

Himalayan langur

- Differences in altitude make a primate species in the same Himalayan habitat choose between flowers and fruits as food options beyond their staple menu of leaves, a new study has revealed.
- The Himalayan Gray Langur or the Chamba Sacred Langur (*Semnopithecus Ajax*) is a colobine, meaning leaf eating monkey.
- It is considered an endangered species globally as its population is estimated to be less than 1,500 mature individuals in 15-20 groups.
- Himalayan Grey Langur (*Semnopithecus ajax*).
- Langurs are an important species as they occupy a key position in the food chains of many forest ecosystems. In India, most langurs comes under the genus *Semnopithecus*
- Ajax is an endangered species according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List but after reassessment in 2004, it was re-designated as 'Critically Endangered'.
- It is considered endangered due to its restricted range habitat.
- These langurs come to agriculture fields during the harvesting of crops and move to the deep forest during other periods of the year.
- This tendency is more visible in the areas of Kala Top and Khajjiar.
- The major and common threats throughout the region are habitat loss and degradation through human encroachment, overgrazing, building roads through forests, lopping, deforestation, agriculture, and fire, unavailability of food, predation by carnivores (leopards and tigers) and attack of several viral and bacterial diseases.
- Present and future threats are mainly due to agriculture and development practices.
- At the ecosystem level, primates including Dark Eyed Himalayan Langurs exert a very important feedback control on the vegetation itself and are also essential to maintain homeostasis of the forest ecosystem, especially critical for forest regeneration and survival.
- Primates could also be projected as 'flagship' or 'umbrella' species in a forest ecosystem and by protecting a 'primate', a large number of species could be protected.
- A primate often performs ecological services that are important to maintaining tropical habitat such as seed disperser, pollinator, and seed

predator as well as food for the top predator.

- Two protected habitats of the species namely Machiara National Park and Dachigam National Park are located in politically disturbed areas. Machiara National park is in Pak-Occupied Kashmir.

○ **THE HINDU**

Why is the regulation of cryptocurrency ids difficult?

- Cryptocurrency is basically a collection of binary data.
- However, we have been conditioned to believe that money must be tangible, backed by something tangible or by the guarantee of a government or a Central bank.
- To accept an intangible computer code as money is a paradigm shift in our belief systems.
- The common investment instruments in stock markets and banking systems are tangible products and some have sovereign backing.
- But crypto-assets are not backed in the real world by assets or commodities.
- Till now, regulatory frameworks have not been crafted for anything purely intangible

- No one seems to understand how exactly the crypto market operates. What are the forces behind it
- The cryptocurrency market is always vulnerable to attacks.
- The sudden breakdown of the market cannot be ruled out.
- If that happens and all the electronic records in the distributed blockchain ledger simply evaporate, recovery mechanisms may not work

Lack of clarity on the basic nature of cryptocurrency

- Given that cryptocurrency isn't issued by a government or Central bank but is mined by individuals around the world, it isn't clear who exactly would have the authority to regulate it.

● **THE HINDU**

Articles 15 and 16

- The amendment, introduced in early 2019, altered Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution, and granted to the state the power to provide for up to 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for "economically weaker sections of citizens [EWS]".
- The change also mandated that the seats reserved for EWS would only apply to citizens other than the

classes that are already eligible for reservation.

ARTICLE 15 OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- Article 15 provides that discrimination on the basis of race, caste, religion, etc., shall be prohibited.
- The State is restrained from discriminating among its citizens on the basis of these factors.
- However, Article 15(3) and 15(4) provides that the State is permitted to make special provisions in the favour of women and children and in favor of other minority and backward or oppressed communities.
- Educationally and socially backward communities are provided an exemption under this Statute.
- The 93rd Constitutional Amendment introduced Article 15(5) to the Constitution. This is an enabling provision.
- The Right to education and several maternity schemes are based upon the concept of Article 15.

ARTICLE 16 OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- Similarly, Article 16 of the Constitution provides that every citizen is entitled to equal

opportunity and the State shall not discriminate when dealing with matters of public employment.

- Here too, the State is entitled to make special provisions in favor of the backward communities provided the State believes that these communities are not adequately represented in the public offices.
- *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India*, 1992 (Supp) 3 SCC 217, where the Court firstly emphasised on the intention of the Constitution makers behind the drafting of Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution.
- The Court held that these Articles are aimed at promoting real equality in the society and to ensure such real equality, some degree of reasonable classification is essential.
- *K.C. Vasanth Kumar v. State of Karnataka* AIR 1985 SC 1495, the Court held that economic backwardness formed the primary indicator of backwardness.

THE HINDU

Topic- NEP and higher education autonomy

- Funded through the University Grants Commission (UGC), universities are all subject to a very

strict regulatory regime. Abiding by UGC regulations and AICTE guidelines, encompasses almost all aspects of their functioning be it faculty recruitment, student admission and the award of degrees.

- In many cases, they are micro-managed by the regulatory authorities.
- Therefore, most of them have become so comfortable with the practice that they rarely assert their autonomy.
- Central universities in the country are also ranked on the basis of their 'obedience' to regulatory compliances.
- The best universities in the world are continuously sensitized about the importance of their autonomy and are trained and enabled to make their own decisions.
- The European University Association (EUA), for example, prescribes a 'university autonomy tool' that lets each member university compare its level of autonomy vis-à-vis the other European higher education systems across all member countries.
- By focusing on four autonomy areas (organizational, financial, staffing, and academic) the EUA computes composite scores and ranks all the countries in Europe.

- National Education Policy 2020), has highlighted the need for higher education autonomy.
- The new education emphasizes to completely overhaul the higher education system, and to attain this objective, repeatedly emphasises the need for institutional autonomy.
- The NEP regards academic and administrative autonomy essential for making higher education multi-disciplinary, and that teacher and institutional autonomy are a sine qua non in promoting creativity and innovation.
- It argues for a 'light but tight' regulatory framework and insists that the new regulatory regime would foster a culture of empowerment
- Higher learning centres in ancient India enjoyed no less academic, administrative, and financial autonomy than the most autonomous universities in the world today.
- Forcing higher educational institutions to follow uniform standardized rules and regulations run counter to what the NEP provides for.

THE HINDU
