Man-Animal Conflict - Indian Gaur

Why in news?

The Indian gaur population increases around the tourist towns of Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Gudalur in Tamil Nadu.

What is happening?

- Recently, four people were killed and eight others suffered injuries during conflicts with Indian gaur in the Nilgiris North Division alone since September 2016.

- There has been a dramatic rise in the Indian gaur population as well as an increase in the human population in the habitats nearby.

- In the Nilgiris North Forest Division, **awareness campaigns** have been conducted in many places where humans share the landscape with the Indian Gaur.

- There was serious consideration of **mass translocation of the gaurs**.

What do the environmentalists say?
Environmentalists said conflicts between gaur and humans would only intensify, as the lack of natural predators that hunt the animal in the upper slopes of the Nilgiris.

But they point out that translocation is not feasible, as introducing large herbivores to the extremely sensitive Sigur plateau could have even more serious consequences on the local wildlife.

It can put an even greater strain on the resources available to the wildlife there, which already have to compete with cattle and livestock herds.

It is noticed that there is a huge behavioural difference between the Indian gaur that live in urban landscapes, around the towns, and the animals that inhabit the MTR.

The gaus in towns are acclimatised to people, cars and buildings, and are unfazed by human activity.

These animals have very little chance of surviving in a completely wild habitat if trans-located.

Indian Gaur:

The Gaur also called Indian Bison, is the largest extant bovine, native to South Asia and Southeast Asia.

It has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Gaur historically occurred throughout mainland South and Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Nepal.

Gaur are largely confined to evergreen forests or semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests, but also occur in deciduous forest areas at the periphery of their range.

Gaur is highly threatened by poaching for trade to supply international
Source: The Hindu