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# International Big Cat Alliance

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## Why in news?

Recently, India has officially joined the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**, which was **launched by the Prime Minister in 2023**

- IBCA aims to protect big cats and their habitats.

## Note:

- Though India launched the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** as a global institution, it must still sign and ratify its Framework Agreement, similar to its approach with other international agreements and institutions, such as the **Paris Agreement**, the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, and the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**.

## About IBCA

- **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** is a **multi-country, multi-agency coalition** of **96 big cat range countries, non-range countries** interested in big cat **conservation**, conservation partners and scientific organizations working in the field of big cat conservation besides **business groups and corporates**, to establish networks and develop synergies in a focused manner.
- Its idea was **1st floated** by **India's Prime Minister in 2019**.
- It was launched in **April 2023** to celebrate the **50th anniversary of Project Tiger**.
- The Union Cabinet had allocated a one-time budgetary support of **Rs 150 crore** for IBCA for a five-year period — **2023-24 to 2027-28**.
- It aims at conservation of **seven big cats** namely **Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma**.
- **Objectives of IBCA:**
  - To **stop the illegal wildlife trade of the seven big cats**.
  - To **work towards the conservation of natural habitats** of the seven big cats.
  - Mobilisation of financial and technical resources for implementing the conservation and protection agenda.

## Governing structure

- It will consist of an **Assembly of Members, Standing Committee** and a **Secretariat**, with its **headquarters in India**.
- Its **Framework of Agreement** (statute) has been drafted largely on the **pattern of the International Solar Alliance**.
- The statute of IBCA will be finalised by an **International Steering Committee**.

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- A **Steering Committee** will be constituted with **nominated national focal points** of founding member countries.
- Appointment of DG by MoEFCC as **Interim Head of IBCA Secretariat** till IBCA appoints its own DG during Assembly meeting.
- IBCA Assembly at **Ministerial level** to be chaired by President, HMEFCC, Gol.

## Big Cats

- **'Big Cat'** is a term that is used to apply to any **large species** of the family *Felidae*. Usually, it applies to the members of the genus **Panthera**. These include:

1. **Tiger** (*Panthera tigris*)
2. **Lion** (*Panthera leo*)
3. **Jaguar** (*Panthera onca*)
4. **Leopard** (*Panthera pardus*)
5. **Snow Leopard** (*Panthera uncia*)

- Two other cats, i.e. **Puma** (*Puma concolor*) and **Cheetah** (*Acinonyx jubatus*), are **not part of Panthera**. But they are usually **included in most listings of 'big cats'**.
- All these cats can usually make **vocalisations** known as **'roars'**.
- The **Indian subcontinent** has been historically home to the **Bengal tiger**, **Asiatic lion**, **Indian leopard**, **Indian/Asiatic cheetah** as well as **Snow leopard**.
- The **cheetah** was declared **extinct in 1952**. In **2022**, the Government of India embarked on an ambitious programme to **introduce African cheetahs** to the **Kuno National Park** in MP.