Indo-Burmese Pangolin

Why in News?

Recently, scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata have identified a new species of Indo-Burmese pangolin.

- **Pangolins** – They are the *only mammals wholly-covered in scales* and they use those scales to protect themselves from predators in the wild.
- **Indo-Burmese pangolin** – It is a distinct phylogenetic species of Asian pangolin, *diverged from the Chinese pangolin* around 3.4 million years ago, during the Pliocene Epoch.
    - **Scientific name** – Manis Indoburmanica.

***Phylogenetic species** is the smallest set of organisms that share an ancestor and can be distinguished from other such sets.*

- **Distinct species** – It has a genetic distance of 0.038 and a barcode gap of 3.8% which reinforced its status as a distinct species.
- It is influenced by geoclimatic changes in the Indo-Burma region.

***Genetic distance** is a measure of the genetic divergence between species or between populations within a species, whether the distance measures time from common ancestor or degree of differentiation.*

***Mitochondrial genomes** include mitochondrial DNA are inherited to offspring from their mother.*

- **Distribution –** Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.
- **In India** – Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- It is home to 2 species,
    - **Indian Pangolin** – Found across the subcontinent.
    - **Chinese Pangolin** – Found across a larger area in south Asia.
- Bihar, West Bengal and Assam have both species in their States.
- **Threats –** Pangolins are among the *most trafficked wild mammals globally* due to poaching and habitat degradation.
- **Conservation Status** –It hasn't yet been concluded.



World Pangolin Day *is observed every year on February 18.*

Reference

The Hindu| Scientists Discovered New Species of Indo-Burmese Pangolin

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