



Leopard Strayed from Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Recently, Forest officials captured a [leopard](#) which had strayed into Aliganj village from the nearby [Pilibhit Tiger Reserve](#) in Pilibhit district of Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- The **Pilibhit Tiger reserve** is spread over the three districts of Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich in Uttar Pradesh.
 - It covers an area of more than 700 square km and is home to a variety of wild animals including leopards and [tigers](#).
 - It forms part of **Terai Arc Landscape** in the **upper Gangetic Plain**.
 - The **northern edge of the reserve lies along the [Indo-Nepal border](#)** while the **southern boundary is marked by the river Sharada and Khakra**.

Leopards

- **Scientific Name:** *Panthera pardus*
- **About:**
 - The leopard is the smallest of the Big Cat family (of **genus Panthera** namely the **Tiger, Lion (*Panthera leo*), Jaguar, Leopard, and Snow Leopard**), and is known for its ability to adapt in a variety of habitats.
 - A **nocturnal animal**, feeds on smaller species of herbivores found in its range, such as the chital, hog deer and wild boar.
 - Melanism is a common occurrence in leopards, wherein the entire skin of the animal is black in colour, including its spots.
 - A melanistic leopard is often called a **black panther** and is mistakenly thought to be a different species.
- **Habitat:**
 - It occurs in a wide range in **sub-Saharan Africa**, in small parts of Western and Central Asia, on the Indian subcontinent to Southeast and East Asia.
 - The **Indian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*)** is a leopard widely distributed on the Indian subcontinent.
- **Threats:**
 - Poaching for the illegal trade of skins and body parts.
 - Habitat loss and fragmentation
 - Human-Leopard conflict
- **Conservation Status:**
 - [IUCN Red List](#): Vulnerable
 - [CITES](#): Appendix-I
 - [Indian Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule-I

