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## Bihar Business Connect 2024 Investment | Bihar | 25 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

In '[Bihar Business Connect-2024](#),' the state received **investment proposals worth Rs 1.80 lakh crore**.

- The State government announced that it will ensure the conversion of **memorandums of understanding (MoUs)** into tangible investments on the ground within a year.

### Key Points

- **Nodal Officers for Ease of Doing Business:**
  - The appointment of "**one nodal officer for every five to ten MoUs**" to facilitate [ease of doing business](#) was announced.
  - These officers will assist investors in securing land and obtaining all required clearances across 11 sectors for which proposals have been received.
- **Periodic Review of Progress:**
  - The **State Investment Promotion Board** will regularly review the progress of these initiatives to ensure timely implementation of investments.
- **Investment Commitments in 2024:**
  - During the **two-day global investors' summit in Patna**, a **total of 423 investment commitments were signed**.
  - **In the 2023 edition** of the investors' meet, **Bihar had secured investment commitments worth Rs 50,300 crore**.

### Bihar Business Connect-2024

- **Objective:**
    - The summit aimed to attract investments across sectors, including **manufacturing, infrastructure, agriculture**, and technology, showcasing Bihar's conducive environment for business growth.
  - **Government Initiatives:**
    - Key policies and reforms focused on improving [ease of doing business](#), along with tax incentives, infrastructure upgrades, and [skill development](#) programs to create a favorable climate for investors.
  - **Networking Platform:**
    - The **event** provided a platform for networking among industry leaders, government officials, and global investors, enhancing collaboration opportunities in Bihar's economy.
  - **Sectoral Focus:**
    - Emphasis on sectors like [renewable energy, IT, tourism](#), and [agri-business](#) aligns with the state's plans to diversify its economic landscape.
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## BPSC Rules Out Exam Cancellation | Bihar | 25 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, [Bihar Public Service Commission \(BPSC\) Chairman](#) ruled out cancellation of the **70<sup>th</sup> Integrated Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) 2024** which got mired in allegations of [question paper leak](#).

### Key Points

- **Disruption in Exam Centre:**
  - The **disruption was limited to one examination center**, and the Commission is **addressing the issue with a re-examination**.
  - The preliminary examination at the Bapu Pariksha Parisar center, canceled due to **disruption caused by unruly aspirants**, will be **re-conducted on 4th January 2025 at another venue in Patna**.
    - Around 12,000 candidates are expected to participate in the re-examination.
- **Show-Cause Notices:**
  - The BPSC has issued [show-cause notices](#) to 34 aspirants alleged to have been involved in the disruptions.
  - These **candidates must respond by 26<sup>th</sup> December 2024**, failing which decisions will be made based on the available evidence.
- **Protests Demanding Complete Cancellation:**
  - **A group of aspirants continues to demand the cancellation of the entire exam** conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024, citing concerns over fairness.
  - Protesters have been sitting on dharna at Gardani Bagh for several days, arguing that re-examination for only one center violates the principle of a "level playing field."

### Note:

- A Show Cause Notice is a **formal communication issued by a court, government agency, or another authoritative body** to an individual or entity, asking them to explain or justify their actions, **decisions, or behavior**. The purpose of a show cause notice is to give the recipient an **opportunity to provide a response or clarification regarding specific concerns** or alleged violations.

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## Chhattisgarh Railway Station Renovated | Chhattisgarh | 25 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, the **136-year-old historic Bhilai railway station** underwent renovation under the [Amrit Bharat Station Yojna](#) launched by the centre to modernise railway stations.

### Key Points

- **Historic Bhilai Railway Station Renovated:**

- The 136-year-old Bhilai railway station in **Durg district, built in 1888**, has been renovated to **enhance passenger experience**.
- The station now features **cleanliness improvements**, an **air-conditioned (AC) waiting hall, and covered sheds** at new platforms to protect passengers from rain and sun.
- Additional amenities include raised ceilings for a spacious feel, improved lighting, and **e-ATM machines** for ticket purchases and train information.
- Entrances have been revamped, ensuring **easier access, enhanced aesthetics, and better facilities for passengers**.

## Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme

### ▪ About:

- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme aims to redevelop 1309 stations nationwide.
- The redevelopment will provide **modern passenger amenities** along with ensuring well-designed traffic circulation, inter-modal integration, and signage for the guidance of passengers.
- The Scheme was **launched in February 2023 by the Ministry of Railways**.

### ▪ Station-wise Plans:

- The station buildings' designs will be inspired by **local culture, heritage, and architecture**.
  - For instance, the Jaipur Railway Station will feature elements resembling the **Hawa Mahal** and **Amer Fort** from Rajasthan.

### ▪ Integrated Approach to Urban Development:

- The redevelopment is planned with a **holistic approach to urban development**, treating the stations as **"City Centres."**
- This approach aims to integrate **both sides of the city and create well-designed traffic circulation**, inter-modal connectivity, and clear signage for passengers' guidance.

## Van Vihar National Park | Madhya Pradesh | 25 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

- According to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, **the Van Vihar National Park** in Bhopal will get two **Asiatic lions from Gujarat** in exchange for two **Bengal tigers**.

### Key Points

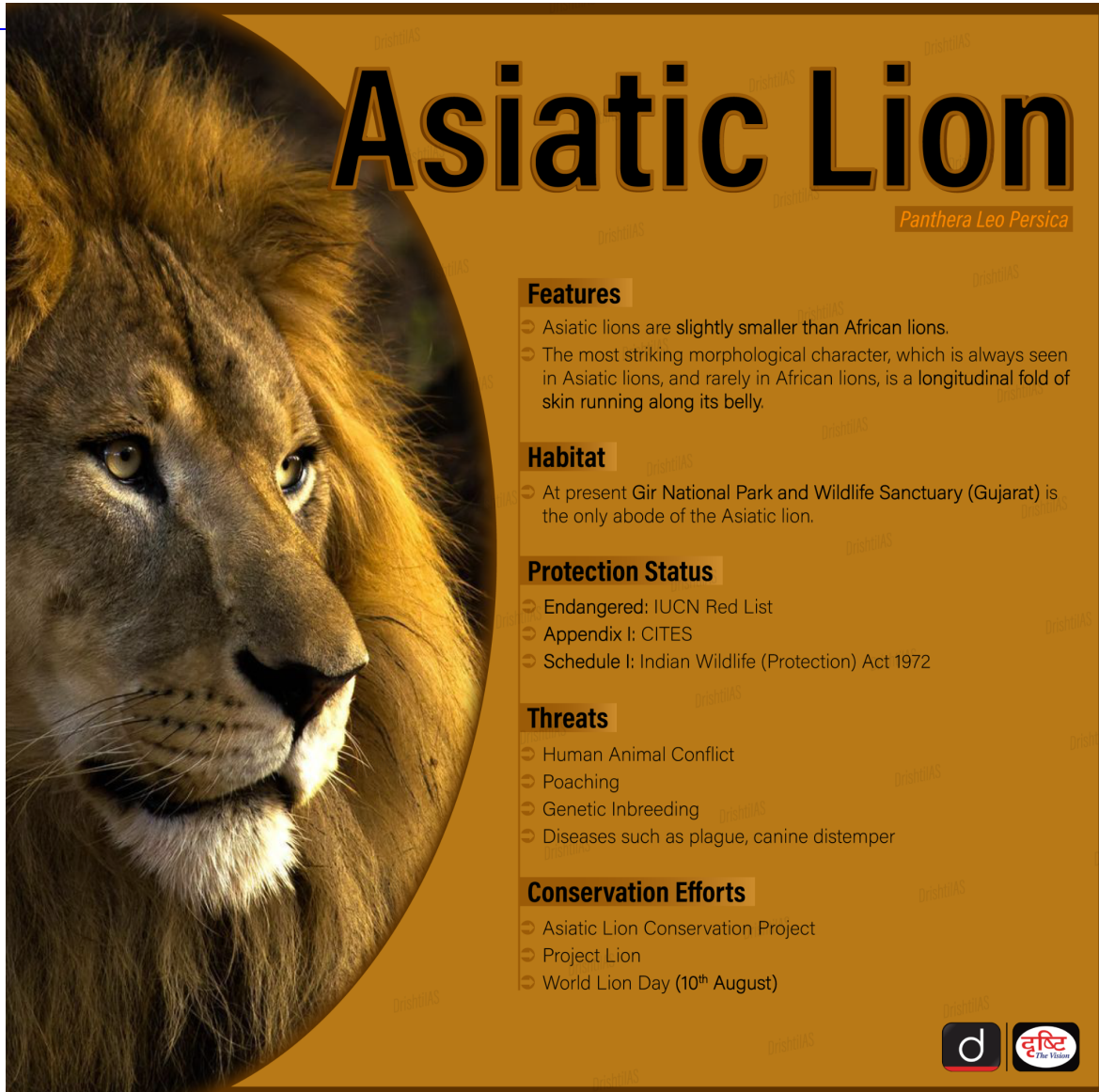
#### ▪ Exchange Between MP and Gujarat:

- Under an animal exchange programme **two tigers have been relocated to the Junagadh zoo**.
- Two **pure-breed Asiatic (Gir) lions** will be brought from **Sakkarbaug Zoological Park in Junagadh to Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal** as part of the exchange.

#### ▪ Van Vihar National Park:

- It is located on the banks of the **Upper Lake in Bhopal**, and serves as a vital conservation area in the Madhya Pradesh capital.
- It has the unique distinction of being **a combination** of National Park, a Zoo, Rescue Centre for wild animals and Conservation Breeding Centre for selected vital species.
  - It is the **only place in central India** where its rescue centre harbours a number of Lions and Tigers rescued from the circuses, Sloth Bears rescued from the madaris, Tigers, Panthers and Bears rescued from the zones of human-wildlife conflict.

- It is also a designated co-ordinating zoo and Conservation Breeding Centre for the **Hard Ground Barasingha**, the **state animal of Madhya Pradesh** and two species of **Gyps Vultures**.
- It is a natural habitat for a variety of herbivores and carnivores namely, **tiger**, **white tiger**, **leopard**, **hyena** and **sloth bear**, **chital**, **sambhar**, **blackbuck**, **blue bull**, **chousingha**, **common langur**, rhesus monkey, porcupine, etc.



**Asiatic Lion**  
*Panthera Leo Persica*

**Features**

- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.

**Habitat**

- At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (Gujarat) is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.

**Protection Status**

- Endangered: IUCN Red List
- Appendix I: CITES
- Schedule I: Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972

**Threats**

- Human Animal Conflict
- Poaching
- Genetic Inbreeding
- Diseases such as plague, canine distemper

**Conservation Efforts**

- Asiatic Lion Conservation Project
- Project Lion
- World Lion Day (10<sup>th</sup> August)

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## 55th GST Council Meeting | Rajasthan | 25 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, the **55th Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting** was held under the Chairpersonship of the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs in **Jaisalmer**, Rajasthan.

### Key Points

- Chief Ministers of Goa, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya, Odisha; Deputy Chief Ministers of Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana also participated.
- **Recommendations by the GST Council:**
  - **Used Electric Vehicle (EVs):** GST council decided to **raise** the rate of tax to **18% from 12% on all used EV sales**, just as in case of non-electric vehicles.
    - GST will apply only to the **margin value** (difference between purchase and selling price, adjusted for depreciation if claimed) in case of **business sales**. **No GST** applies to **individual-to-individual sales**.
- **Bank's Penal Charges:** No GST applies to penal charges by **banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)** for **loan term violations**.
- **Payment Aggregators:** **Payment aggregators** handling payments of **less than Rs 2,000** will be eligible for an exemption.
  - This exemption **does not** extend to **payment gateways or other fintech services** unrelated to fund settlement.
- **Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF):** GST council **did not agree** on bringing **ATF** under the ambit of **GST** because states refused to accept it.
  - States see ATF as part of the **crude petroleum diesel basket**, saying that it alone **cannot be taken out**.
  - 5 products i.e., **crude oil, petrol, diesel, ATF and natural gas** were kept out of purview of GST. The central government levies **excise duty** on them and states **levy VAT**.
- **GST Exemption: Black pepper and raisins** supplied directly by **farmers** will be exempt from GST.
  - **Gene therapy is fully exempt** from GST, and **Integrated GST** exemption on **surface-to-air missiles** is extended.
- **Compensation Cess:** Reduced **compensation cess** rate to **0.1% on supplies to merchant exporters**.
  - This Cess is collected on the supply of select goods and or services to **compensate the states for any revenue loss** on account of implementation of GST.
- **Popcorn:** GST Council **clarified** (no new tax imposition) that **caramelized popcorn** is taxed at **18% GST**. Ready-to-eat popcorn with **salt and spices attracts 5% GST** if not pre-packaged and labeled, and **12% if pre-packaged and labeled**.
  - **Caramelised popcorn** is classified as **sugar confectionery**, and attracts **18% GST** while **salted popcorn** is a **namkeen** and subject to **5% GST**.

## GST Council

- **About:** The GST Council, a **constitutional body** under **Article 279-A (101st Amendment, 2016)**, makes recommendations on GST implementation.
  - GST is a **value-added (Ad Valorem)** and **indirect tax system** that is levied on the supply of goods and services in India.
- **Members:** The Council includes the **Union Finance Minister (Chairperson)**, Union Minister of State (Finance), and a finance or any other minister from each state.
- **Nature of Decisions:** In the **Mohit Minerals case, 2022**, the Supreme Court ruled GST Council recommendations are **not binding**, as Parliament and states have **simultaneous legislative powers** on GST.