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## Forest Fires a Concern for India | Uttarakhand | 12 Jun 2024

### Why in News?

**Forest patches in Uttarakhand** and Himachal Pradesh **burned due to rising temperatures** from April, causing **damage to properties, loss of [wildlife](#)**, and prolonged smoke in tourist areas.

### Key Points

- According to data collected by the **MODIS (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer)** sensor fitted onto [NASA's \(National Aeronautics and Space Administration\) Aqua and Terra satellites](#), **Uttarakhand was the hardest hit** by forest fires this season (November 2023 to June 2024).
  - **Odisha ranked second** with 1,866 fire incidents, **Andhra Pradesh came third** with 1,788 fires, Maharashtra had 1,493, and Chhattisgarh reported 1,330 fires in forest areas.
- In Uttarakhand, the highest number and most intense fires were noted in **Nainital, Champawat, and Udham Singh Nagar districts** in the southwestern part.
  - The **Uttarakhand Forest Department** had **suffered revenue losses** worth more than Rs 25 lakh due to the blaze.
  - The state government has announced plans to file cases against persons found setting the grazing area in forests ablaze.
- As per the [Forest Survey of India](#), 54.4% of India's forests are exposed to occasional fires, 7.4% to moderately frequent fires, and 2.4% to high incidence levels.

### Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS)

- Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer is a key instrument aboard the **Terra (originally known as EOS AM-1) and Aqua (originally known as EOS PM-1) satellites**.
    - Terra's orbit around the Earth is timed so that it passes from north to south across the equator in the morning, while Aqua passes south to north over the equator in the afternoon.
  - Terra MODIS and Aqua MODIS are **viewing the entire Earth's surface every 1 to 2 days**, acquiring data in 36 spectral bands, or groups of wavelengths.
  - These data will improve our understanding of global dynamics and processes occurring on the land, in the oceans, and in the lower atmosphere.
  - The primary goal of the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer is to gather information about the Earth's climate and environment, including measurements of various atmospheric, land surface, and oceanic parameters.
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## Why in News?

The **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)**, in collaboration with the [Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board](#), has launched online ticket reservations for the **Bharat Gaurav Express train** from Tamil Nadu to six spiritual destinations in Uttarakhand.

## Key Points

- The six spiritual destinations are: **Rishikesh, Rudraprayag, Guptkashi, Kedarnath, Joshimath, and Badrinath.**
  - The journey spans over 13 days and includes a helicopter transfer from Guptkashi to Kedarnath.
- **Kedarnath Dham** is located in **Rudraprayag district**. It is **dedicated to Lord Shiva** and situated on the bank of the [Mandakini River](#). It is one of the [12 Jyotirlingas](#) (divine representations of Lord Shiva) in India.
- **Badrinath Dham** is located in **Chamoli district**. It is home to the sacred Badrinarayan Temple, **dedicated to Lord Vishnu.**
- **Rudraprayag** is one of the **Panch Prayag of Alaknanda River**, the point of confluence of rivers **Alaknanda and Mandakini.**
  - It is **named after Rudra, an aspect of Lord Shiva.** According to a legend, Lord Shiva appeared here as 'Rudra' to bless Narad Muni.
- **Joshimath** is a hilly town located on the Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway (NH-7) in **Chamoli district** of Uttarakhand.
  - The city serves as a tourist town as it acts as an **overnight rest stop** for people visiting **Badrinath, Auli, Valley of Flowers, and Hemkund Sahib,** among other important religious and tourist locations in the state.
- **Guptkashi** is located in the **Rudraprayag district**. It is known for its ancient Vishwanath Temple dedicated to the god Shiva, which is similar to the one in Varanasi.
- **Rishikesh** is located in the Dehradun district. It is commonly referred to as the '**yoga capital of the world**'.
  - It is situated on the **right bank of the Ganges River** and is a pilgrimage town for Hindus, with ancient sages and saints meditating there in search of higher knowledge.

## Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB)

- It is a government body responsible for promoting tourism in the state of Uttarakhand.
- It was **established in 1976** and is **headquartered in Dehradun.**
- The UTDB works to develop and **promote tourism infrastructure, attract investment, and market** Uttarakhand as a tourist destination.

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## Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) | Haryana | 12 Jun 2024

### Why in News?

The two-time CM of Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar was allocated the **Ministry of Power and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** in the Prime Minister's cabinet.

- During the cabinet meeting the govt announced 30 million homes under [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana \(PMAY\).](#)

## Key Points

- PMAY launched in 2015, provides assistance to eligible rural and urban households for the construction of houses with basic amenities.
  - Under this, a total of 42.1 million houses have been completed for eligible poor families under the housing schemes in the past 10 years, according to government data.
- The power ministry also faces the challenge of maintaining power generation capacity, largely dependent on [coal](#), and balancing it against the global demand to dial down [fossil fuels](#).

## Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) Scheme

- **Launch:** To achieve the objective of “Housing for All” by 2022, the erstwhile rural housing scheme Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was restructured to Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.
  - To help rural people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.

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## Additional Installment of the Tax Devolution | Uttar Pradesh | 12 Jun 2024

### Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh received the largest portion of Rs 25,495 crore, which was the highest amount in the country, as an extra payment for [tax devolution](#) from the Union finance ministry under the new government.

- According to the finance ministry, the funds will allow room for the states to expedite development projects.

### Key Points

- This amount has come as an additional installment of devolution of taxes to states besides the devolution amount for the month of June 2024.
- Uttar Pradesh topped the list with maximum allocation, followed by Bihar (Rs 14,056.12 crore), Madhya Pradesh (Rs 10,970.44 crore), and West Bengal (Rs 10,513.46 crore) in tax devolution.

### Tax Devolution

- Tax devolution refers to the distribution of tax revenues between the central government and the state governments. It is a constitutional mechanism established to allocate the proceeds of certain taxes among the Union and the states in a fair and equitable manner.
- [Article 280\(3\)\(a\)](#) of the Constitution of India mandates that the Finance Commission (FC) has the responsibility to make recommendations regarding the division of the net proceeds of taxes between the Union and the states.

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## Solar Energy Hub in Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 12 Jun 2024

### Why in News?

Trade and industry organisations in Rajasthan have **urged the government to establish** the state as a **hub for manufacturing [solar panels](#)**.

- Rajasthan is among the top states in India for generating solar energy.

### Key Points

- The **state's electricity demand is rising** by 8 to 10% annually. The government aims to have 43% of total electricity consumption come from solar energy by 2030.
  - In 2023, solar power plants with a combined capacity of 15,195.12 megawatts (Mw) were set up in the state.
- According to the **Federation of Rajasthan Trade and Industry (FORTI)**, considering the scope in the field of solar energy, the **state government should promote solar panel manufacturing** in the state.

### Solar Panels

- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) technology converts sunlight directly into electricity through the **photovoltaic effect**.
  - The term "photovoltaics" is derived from the conversion of **light (photons)** into **electricity (voltage)**, a phenomenon known as the photovoltaic effect.
- PV cells are made of semiconductor materials like **silicon**. When sunlight strikes the cell, electrons are knocked loose from the atoms, generating electricity.
  - **Grid-connected systems** feed surplus electricity back into the grid.
- In many regions, photovoltaic systems are being deployed at large scales to help power the electric grid.
- **Methods:** PV systems come with small rooftop solar installations, solar pumps, off-grid lighting systems, and large utility-scale solar power plants.
- **Cost-effective:** The costs of PV systems have **fallen dramatically**, making solar power cost-competitive.
  - With weatherproof panels and no moving parts, PV systems require **minimal maintenance** and have **long lifespans**.
- **Drawback:** Solar PV generation relies on **sunny weather** and output varies throughout the day.

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## Reintroduction of Cheetahs in Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary | Madhya Pradesh | 12 Jun 2024

### Why in News?

The Madhya Pradesh government has completed preparations at the [Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary](#) to become a new habitat for [cheetahs](#).

## Key Points

- Teams from Kenya and South Africa had earlier visited Gandhi Sagar to assess the conditions for [reintroduction of cheetahs](#).
  - Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister chaired a meeting of the **state wildlife board**, during which it was informed that preparations have been completed.
- Prey animals were relocated from [Kanha](#), [Satpura](#) and **Sanjay tiger reserves** to Gandhi Sagar.
- Under the ambitious cheetah reintroduction project, **eight Namibian cheetahs**, five females and three males, were released into enclosures at [Kuno National Park \(KNP\)](#) in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.
  - In February 2023, 12 more cheetahs were brought from South Africa.
- During the meeting, the chief minister directed officials to conduct a study on the possibilities of bringing **rhinos** and other rare and endangered wild animals to the forests of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** in **Mandsaur district** is around 270 km from Kuno National Park in Sheopur.
  - The second home for cheetahs is spread over 64 sq km.

## Kanha Tiger Reserve

- It stretches over an area of 940 square km in the **two districts - Mandla and Balaghat - of Madhya Pradesh**.
- The present-day Kanha area **was divided into two sanctuaries, Hallon and Banjar. Kanha National Park was created in 1955** and in **1973** was made the **Kanha Tiger Reserve**.
  - Kanha National Park is the **largest National Park in Central India**.

## Satpura Tiger Reserve

- Satpura Tiger Reserve, is in the **Hoshangabad district** of Madhya Pradesh. Famous as a **tiger conservation center**, this area is also **rich in wildlife and plant diversity**.
- Apart from the tiger, various wildlife including **leopard, Indian bison, Indian giant squirrel, sambar, chital, deer, nilgai, langur, bear, wild boar** are found here.
- It has more than 300 caves of historical and **archaeological importance**.

## Sanjay Tiger Reserves

- Sanjay-Dubri National Park and Tiger Reserve was **established in 1975** to conserve the biodiversity rich forest area of the district. Comprising an **Evergreen Sal forest**.
- The major species found are **tiger, Sloth bear, Chital, Nilgai, Chinkara, Sambar (limited to hilly terrain and in very small number), leopard, Dhole (wild dog), Jungle Cat, Hyena, Porcupine, Jackal, Fox, Indian Wolf, Indian Python Four-horned Antelope and Barking deer**.

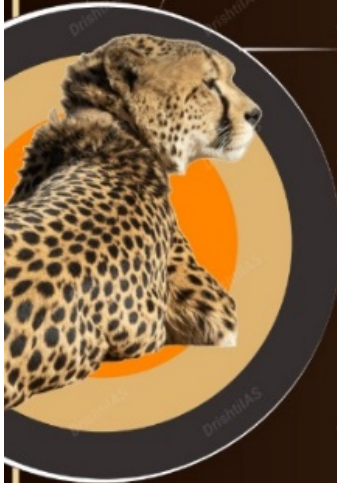


# Cheetah

**Common Name** - Cheetah

**Scientific Name** - *Acinonyx jubatus*

- *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (African Cheetah)
- *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Asiatic Cheetah)



## Reintroduction of Cheetah to India:

- The "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India" was released by MoEF&CC at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (January 2022).
  - Such a plan was first proposed in 2009.
- In September 2022, eight cheetahs landed in India from Namibia.
  - The 8 cheetahs have been relocated to the Kuno-Palpur National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- The relocation of cheetahs to India from Namibia is the world's first inter-continental large wild carnivore translocation project.

Slightly brownish and golden skin; thicker than the Asiatic Cheetahs

More prominent spots and lines on the face

Found all over the African continent

**IUCN Red List Status - Vulnerable**



## African Cheetah

Slightly smaller than the African ones.

Pale yellowish fawn coloured skin - more fur under body, belly specifically.

Found only in Iran; the country claims there are only 12 of them left. Year 1952 - Asiatic Cheetah officially declared extinct from India.

**IUCN Red List Status - Critically Endangered**



## Asiatic Cheetah

