Prelim Bits 30-12-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Nilgiri Tahr Conservation Project

The Tamil Nadu government launched an initiative for the conservation of the Nilgiri Tahr at a cost of Rs 25 crore.

- The Conservation project will be headed by a Project Director and assisted by a team which includes Assistant Director, senior scientists, research fellows and field staffs.
- Under The Nilgiri Tahr project, the government plans to -
    1. Develop a better understanding of the Nilgiri Tahr population through surveys and radio telemetry studies;
    2. Reintroduce the Tahrs to their historical habitat;
    3. Address proximate threats; and
    4. Increase public awareness of the species.
- **Time Frame** - The project is to be implemented for 5 year period from 2022 to 2027.
- **Funding** – The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board funds the project.



Nilgiri Tahr

Nilgiri Tahr

- Nilgiri Tahr are the only Caprinae species found in the tropical mountains of southern India.
- **Range** - They are endemic to the Western Ghats and used to inhabit a large part of the Western Ghats between Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- These mountain goats inhabits meadows with steep cliffs at elevations between 300 metres and 2,600 metre above sea level.
- It is estimated that there are 3,122 Nilgiri Tahrs in the wild, but has become locally extinct in around 14% of its traditional shola forest-grassland habitat.

- **Threats** - Vulnerable to local extinction due to their highly fragmented populations.
- Other threats are - invasion of exotic species, forest fires, over-exploitation of forest resources and lack of ecological data and understanding.

October 7 will be celebrated as 'Nilgiri Tahr Day' in honour of E.R.C. Davidar, who was responsible for pioneering one of the first studies of the species in 1975.

- **Significance** – Nilgiri Tahr is the State animal of Tamilnadu.
- The Nilgiri Tahr had multiple references in Tamil Sangam literature.
- The late Mesolithic (10,000-4,000 BC) paintings also highlights the Nilgiri Tahr's

cultural significance.

- **Conservation Status**
    1. IUCN - Endangered
    2. Wildlife (protection) Act of India, 1972 - Schedule I

References

1. The Hindu - T.N. sets up Nilgiri Tahr conservation project
2. Deccan Herald - TN launches special project to conserve Nilgiri Tahr

King Penguins

King Penguins which survived the threat of hunting now threatened by climate change.

> *A 2018 study that found that global warming was on track to wipe out 70% of the world's king penguins by the end of the century.*

- King Penguin species are flightless birds, distinguished by the bright orange on their necks and beaks.
- They are just under a metre (three feet) tall and the 2nd largest penguin species.
- King penguins live for about 25 years and start to breed around age 6 or 7.

King Penguins

- **Distribution** - They live on Antarctic and sub-Antarctic islands.
- Major colonies are found on Crozet, Prince Edward Island, Kerguelen Island, Heard Island, South Georgia and Macquarie Island.
- **Diet** - Mainly fish, also squid.
- **Breeding** – They breed on land in the Sub-Antarctic islands (dry place without winter sea ice).
- Their breeding spots need to be close to the Antarctic Polar Front (APF), where there is an abundant of fish, squid and other marine food.
- King penguins don't make a nest and they carry their egg around with them at all times on top of their feet by taking turns.
- The parent not caring for the egg or chick heads out to sea in search of food. Their partner back on land can go a month without eating.
- **Conservation Status** – IUCN – Least Concern
- **Threats** – Climate change, habitat shifting and southward shifting of Antarctic Polar Front.
- Out of all the breeding pairs, around half breed on the Crozet Islands.
- The polar front is usually 350 kilometres south of the Crozet archipelago.
- But with the polar front drifting southwards due to climate change, too far for penguins to get food and quickly return to their hatchlings.
- The Crozet Islands could soon become uninhabitable for king penguins.

References

1. The Hindu - The king penguins survived the hunters, now face climate change
2. IUCN - King Penguins

Qualified Institutional Placements

Equity fund-raising through qualified institutional placements (QIPs) and rights issues slumped to the lowest since 2016.

- Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) is a mechanism used by publicly traded corporations to raise capital by selling stocks or other equity-convertible instruments to qualified institutional buyers (QIBs).
- **Conditions** - Qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) are the only entities allowed to purchase QIPs.
- For a QIP to take place, the company must already have its shares listed on a stock exchange.
- With this private placement technique, the firm avoids dilution of its management stake.
- **Reasons to prefer QIP** – It is a secure and effective method of obtaining capital.
- It lessens the reliance on foreign resources for fund raising.
- It is less time-consuming since they are subject to fewer legal requirements and constraints.

Rights Issue

- A rights issue is a mechanism to raise money by offering existing shareholders, new equity shares typically offered at a discount by listed firms.
- If an existing investor does not intend to participate in the rights offering, there is an option to renounce the shares in favour of others.
- Rights issues are often used by firms when the promoter group intends to maintain its shareholding.

References

1. Business Standard - Equity fundraising via QIPs, rights issues slumps
2. Live Mint - Why is QIP a preferred way to raise capital for listed companies?

Triple Test Survey

The 'triple test' requirement had not been met to carry out for OBC quota in urban local bodies' election in Uttar Pradesh (UP).

- The 'triple test' formula was suggested by the Supreme Court in 2010 to provide OBC reservation in urban local body (ULB) elections.
- The 5-member commission will conduct a survey to ensure that the OBCs are provided reservation on the basis of the triple test, as mandated by the Supreme Court.
- The triple test requires the government to complete three tasks (triple conditions) for finalisation of reservation to OBCs in the local bodies. These include:

1. To set up a dedicated commission to conduct a rigorous empirical inquiry into the nature and implications of the backwardness in local bodies;
2. To specify the proportion of reservation required in local bodies in light of recommendations of the commission, so as not to fall foul of overbreadth;
3. To ensure reservation for SCs/STs/OBCs taken together does not exceed an aggregate of 50% of the total seats.

- These triple test/conditions were outlined by the Supreme Court in the case of Vikas Kishanrao Gawali vs. State of Maharashtra and others, decided on March 4, 2021.

Other Backward Classes (OBCs) Reservation

In Jobs and Higher Education - The Mandal commission recommended a 27% quota for OBCs in public sector jobs and higher education, thus making the total number of reservations for SC, ST and OBC to 49%.

In Elections - ***Article 243D (6) and Article 243T (6)*** of the Constitution provides reservation by enactment of law for backward classes in panchayat and municipal bodies respectively. But so far not done in any state.

Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha tried to institute OBC quotas in local body elections but the judiciary struck down the government notifications for not adhering to the triple test.

References

1. Indian Express - What is triple test survey, which UP is to carry out?
2. India Today - OBC quota row in UP

Indian Council of Historical Research

The 81st session of the Indian History Congress concluded in Chennai.

> *The Indian History Congress (IHC), founded in 1935, is the largest association of professional historians in South Asia to promote secular and scientific writing of history.*

- The Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- ICHR was registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It was established in 1972 on the recommendation of a Working Group during the period of Indira Gandhi.
- Professor R.S. Sharma is the founding Chairman of the ICHR.
- **Aim and objective** - To promote and give directions to historical research and to encourage and foster objective and scientific writing of history.
- ICHR is headquartered at New Delhi and has 2 regional centres -

    - ICHR North-East Regional Centre (Guwahati) and
    - ICHR Southern Regional Centre (Bangalore)
- **Functions**
    1. To provide fellowships and financial assistance.
    2. To bring historians together for exchanging views related to history.
    3. To provide publication subsidy to the seminars, congress proceedings and journals.
    4. To publish 2 Journals - the Indian Historical Review (biannual) and *Itihas* journal in Hindi.
    5. To maintain a large and expanding Library-cum-Documentation Centre exclusively for researchers and scholars.

References

1. The Hindu - ICHR publishes only papers of those playing second fiddles
2. Indian Council of Historical Research
3. Indian History Congress

