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# ‘Lion’ Species Spotlight Programme Launched at Gir Ahead of IBCA Summit 2026

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Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav launched the ‘Lion’ Species Spotlight Programme at Gir National Park in Gujarat as a precursor event to the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026. The programme aims to highlight India’s successful conservation model for the Asiatic lion and strengthen global cooperation for big cat conservation.?

## **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026:**

India will host the first IBCA Summit in New Delhi on 1–2 June 2026 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The summit will bring together representatives, scientists and policymakers from nearly 95 countries across Asia, Africa and the Americas.

## **Theme of the Summit:**

“Save Big Cats, Save Humanity, Save Ecosystem”

## **The International Big Cat Alliance aims to:**

- Promote conservation of big cat species
- Enhance international collaboration
- Support scientific research and wildlife monitoring
- Address habitat loss and climate change impacts
- Strengthen anti-poaching efforts globally

## **Kamaraj IAS Academy**

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## **Big Cat Species Covered Under IBCA**

### **The alliance focuses on conservation of seven major big cat species:**

Tiger

Lion

Leopard

Snow Leopard

Cheetah

Jaguar

Puma

### **Importance of Asiatic Lion Conservation**

The Asiatic lion is classified as an endangered species and survives only in the Gir landscape of Gujarat. India's conservation efforts have led to a significant increase in lion population over the decades.

### **Challenges Faced:**

Habitat fragmentation

Human-wildlife conflict

Disease vulnerability due to single population concentration

Climate change impacts

### **Additional Key Facts:**

#### **Gir National Park:**

Located in Gujarat across Junagadh, Gir Somnath and Amreli districts

Established in 1965

It is the only natural habitat of Asiatic lions in the world

Part of the Kathiawar-Gir dry deciduous forest ecosystem

#### **Asiatic lion:**

Scientific name: *Panthera leo persica*

IUCN Status: Endangered

India's lion population increased to around 674 in the 2020 estimation

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### **Project Lion:**

Announced by the Government of India for long-term conservation of Asiatic lions

Focuses on habitat expansion, disease management and establishment of alternative lion habitats

### **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA):**

Launched by India in 2023.

Formally constituted in 2025.

Headquarters: New Delhi.

India is the only country hosting five of the seven major big cat species.