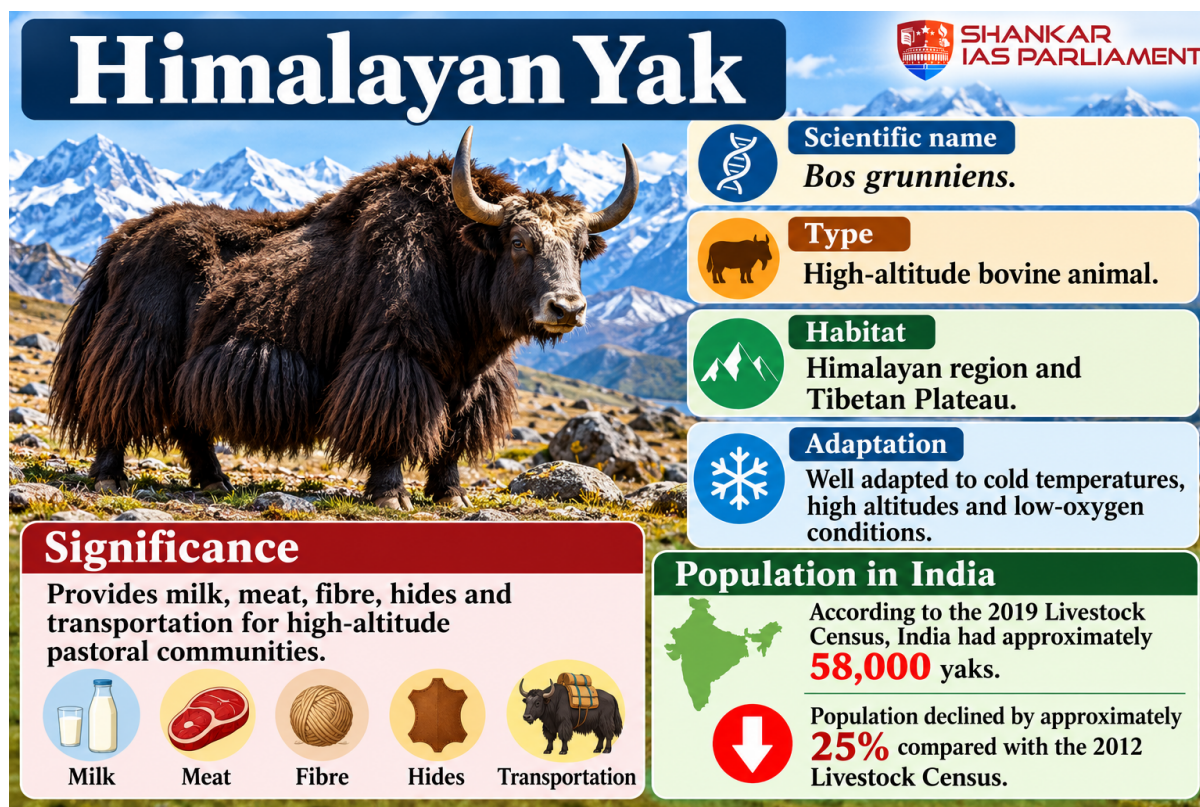


Himalayan Yak Festival - Sikkim

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Art and Culture

Why in News?

Recently, Sikkim hosted its first-ever Himalayan Yak Festival at Gnathang Valley on October 28, 2026.



Himalayan Yak

Scientific name
Bos grunniens.

Type
High-altitude bovine animal.

Habitat
Himalayan region and Tibetan Plateau.

Adaptation
Well adapted to cold temperatures, high altitudes and low-oxygen conditions.

Significance
Provides milk, meat, fibre, hides and transportation for high-altitude pastoral communities.

Population in India
According to the 2019 Livestock Census, India had approximately **58,000** yaks.
Population declined by approximately **25%** compared with the 2012 Livestock Census.

Milk **Meat** **Fibre** **Hides** **Transportation**

- **Location** - Gnathang Valley, Sikkim, situated near the India-China border.
- **Organised by** - Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Government of Sikkim.
- **In collaboration with**
 - Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE).
 - Sikkim Inspires.
 - G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (NIHE).
- **Objectives**
 - Advance the conservation of indigenous yak populations.
 - Acknowledge and support yak herders and their traditional practices.
 - Enhance sustainable livelihoods within high-altitude communities.
 - Foster the development of high-altitude tourism and yak-based products.

- Facilitate collaboration to advance sustainable yak husbandry.

Himalayan Yak Herders' Network 2026 - Yak herders from Bhutan, India, and Nepal launched the first Himalayan Yak Herders' Network at Bhutan's 9th Royal Highland Festival.

- **Key highlights**

- **Sikkimese Yak** - It recognised as an indigenous breed, strengthening conservation of its genetic resources.
- **One Calf, Nine Trees Programme** - It integrates yak rearing with tree planting to promote sustainable livelihoods and environmental conservation.
- **Yak-based Products** - SLDB launched Siri Ghee (A2 milk) and Yak Churpi prototypes to promote value addition and yak-based livelihoods.
- **Other Initiatives** - Awareness and conservation efforts strengthened through documentaries, ecosystem management publications, and yak-product exhibitions.

- **Significance**

- **Ecological & Environmental** - Conserves indigenous yaks and Himalayan ecosystems while integrating livestock rearing with environmental sustainability.
- **Economic, Cultural & Social** - Supports livelihoods and tourism, preserves pastoral heritage, and empowers yak-herding communities through knowledge sharing.

Reference

[HT | First Himalayan Yak Festival](#)

[Govt of Sikkim | Himalayan Yak Festival](#)

