



Van Vihar National Park

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.**

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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 (10th August)

