



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Asiatic Lion and the Case for a Second Home

6 July 2026 · ENVIRONMENT · GS3

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**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com



The Asiatic Lion and the Case for a Second Home

6 July 2026 · 5 min read ·

 Source: ujyari.com — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped

 **Every fact web-verified against primary sources** (<https://ujyari.com/how-we-verify/>)

WHY IN NEWS

The 16th Asiatic Lion Census (2025) reported the Gujarat lion population rising to about 891, and with the species now spreading well beyond Gir into landscapes like the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, the old but unresolved debate over creating a geographically separate “second home” has returned to the fore.

THE 16TH ASIATIC LION CENSUS (2025)

The census was conducted from May 10 to 13, 2025, across about 35,000 sq km of the Saurashtra (Gir) landscape, covering 58 talukas in 11 districts of Gujarat. Its headline finding was a population of about 891 Asiatic lions, a 32.2 per cent jump from 674 in 2020.

FEATURE	DETAIL
Census	16th Asiatic Lion Census, 2025
Survey dates	May 10 to 13, 2025
Population	About 891 lions (up 32.2% from 674 in 2020)
Area covered	About 35,000 sq km, 58 talukas, 11 districts
Inside Gir NP and Sanctuary	About 394 lions
Outside protected areas	About 507 lions (44.22%)
Method	Block-count / direct sighting (Lion Estimation)

The rise is a genuine conservation success and reflects decades of protection in Gujarat. But the distribution is the real story: only about 394 lions are inside the Gir National Park and Sanctuary, while about 507 (44.22 per cent) now live outside protected areas, in agricultural land, coastal forests and near human settlements.

Barda as a “Second Home” Within Gujarat

The Barda Wildlife Sanctuary near Porbandar has emerged as a natural second home, recording about 17 lions, the first lion presence there since 1879. This shows the population is expanding on its own, but it is still confined to a single, connected Saurashtra landscape.

THE CASE FOR A SECOND HOME OUTSIDE GUJARAT

Conservationists have long warned against keeping an entire endangered species in one landscape. A single catastrophe, an epidemic, a large forest fire, or a natural disaster, could wipe out most of the population at once. This risk is not hypothetical: a canine distemper virus (CDV) outbreak in 2018 killed a large number of Gir lions, echoing the CDV epidemic that devastated Serengeti lions in the 1990s.

The scientific answer is metapopulation management: maintaining two or more geographically separate populations so that a disaster in one does not doom the species. This is precisely why a second home outside Gujarat has been proposed.

The Kuno Directive

In April 2013, the Supreme Court of India directed the translocation of some Asiatic lions from Gir to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, to establish a free-ranging second population. More than a decade on, the directive remains largely unimplemented, amid resistance from Gujarat, which regards the lion as its natural and cultural heritage. Kuno, meanwhile, has since become home to translocated African cheetahs under Project Cheetah, adding a further layer to the debate.

FEATURE	DETAIL
Directive	Supreme Court, April 2013
Proposed second home	Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh
Aim	Geographically separate, free-ranging second population
Status	Largely unimplemented
Core rationale	Avoid single-population extinction risk (metapopulation)

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

Ujjyari Current Affairs - ujjyari.com - Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

The 891 figure is worth celebrating, but conservation biology cautions that a large number in one place is not the same as a secure species. Two challenges now dominate. First, with 44 per cent of lions outside protected areas, human-lion conflict, road and rail deaths, open wells and disease spillover from livestock and dogs are rising. Second, the absence of a genuinely separate second population leaves the species exposed to a single-event collapse.

The way forward is twofold. Within Gujarat, strengthen the Greater Gir landscape, secure corridors to Barda and the coast, vaccinate dogs against CDV, and reduce accidental deaths. Beyond Gujarat, revive the metapopulation approach in the spirit of the Supreme Court's 2013 directive, so that a scientifically identified second home preserves the Asiatic lion for the long term. The lion is a shared national natural heritage, and its survival strategy should be guided by science and national conservation interest rather than by any single-state consideration.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3: Conservation, environment and biodiversity; environmental pollution and degradation; disaster (epidemic) risk to a single-population species; protected-area management.

Prelims pointers:

- 16th Asiatic Lion Census (2025): about 891 lions, up 32.2% from 674 in 2020; surveyed May 10 to 13, 2025, across about 35,000 sq km, 58 talukas, 11 districts.
- About 394 lions inside Gir National Park and Sanctuary; about 507 (44.22%) outside protected areas.
- Barda Wildlife Sanctuary near Porbandar: about 17 lions, first since 1879.
- 2013 Supreme Court directive: translocate some lions to Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh (largely unimplemented).
- IUCN Red List: the lion species (*Panthera leo*) is "Vulnerable"; the Asiatic subpopulation, long assessed as the subspecies *Panthera leo persica*, has been listed as "Endangered" on the population-size criterion, and IUCN's 2024 revision now treats it within the species-level assessment. On Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. A 2018 canine distemper outbreak killed many Gir lions.

Mains question: "A rising population confined to a single landscape is not the same as a secure species." Critically examine the case for establishing a second home for the Asiatic lion, and the reasons the Supreme Court's translocation directive remains unimplemented. (15 marks, 250 words)

FACTS CORNER

Ujjiyari Current Affairs - ujjiyari.com - Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

16th Asiatic Lion Census (2025): about 891 lions in the Saurashtra (Gir) landscape, up 32.2% from 674 in 2020; surveyed May 10 to 13, 2025, across about 35,000 sq km, 58 talukas and 11 districts of Gujarat.

Distribution: about 394 lions inside the Gir National Park and Sanctuary; about 507 (44.22%) outside protected areas.

Barda Wildlife Sanctuary: near Porbandar, emerged as a “second home” with about 17 lions, the first there since 1879.

Kuno directive: in 2013 the Supreme Court directed translocation of some lions to Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, to create a separate second population; the directive remains largely unimplemented.

Single-population risk: concentrating the species in one landscape leaves it exposed to a single catastrophe such as an epidemic; a canine distemper outbreak killed many Gir lions in 2018.

Status: on the IUCN Red List the lion species (*Panthera leo*) is “Vulnerable” while the Asiatic subpopulation (the subspecies *Panthera leo persica*) has been listed as “Endangered” on the population-size criterion; it is on Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Sources: *Down To Earth* (<https://www.downtoearth.org.in>), *PIB* (<https://pib.gov.in>), *IUCN Red List* (<https://www.iucnredlist.org>)

Source: The Asiatic Lion and the Case for a Second Home — Ujjiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

RELATED EDITORIALS

DOWN TO EARTH

[The Cooling Divide: Air Conditioning and Climate Inequality](#)

6 Jul

DOWN TO EARTH

[Food in the Fuel Tank: The OECD-FAO Outlook and the Biofuel Dilemma](#)

6 Jul

DOWN TO EARTH

[When the Chenab Rises: Himalayan Flash Floods and Fragile Infrastructure](#)

6 Jul

THE HINDU

[One Landscape, One Risk: The Case for a Second Home for the Asiatic Lion](#)

6 Jul

RELATED KEY TERMS

Ujjayari Current Affairs · ujjayari.com · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

KEY TERM

[Access and Benefit Sharing \(ABS\)](#)

The framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising...

KEY TERM

[Agasthyamalai BR](#)

A UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve in the southern Western Ghats...

KEY TERM

[Agri-Photovoltaic](#)

A dual land-use technology that integrates elevated solar panels with...

KEY TERM

[Aquifer](#)

Underground layer of permeable rock, sediment, or soil that stores and...

Ujiyari Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · **Free Daily** Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/07/06/asiatic-lion-second-home-gir-concentration-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](#)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com