

# International Big Cat Alliance

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## International Big Cat Alliance: India's Global Leadership in Wildlife Conservation

### Context:

India has officially been designated as the **Headquarters and Secretariat** of the *International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)*, following a recent agreement signed between the Central Government and IBCA. This development strengthens India's leadership in global wildlife conservation efforts.

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### About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- IBCA is an international coalition of **96 countries** — including both **big cat range countries and non-range countries** — committed to the conservation of **seven big cat species** and their habitats.
  - The concept of IBCA was first proposed by **India's Prime Minister in 2019** and was officially launched on **April 9, 2023**, marking the **50th anniversary of Project Tiger**.
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### Objectives of IBCA

- To combat **illegal wildlife trade** involving the seven big cats.
  - To strengthen the **protection and conservation** of big cat habitats.
  - To mobilize **financial and technical resources** for conservation activities.
  - To build international cooperation on conservation practices, research, and policy exchange.
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## Focus Species

IBCA concentrates on the conservation of the following seven species:  
**Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Puma, Jaguar, and Cheetah.**


Among these, **five species are found in India:**  
**Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, and Cheetah.**

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## Institutional Framework

- **Depository Authority:** *Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India.*
  - **Membership:** Open to all **United Nations member states**. Initial members include:
    - Republic of **India**
    - Republic of **Nicaragua**
    - Kingdom of **Eswatini**
    - Federal Republic of **Somalia**
    - Republic of **Liberia**
  - **Partner Organizations:** Nine global organizations are associated as IBCA partners.
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## Governance Structure

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- The alliance functions through:
    - An **Assembly of Members**
    - A **Standing Committee**
    - A **Secretariat** (hosted by India)

- The structure is modeled on the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** framework.
  - The **Director-General (DG)** is appointed by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
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## Need for IBCA

- Big cat populations face sharp decline due to:
    - **Habitat loss**
    - **Poaching and illegal wildlife trade**
    - **Human-wildlife conflict**
    - **Climate change**
  - A coordinated **global conservation effort** is essential to reverse these trends and stabilize their populations.
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## Financial Commitment

- India has committed **₹150 crore (2023-2028)** to support IBCA operations.
  - Additional funding is being explored via **bilateral, multilateral, and donor agency partnerships**.
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## Role in Global Conservation

- **Collaborative Platform:** Brings together **governments, researchers, conservationists, and policymakers**.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Promotes the exchange of expertise in **anti-poaching, habitat management, and ecological restoration**.

- **Funding Support:** Functions as a **pooled global funding mechanism** for conservation projects.
  - **Capacity Building:** Offers **technical guidance and scientific research support** to under-resourced nations.
  - **Strengthening Global Treaties:** Complements existing agreements like:
    - **CITES** (*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species*)
    - **CMS** (*Convention on Migratory Species*)
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## Ecological Significance

- Big cats are **apex predators**, and their conservation ensures:
    - **Biodiversity preservation**
    - **Ecosystem stability**
    - **Climate resilience**
  - IBCA-backed conservation of forests and grasslands aids in:
    - **Carbon sequestration**
    - **Climate adaptation**
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## National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- **Established:** 2005, following **Tiger Task Force** recommendations.
- Granted statutory authority under **Section 38L, Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006**.

- Ensures:
    - Central accountability in **tiger reserve management**.
    - Support for **local livelihoods** around protected areas.
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## India's Conservation Initiatives for Big Cats

- **Project Tiger** (1973) — Flagship tiger conservation program.
- **Asiatic Lion Conservation Project** — Focused on Gir's unique lion population.
- **Project Snow Leopard** — Protects the high-altitude snow leopard habitat.
- **Project Cheetah** — Aims at reintroducing and conserving cheetahs in India.
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** — Legislative backbone for wildlife conservation.
- **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** — Apex advisory body for wildlife protection.

