Need for Conservation of Hoolock Gibbons

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Addressing 30th Congress of the International Primatological Society (IPS) at Antananarivo in Madagascar, Indian representative underscored the urgency of a national-level Project Gibbon, noting its severe habitat loss.

- **Issue** – Cases of local extinction have already been observed in fragmented forest patches of the northeast
- **Action plan Modelled on -** Project Tiger or Project Elephant.
- **Aim** - To promote the western hoolock gibbon as a flagship species to generate broader public and policy support for effective conservation.
- **Conservation actions** – This including the restoration of degraded habitats, creation of ecological corridors.
    - Scientific research
    - Capacity building for forest staff
    - Community engagement.

Hoolock Gibbons

• Hoolock Gibbon is ***India's only ape species.***
• It is also known as '**Hoolocks or White browed Gibbons**' and *2nd largest of the Gibbon species*.
• It is among the of the world's 25 most endangered primates from Asia.
• **Family** – Hylobatidae.
• **Physical attributes** – Size 60 to 90 cm weigh 6 to 9 kg.
• **Diet** – Mainly of fruits, insects and leaves.
• **Behaviour** – Live together in *monogamous* pairs, *stake out a territory.*
- Calls serve to locate family members and ward off other gibbons from their territory.
• **Geographical distribution** – Extending from Assam to Myanmar, some populations (in each case few hundred animals), also in the eastern Bangladesh and in southwest China.
- **In India** - Restricted to the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River and east of the Dibang River across 7 northeastern States – Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura.
• ***Diurnal and arboreal*** (living in tress), brachiating through the trees with their long arms.

- **Causes for habitat loss** – Encroachment,
    - Unregulated resource extraction
    - Infrastructure development
    - Tea plantations, shifting cultivation

    - Fragmentation, hunting, and the illegal wildlife trade.
- **Conservation status**
    - **IUCN** – Endangered
    - **WPA, 1972 -** Schedule 1.

Quick facts

Other species

- Banka slow loris (*Nycticebus bancanus*),
- Sangihe tarsier (*Tarsius sangirensis*)
- Pig-tailed langur (*Simias concolor*)
- Myanmar snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus strykeri*)
- Tapanuli orangutan (*Pongo tapanuliensis*).

References

1. The Hindu| Need for Conservation of Hoolock Gibbons
2. npcb.nagaland.gov.in| Hoolock Gibbons

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