

# Mithun

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## Mithun Latest News

Over 200 mithuns have died in a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh in the last one month.

## About Mithun

- The Mithun, or **gayal**, is a **heavily built, semi-domesticated bovine species**.
- Scientific Name: *Bos frontalis*
- Mithun is believed to have originated more than 8000 years ago and is **considered** to be a **descendent of wild Indian gaur, or bison**.
- It is also known as the '**cattle of the mountain**'.

## Mithun Distribution

- The highest concentration of mithuns in the world is spread over the **North Eastern (NE) region of India**, with **Arunachal Pradesh** having the **highest population**.

- It is also found in **China** and **parts of Southeast Asia**, viz., Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan.
- The geographic zone is covered with **tropical evergreen rain forests**.
- It is the **state animal** of **Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland**.
- The **‘Soulung’ festival** is observed annually by the **Adi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh to commemorate the birth and arrival of Mithun** on this earth.

## Mithun Features

- It appears somewhat **similar to that of Gaur** but are distinctly **smaller in size**.
- The characteristic feature lies in the **head**, which has a **well-developed, broad frontal bone with a flat-shaped face**.
- From the front view, it **appears like an inverted triangle** from where **two horns emerge from the lateral sides**.
- **Horn colour** varies from **whitish yellow to salty black** in most animals.
- The **skin color** of the head and body is **blackish-brown** in both sexes, and the **forehead** is **creamy white or yellowish** in color.
- The other distinguishing features are a small and double dewlap and white stockings.
- They move in **small groups** with one or two males and several females and calves.

## Mithun Conservation Status

It is classified as **‘Vulnerable’** under the IUCN Red List.

## What is Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)?

- It is a severe, highly **contagious viral disease** that **affects all cloven-hoofed animals**, including cattle, sheep, goats, camelids, deer, and pigs.
  - Cloven-hoofed animals are those with divided hooves. It does not affect horses or zebras.
- **Cause:** It is caused by an **Aphthovirus** of the family Picornaviridae.
- It is a **transboundary animal disease (TAD)** that deeply affects the production of livestock and disrupts regional and international trade in animals and animal products.
- **Intensively reared animals** are **more susceptible** to the disease than traditional breeds.
- FMD is a disease of animals, not humans, and is a **different disease than hand, foot, and mouth disease** which is **common in young children**.
- FMD is **not transmitted to humans by eating affected meat**.
- **Transmission:**
  - The virus is transmitted through **direct contact** between healthy and infected animals.
  - **Indirect contact with contaminated objects** (fomites) such as vehicles, clothing, footwear, and bedding can also spread FMDV.
  - Additionally, **consuming contaminated feed or milk** can transmit the virus as well as through **respiratory aerosols**.
- **Symptoms:**

- FMD is characterised by **fever and blister-like sores on the tongue and lips**, in the mouth, on the teats and between the hooves.
- The disease is **rarely fatal in adult animals**, but there is often **high mortality in young** animals due to myocarditis.

- **Treatment: Vaccination** is the only effective preventive measure against FMD.

**News: DC**

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