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1 Elephant Corridors in India (Source: The Hindu)

Elephant corridors are narrow strips of natural habitat that connect two or more larger elephant habitats.

- Elephant corridors are part of Project Elephant

Importance of Elephant Corridors

- Maintain habitat connectivity and prevent isolation of elephant populations.
- Facilitate gene flow, helping maintain genetic diversity.
- Provide access to seasonal food and water resources.
- Reduce pressure caused by fragmented habitats.
- Properly protected corridors can help reduce human–elephant conflict.

Key Elephant Corridors in India

• **Southern India**

- Nilambur–Appankappu Corridor: Kerala.
- Nilambur Kovilakam–New Amarambalam: Kerala–Tamil Nadu.
- Chamarajanagar–Talamalai Corridor (connects Biligiriranga Hills with Sathyamangalam): Karnataka–Tamil Nadu
- Edeyarahalli–Doddasampige Corridor (connects BRT Tiger Reserve with Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary): Karnataka.
- Sigur Plateau Corridor(connects elephant habitats in the Nilgiris): Tamil Nadu

• **Northeast India**

- Panbari Corridor: Assam
- Haldhibari Corridor: Assam
- Kanchanjuri Corridor: Assam
- D'ering–Dibru–Saikhowa Corridor: Assam–Arunachal Pradesh
- Rewak–Emangre Corridor: Meghalaya
- Nokrek–Emangre Corridor: Meghalaya
- Geleki–Sitap Corridor: Nagaland.

• **East-Central and Northern India**

- Dalma–Chandil Corridor: Jharkhand
- Karo–Karampada Corridor: Odisha
- Telkoi–Pallahada Corridor: Odisha
- Rawasan–Sonanadi Corridor: Uttarakhand–Uttar Pradesh
- Motichur–Gohri Corridor: Uttarakhand
- Chilkiya–Kota Corridor: Uttarakhand.



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Key Facts of Asian Elephants

- Endangered on the IUCN Red List
- Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

2 Leprosy (Source: The Hindu)

- **Fact:** Leprosy is one of the oldest diseases in recorded history.
- **Cause:** Bacteria called Mycobacterium Leprae
- **Areas of Infection:** Skin, Peripheral nerves, Upper respiratory tract, and Lining of the nose.
- **Mode of Transmission:** Mainly by breathing airborne droplets from affected individuals.
- **Symptoms:** Red patches on the skin, skin lesions, numbness in arms, hands, and legs, ulcers on the soles of the feet, muscle weakness, and excessive weight loss.
- **Effect:** Disfigurement, permanent nerve damage in the arms and legs, and even loss of sensation.
- **Treatment:** Leprosy is curable with the combination of drugs known as Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT).



3 Sholas (Source: The Hindu)

SHOLAS

Tropical montane evergreen forests of the Western Ghats

What are Sholas?

- Sholas are patches of **tropical montane evergreen forests** found in the higher reaches of the **Western Ghats**.
- They occur in **valleys** and sheltered depressions, surrounded by **montane grasslands**.
- Together, they form the unique **Shola-grassland ecosystem**.

Distribution

- Occur mainly in the higher Western Ghats of: **Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**.
- Major areas: Nilgiri, Anamalai, Palani and High Range hills.
- Generally found at elevations above **~1,500 metres** (approximately).

Western Ghats (Shola regions)

Key Features

- Stunted evergreen trees with dense, often twisted branches.
- Forest patches in valleys; grasslands on adjoining slopes.
- Cool, moist climate with frequent mist and high rainfall.
- Rich in mosses, lichens, ferns and epiphytes.
- High degree of endemism and biodiversity.

Ecological Importance

- Acts as important water catchments and helps maintain perennial streams.
- Regulates runoff and reduces soil erosion.
- Stores carbon.
- Provides habitat for several endemic and threatened species.
- Maintains ecological balance in the Western Ghats.

Characteristic Flora

Rhododendron (nilagiricum)

Michelia nilagirica

Syzygium spp.

Important Fauna

Nilgiri tahr

Nilgiri marten

Nilgiri langur

Endemic birds, amphibians and reptiles

Major Threats

Conversion to plantations (tea, coffee, etc.)

Invasive alien species (Acacia, Eucalyptus, Wattle)

Infrastructure development and tourism pressure

Altered fire regimes

Climate change

Conservation Measures

- Protection and restoration of Shola-grassland habitats.
- Wildlife-friendly infrastructure and mitigation measures.
- Control of invasive species.
- Involvement of local communities and conservation organisations.
- Part of broader Western Ghats conservation initiatives.