

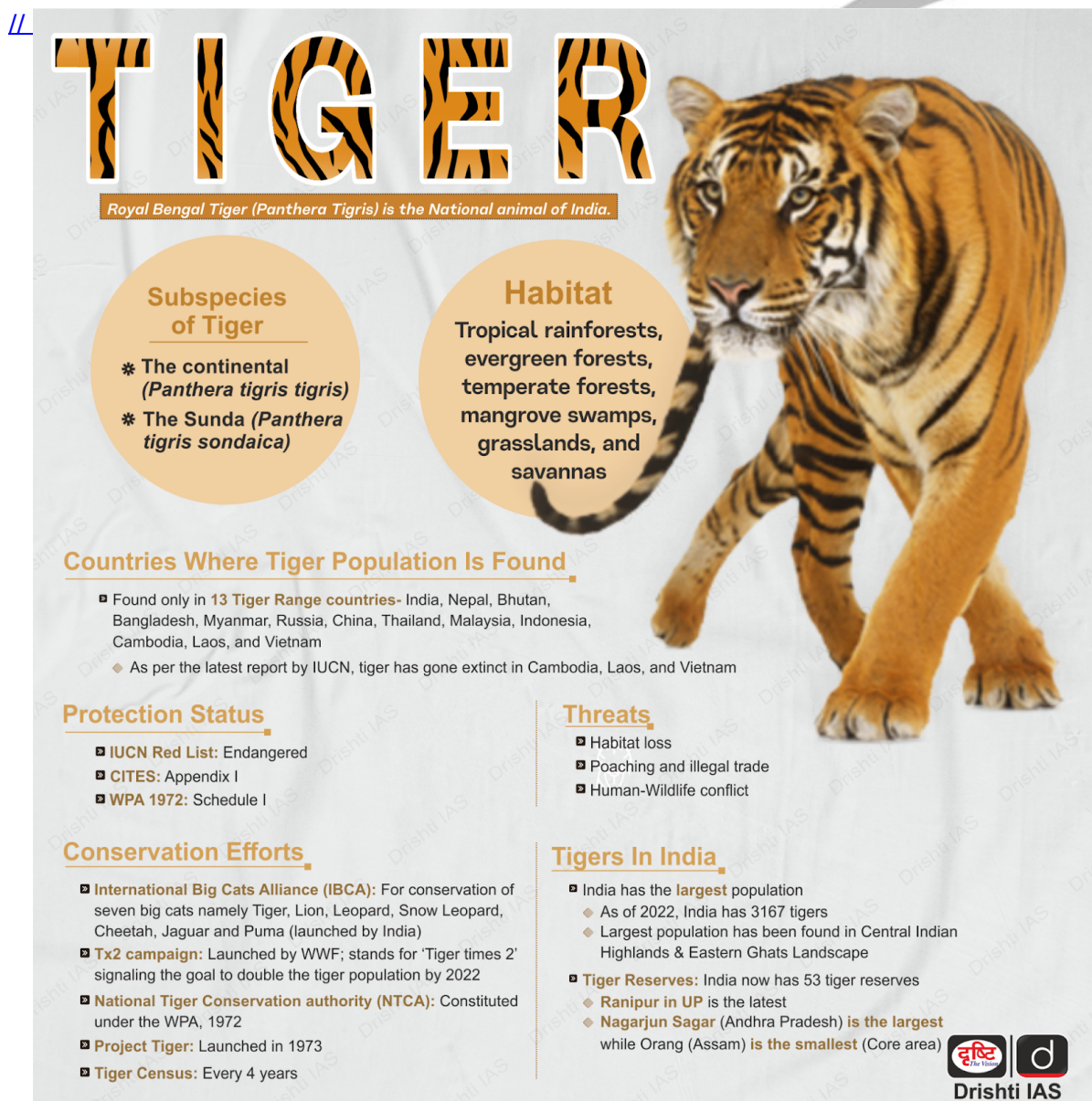


## New Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 08 Nov 2024

### Why in News?

An **expert committee advised urgent habitat conservation and prey base development** before declaring **Kumbhalgarh-Todgarh Raoli sanctuary** as a [Tiger Reserve](#).

- The Union government and [National Tiger Conservation Authority](#) provided in-principle **approval in August 2023**. The committee will continue to define core and buffer areas to safeguard biodiversity.



The infographic features the word 'TIGER' in large, stylized letters with a tiger-stripe pattern. To the right is a photograph of a tiger walking. Below the title, a caption states: 'Royal Bengal Tiger (Panthera Tigris) is the National animal of India.' Two circular callouts provide details: 'Subspecies of Tiger' lists 'The continental (Panthera tigris tigris)' and 'The Sunda (Panthera tigris sondaica)'; 'Habitat' lists 'Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas'. A section titled 'Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found' lists 13 countries and notes that tigers are extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. 'Protection Status' includes IUCN Red List (Endangered), CITES (Appendix I), and WPA 1972 (Schedule I). 'Threats' include habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict. 'Conservation Efforts' mentions the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA), the Tx2 campaign, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Project Tiger (1973), and the Tiger Census (every 4 years). 'Tigers In India' notes India has the largest population (3167 as of 2022), with the largest population in Central Indian Highlands & Eastern Ghats Landscape, 53 tiger reserves, Ranipur in UP as the latest, and Nagarjun Sagar (Andhra Pradesh) as the largest while Orang (Assam) is the smallest (Core area). The Drishiti IAS logo is in the bottom right corner.

# TIGER

Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera Tigris*) is the National animal of India.

### Subspecies of Tiger

- \* The continental (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
- \* The Sunda (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

### Habitat

Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas

### Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found

- Found only in 13 Tiger Range countries- India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
- As per the latest report by IUCN, tiger has gone extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

### Protection Status

- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITES: Appendix I
- WPA 1972: Schedule I

### Threats


- Habitat loss
- Poaching and illegal trade
- Human-Wildlife conflict

### Conservation Efforts

- International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA):** For conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma (launched by India)
- Tx2 campaign:** Launched by WWF; stands for 'Tiger times 2' signaling the goal to double the tiger population by 2022
- National Tiger Conservation authority (NTCA):** Constituted under the WPA, 1972
- Project Tiger:** Launched in 1973
- Tiger Census:** Every 4 years

### Tigers In India

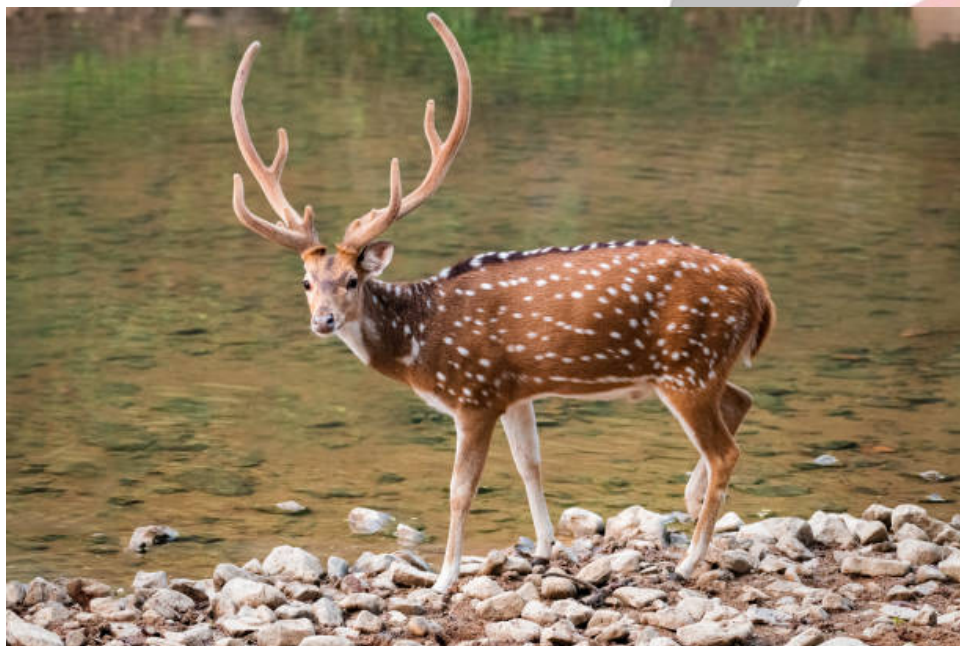
- India has the **largest** population
  - As of 2022, India has 3167 tigers
  - Largest population has been found in Central Indian Highlands & Eastern Ghats Landscape
- Tiger Reserves:** India now has 53 tiger reserves
  - Ranipur in UP is the latest
  - Nagarjun Sagar (Andhra Pradesh) is the largest while Orang (Assam) is the smallest (Core area)



## Key Points

- **Committee's Recommendation:**
  - **Habitat Limitations:**
    - The **current area lacks the capacity to support a sustainable tiger population**. The report suggests adding more areas to the proposed reserve.
  - **Village Relocation:**
    - A strategic, voluntary relocation plan for **sparsely populated villages within the proposed reserve area is recommended** to secure undisturbed habitats and enhance villagers' quality of life through sustainable resettlement.
  - **Invasive Species Control:**
    - Removing invasive weeds and planting native, palatable grasses are essential to restore suitable habitats for wild herbivores and promote biodiversity.
  - **Prey Base Development:**
    - Relocating 1,000–2,000 [spotted deer \(chital\)](#) is recommended to boost prey availability, benefiting the population of predators.
  - **Anti-Poaching and Infrastructure:**
    - Strengthening [anti-poaching](#) measures, wireless communications, and patrol roads is necessary.
  - **Geographic Scope:**
    - The Kumbhalgarh Tiger Reserve would **span approximately 1,397 sq km** across **Rajsamand, Udaipur, Pali, Ajmer, and Sirohi districts** in Rajasthan.

## Spotted Deer (Chital)



- The chital, also known as the **spotted deer or axis deer**, is a graceful and elegant herbivore native to the grasslands and forests of **India and Sri Lanka**.
- They prefer open grasslands, savannas, and lightly forested areas.
  - [IUCN Red list](#): Least Concern
  - [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#): Schedule II.

# VINBAX 2024 | Haryana | 08 Nov 2024

## Why in News?

The 5<sup>th</sup> [Vietnam-India Bilateral Army Exercise](#), "VINBAX 2024" commenced at Ambala, Haryana.



## Key Points

### ▪ About VINBAX 2024:

#### ◦ Expanded Scope with Bi-Service Participation:

- For the first time, the exercise includes personnel from both Army and Air Force of India and Vietnam, increasing the scope of the exercise.

#### ◦ Objective:

- The exercise aims to build joint military capability, focusing on **deployment of Engineer and Medical teams** for [United Nations Peacekeeping Operations](#) under [Chapter VII](#).

#### ◦ Validation Exercise:

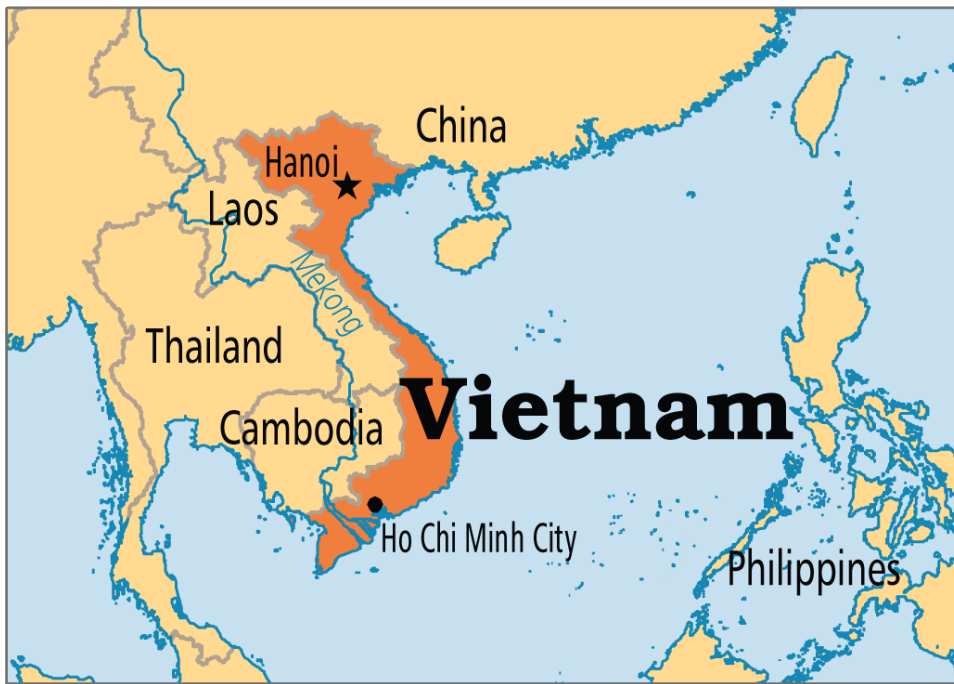
- A 48-hour validation exercise, including a [Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief \(HADR\)](#) demonstration and equipment display, will evaluate the contingents' technical capabilities under UN mission scenarios.

#### ◦ Cultural Exchange:

- The exercise also serves as a platform for troops from both nations to learn about each other's social and cultural heritage.

### ▪ India and Vietnam:

- Both countries share a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and defence cooperation is a key pillar of this partnership. Vietnam is an important partner in [India's Act East policy](#) and the [Indo-Pacific vision](#).



## United Nations Peacekeeping

- UN Peacekeeping refers to the **activities carried out by the United Nations (UN) to help maintain or restore international peace and security** in conflict-affected areas.
  - Established to respond to the complex nature of conflicts and to support countries in transition from conflict to peace,
  - UN Peacekeeping operates under the **principles of consent, impartiality, and non-use of force, except in self-defense** and defense of the mandate
  - Although the majority of peacekeepers are military or police, approximately 14% are civilians.

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## Cat Snake Spotted in Valmiki Tiger Reserve | Bihar | 08 Nov 2024

### Why in News?

The **common cat snake (*Boiga trigonata*)**, a rare and minimally venomous species, was recently discovered in Bihar's [Valmiki Tiger Reserve](#).



## Key Points

- **About Common Cat Snake:**
  - Also known as **Indian gamma snake**, the common cat snake is a species of **rear-fanged snake** endemic to **South Asia**.
- **Features:**
  - **Thin, long body** with smooth, non-glossy scales.
  - **Greyish-brown dorsal** with **light zig-zag patterns**; **whitish belly** with tiny spots.
  - Triangular head with a **distinct Y-pattern on top**.
  - **Large golden eyes** with **vertical pupils**.
- **Habitat:**
  - Found widely across the **Indian Subcontinent**.
  - Inhabits dense and open forests, rocky hills, and scrub jungles.
  - Hides in tree holes, crevices, and dense vegetation at low to moderate heights.
- **Venom Characteristics:**
  - **Mildly venomous**, the snake poses no significant threat to humans but impacts small animals.
- **Lifespan:** 12-20 years
- **Diet:** It primarily consists of **small vertebrates**.
- **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern.

## Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR)

- The VTR is located in **Bihar's West Champaran district**, bordering Nepal to its north and Uttar Pradesh to its west. It is the **only tiger reserve in Bihar**.
  - Situated in the **Gangetic plains bio-geographic region**, the vegetation of this Tiger Reserve is a **combination of Bhabar and Terai regions**.
  - **Wild mammals include** [tiger](#), sloth bear, [leopard](#), wild dog, bison, wild boar etc.
  - **Rivers Gandak**, Pandai, Manor, Harha, Masan and Bhapsa flow through various parts of the reserve.
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# Maithili Missed Classical Status | Bihar | 08 Nov 2024

## Why in News?

According to the sources, **Maithili** was not granted [classical status](#), despite recurring demands, as the **Bihar government** did **not formally submit the proposal**.

## Key Points

- **Recommendation Process:**
  - **Classical status for languages** is recommended by a [Linguistics Expert Committee](#) with representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, **chaired by the [Sahitya Akademi](#) president**.
  - After the committee's recommendation, Union Cabinet approval and a gazette notification are required.
- **Maithili Proposal Technicality:**
  - Although the **Maithili Sahitya Sansthan in Patna** prepared a proposal for **Maithili's classical status**, the Bihar government did **not forward it to the Union Home Ministry** as required.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Importance of Maithili:**
  - According to the [2011 census](#), India has approximately 12 million Maithili speakers.
  - Recognized in the [Eighth Schedule](#) since 2003, Maithili is an **optional subject in the Union Public Service Commission exam** and has **official language status in Jharkhand as of 2018**. It is **widely spoken in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Nepal**.
- **Political Advocacy for Maithili's Status:**
  - The **Janata Dal (United)** has consistently supported Maithili's classical status.
  - Maithili's **1,300-year literary heritage** and ongoing evolution are highlighted as grounds for its classical status.
- **Recent Classical Language Recognitions:**
  - In October 2024, **Assamese, Bengali, and three other languages were granted classical status**, following proposals from respective state governments.
  - Previously, Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit were considered by the committee, with only **Sanskrit recognized in 2005**.
- **Benefits of Attaining Classical Language Status:**
  - Recognized classical languages **receive Ministry of Education support**, including **two annual awards to honor distinguished scholars**.
  - A **Centre of Excellence** is established for dedicated studies, and professional academic chairs are set up at central universities.

## Maithili Language

- Maithili is a language **spoken in Bihar** belonging to the **eastern sub-group of the Indo-Aryan branch**. **Bhojpuri and Magadhi** are closely related to the language.
  - The language is claimed to have **developed from the Magadhan Prakrit**.
    - It was the literary language of all of eastern India during the medieval period.
  - It was **popularised in the 14th century by poet Vidyapati** and solidified the importance of the language in literature.
  - Maithili language has been accorded **Constitutional status in 2003** and it became one of the **22 languages** mentioned in the **8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution**.
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# Survival Threat to Markhor | Jammu & Kashmir | 08 Nov 2024

## Why in News?

**Markhor**, the largest [wild goat](#) in the world, is **battling for survival** in **Jammu and Kashmir**. It is known for its **thick fur, flowing beard and corkscrew horns**.



## Key Points

- **Legal Protection and Species Status:**
  - Markhor, scientifically known as *Capra falconeri*, is classified as "**Near Threatened**" by the [IUCN](#) and protected under Schedule I of India's [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#).
- **Threats to Survival:**
  - Primary threats include habitat loss from fencing, illegal grazing, [poaching](#), and [encroachment](#). [Climate change](#) is also affecting food resources, driving Markhor closer to human settlements.
- **Global Recognition and Initiatives:**
  - Recognizing its ecological importance, the [UN General Assembly](#) designated **24<sup>th</sup> May as the International Day of the Markhor** to encourage conservation efforts.
- **Significance as a Flagship Species:**
  - Markhor serves as a flagship species for conservation in J&K, helping protect other regional wildlife, such as [Musk Deer](#) and [Brown Bear](#).
- **Distribution and Habitat:**
  - The endangered Markhor inhabits **moist to semi-arid mountain regions** across **Pakistan, India (Jammu & Kashmir), Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan**.
  - In J&K, it's found in areas like **Shopian, the Pir Panjal range, and Kazinag Uri**, but its population is fragmented due to human interference and habitat loss from projects like the **Mughal Road**.
- **Impact of Mughal Road and Conservation Measures:**
  - The construction of Mughal Road, despite wildlife department opposition, disrupted Markhor habitats.
  - Following a Supreme Court directive, **5% of the road's project cost was allocated for Markhor habitat restoration**.
- **Markhor Recovery Program:**
  - **Initiated in 2004** by the [Wildlife Trust of India \(WTI\)](#) and the Wildlife Department, the program focuses on fencing sanctuaries, tracking habitat usage, and studying competition between Markhor and livestock.
- **Community Involvement and Awareness:**
  - The Wildlife Department **collaborates with Gujjar and Bakerwal herders** to educate them on conservation practices, especially in areas with livestock that compete with Markhor for space and resources.
- **Government Support and Directives:**
  - The Forest and Environment Minister recently urged the Wildlife Department to assess the impact of human activities on Markhor habitats, emphasizing soil conservation and afforestation efforts.
- **Need for Global Collaboration:**

- Conservation efforts call for international expertise and local engagement to boost Markhor populations and preserve this unique species for future generations.

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PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/statepcs/08-11-2024/print>

