waters, where there are enough fish for them to feed on.
- Gangetic dolphins live in a zone where there is little or no current, helping them save energy. If they sense danger, they can dive into deep waters.
- As per official figures, there are about 3,700 Gangetic river dolphins in the Indian river systems.
- The dolphins act as indicators of healthy river ecosystems.
- The Conservation Action Plan for the Ganges River Dolphin 2010-2020, which “identified threats to Gangetic Dolphins and impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey-base on Dolphins populations”.