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IBCA Summit 2026 — India to Host First International Big Cat Alliance Summit in June

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

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IBCA Summit 2026 — India to Host First International Big Cat Alliance Summit in June

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WHY IN NEWS

Environment Minister **Bhupender Yadav** launched the official website and logo of the **first International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit** on May 6, 2026. The summit will be held on **June 1–2, 2026 in New Delhi**, bringing together representatives from **95 big cat range countries**. India, as the host nation and founding driver of IBCA, is positioning itself as the global leader in big cat conservation.

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA) — OVERVIEW

FEATURE	DETAIL
Full name	International Big Cat Alliance
Founded	2023
Headquarters	India (New Delhi)
Intergovernmental status	Inter-governmental organisation
Member focus	95 big cat range countries
Species covered	7 big cats
India's role	Founding nation; host of Secretariat
Launched by	PM Modi on April 9, 2023 (50th anniversary of Project Tiger)
1st Summit	June 1–2, 2026, New Delhi

The Seven Big Cats

SPECIES	IUCN STATUS	NOTABLE INDIA CONTEXT
Tiger	Endangered	India holds ~75% of wild tigers; Project Tiger (1973)
Lion	Vulnerable	Only wild population outside Africa: Gir Forest, Gujarat
Leopard	Vulnerable	Most widespread big cat; ~13,000 in India
Snow Leopard	Vulnerable	Himalayan states (J&K, HP, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal)
Cheetah	Vulnerable	Reintroduced to India (Kuno NP, 2022) from Namibia and South Africa
Jaguar	Near Threatened	Range: Central and South America (not in India)
Puma	Least Concern	Range: Americas (not in India)

WHY IBCA MATTERS

Threats to Big Cats Globally

- ❶ **Habitat loss** — deforestation, agricultural expansion
- ❷ **Human-wildlife conflict** — livestock depredation, retaliatory killing
- ❸ **Poaching** — skin, bones (traditional medicine, particularly tiger)
- ❹ **Prey base depletion** — ungulate hunting
- ❺ **Climate change** — habitat shifts, prey distribution changes

India's Track Record — Basis for Leadership

PROGRAMME	STATUS
Project Tiger (1973)	58 Tiger Reserves; tiger population from 1,827 (2022 census) to growing
Project Lion	Asiatic Lion Conservation; Gir Forest protected
Project Snow Leopard	High-altitude ecosystem conservation
Cheetah reintroduction	Kuno NP (2022); first intercontinental cheetah translocation in history
Project Elephant (1992)	Elephant corridors, conservation

Global Biodiversity Context

- **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) (2022):** “30×30” target — protect 30% of land + oceans by 2030
- IBCA aligns with GBF Target 4 (halt species extinction) and Target 3 (30×30)
- **South-South Cooperation:** IBCA promotes technology and knowledge transfer between developing range countries

PROJECT TIGER — 50 YEARS (KEY FACTS)

PARAMETER	VALUE
Launched	1973 by PM Indira Gandhi
Initial tiger population	1,827 (1972 census)
Current tiger reserves	58 across India (58th: Madhav NP, MP — added March 2025)
Tiger population (2022 census)	3,682
India’s share of global wild tigers	~ 75%
Authority	National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)
Core-buffer zone model	Each Tiger Reserve has inviolate core + buffer zone

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS3 — Environment	Big cat conservation, IBCA, Project Tiger, Cheetah reintroduction, IUCN status
GS2 — International Relations	India’s multilateral leadership; IBCA as soft power; Global South cooperation
GS3 — Environment	Kunming-Montreal GBF, 30×30 target, biodiversity frameworks

Mains Keywords: International Big Cat Alliance, IBCA Summit 2026, Project Tiger, 7 big cats, cheetah reintroduction, Kuno National Park, NTCA, Kunming-Montreal GBF, India biodiversity leadership, Bhupender Yadav, big cat conservation

Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
IBCA founded	2023 (PM Modi, April 9, 2023 — 50th anniversary of Project Tiger)
IBCA HQ	India (New Delhi)
First IBCA Summit	June 1–2, 2026 , New Delhi
Species covered	7 big cats: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, Puma
Range countries	95
Project Tiger year	1973
India's tiger population (2022)	3,682 (most recent census)
India's Tiger Reserves	58 (58th: Madhav NP, MP — March 2025)
India's wild lion location	Gir Forest, Gujarat (only population outside Africa)
Cheetah reintroduction	Kuno NP, MP (2022); from Namibia + South Africa
GBF 30×30 target	Protect 30% land + oceans by 2030

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Bharat Choudhary

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