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COMMISSION OF RAILWAY SAFETY



- It is a statutory body that acts as the railway safety authority in the country.
- It deals with matters pertaining to safety of rail travel and train operation and is charged with certain statutory functions as laid down in the Railways Act, 1989 which are of an inspectorial, investigatory & advisory nature.
- The most important duty of the Commission is to ensure that any new Railway line to be opened for passenger traffic conforms to the standards and specifications prescribed by the Ministry of Railways.

The Commission also conducts statutory inquiries into serious train accidents occurring on the Indian Railways and makes recommendations for improving safety on the Railways in India.

- It is working under the administrative control of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of the Government of India.
- The reason or principle behind this, put simply, is to keep the CRS insulated from the influence of the country's railway establishment and prevent conflicts of interest.
- It is headed by a Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety (CCRS).
- Headquarter: It is headquartered in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT SCHEME



- It was previously known as the Scheme for promotion of International Cultural Relations.
- It promotes India's rich cultural heritage and enhances India's image in the global arena in a concerted manner.



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It has following three components:

- Festival of India: It is organized abroad to promote people to people connect and bilateral cultural contacts. The artists from diverse cultural fields such as Folk Art including Folk Music, Folk Dance, Folk Theatre & Puppetry, Classical and Traditional Dance, Experimental/ Contemporary Dance, Classical/ Semi Classical Music, Theatre etc. perform in the 'Festivals of India' abroad.
 - Grant in aid to Indo Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies Scheme: The Grants under this scheme will be sanctioned with the object of fostering closer friendship and cultural contacts between India and foreign countries concerned.
 - Contribution Grant: This component is meant for Indian contribution towards membership of International Organizations like ICROM, UNESCO, World Heritage Fund and to facilitate Indian participation and hosting of international meetings
 - Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Culture
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UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION



- It was established on 20 December 2005 by resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Security Council.
- It is an intergovernmental advisory body that supports peace efforts in conflict-affected countries and is a key addition to the capacity of the International Community in the broad peace agenda, according to its website.
- The PBC is composed of 31 Member States, elected from the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.
- The top financial contributing countries and the top troop-contributing countries to the United Nations system are also members.



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The Commission is mandated

- To bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
 - To focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development.
 - To provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations,
 - To develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery, the Commission said.
 - The Commission also focuses on promoting an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding.
 - India is among the largest contributors of uniformed personnel to U.N. Peacekeeping.
 - It currently deploys about 6,000 military and police personnel to UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western Sahara.
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HIGH ENERGY STEREOSCOPIC SYSTEM (HESS) OBSERVATORY



- It is an array of Cherenkov Telescopes located in the Khomas Highlands in Namibia.
- It started operations in 2003 and has been operated very successfully since then.
- It observes gamma rays, the most energetic form of light, in the very high energy range (>100 GeV), which are produced by some of the most violent processes in the universe.
- Being in the southern hemisphere, it is very well located for observations of gamma-ray sources within our galaxy, the Milky Way.



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- Since gamma rays cannot penetrate the Earth's atmosphere, it detects them indirectly via their interactions with the air molecules.
 - Besides sources from our Milky Way sources, it has a rich and wide physics program, covering also outbursts in very distant galaxies and fundamental physics questions related to dark matter and Lorentz invariance.
 - The HESS observatory is operated by a collaboration of more than 260 scientists from about 40 scientific institutions and 13 different countries.
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WHAT IS SILICA?



- Silica is another name for the chemical compound composed of two most abundant elements in Earth's crust, silicon and oxygen, SiO_2 .
 - The mass of Earth's crust is 59 percent silica, the main constituent of more than 95 percent of the known rocks.
 - Silica exists in many different forms that can be crystalline as well as non-crystalline (amorphous).
 - Silica has three main crystalline varieties: quartz (by far the most abundant), tridymite and cristobalite.
 - Other varieties include coesite, keatite and lechatelierite.
 - Uses:
 - Silica sand is used in buildings and roads in the form of portland cement, concrete and mortar, as well as sandstone.
 - Silica is also used in grinding and polishing glass and stone; in foundry molds; in the manufacture of glass, ceramics, silicon carbide, ferrosilicon, and silicones; as a refractory material; and as gemstones.
 - Silica gel is often used as a desiccant to remove moisture.
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INDIANS NEED TO SHARE CONTRACEPTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

- **India has a long history of family planning initiatives, beginning in 1952** with a national program aimed at improving maternal and child health and stabilizing population growth.
- Over the years, **the program has evolved, but one striking trend has emerged: a stark gender disparity in the adoption of permanent contraceptive methods.**
- This **disparity underscores systemic challenges** to achieving gender equality, particularly in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 5: **empowering all women and girls by 2030.**

The Decline of Male Sterilisation

- **During the late 1960s, vasectomies were the dominant sterilisation method in India,** constituting over 80% of such procedures.
- However, policy shifts, misconceptions, and societal attitudes have led to a steep decline.
- **The five rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reveal a consistent drop in male sterilisation rates,** with the most recent surveys, NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5, showing no progress.
- **This stands in contrast to the National Health Policy of 2017, which set a target of increasing male sterilisation rates to 30%.**

Implications for Gender Equality

- This gendered disparity **undermines broader efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.**
- When women bear the brunt of sterilisation, **they face higher health risks and potential disruptions to their daily lives and livelihoods.**
- Moreover, **the societal narrative that places the burden solely on women reinforces harmful gender stereotypes and limits the potential for shared responsibilities in marital and familial dynamics.**

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- Addressing these disparities requires not only increased awareness about the safety and simplicity of vasectomy procedures but also a societal shift in how reproductive responsibilities are viewed.
- Until men are encouraged to take an active role in family planning, achieving gender equality in India will remain an elusive goal.

Strategies for Promoting Vasectomy Adoption

- **Early Education, Awareness, Social and Behavioural Change Initiatives**
 - Sensitisation about shared family planning responsibilities should begin in schools.
 - **Early exposure to concepts of gender equality** and reproductive health through peer-group discussions and structured awareness programs can challenge existing stereotypes and destigmatise vasectomies.
- **Enhanced Incentives and Learning from International Successes**
 - Conditional cash incentives can play a vital role in increasing male participation.
 - For instance, a **2019 study in Maharashtra** revealed that **financial incentives encouraged more men in rural tribal areas to opt for vasectomies.**
- **Strengthening Health Systems**
 - **The Indian government must align its health infrastructure with policy goals** by training more professionals to perform vasectomies and promoting technical advancements like non-scalpel techniques.
 - **Investments in awareness and accessibility are essential** for creating an environment where male sterilisation is a viable option.

Conclusion

- **The disproportionate reliance on women for sterilisation highlights deep-seated gender inequalities** in India's family planning efforts.
 - **Bridging this gap requires more than policy intentions;** it demands actionable steps that integrate education, incentives, and systemic reform.
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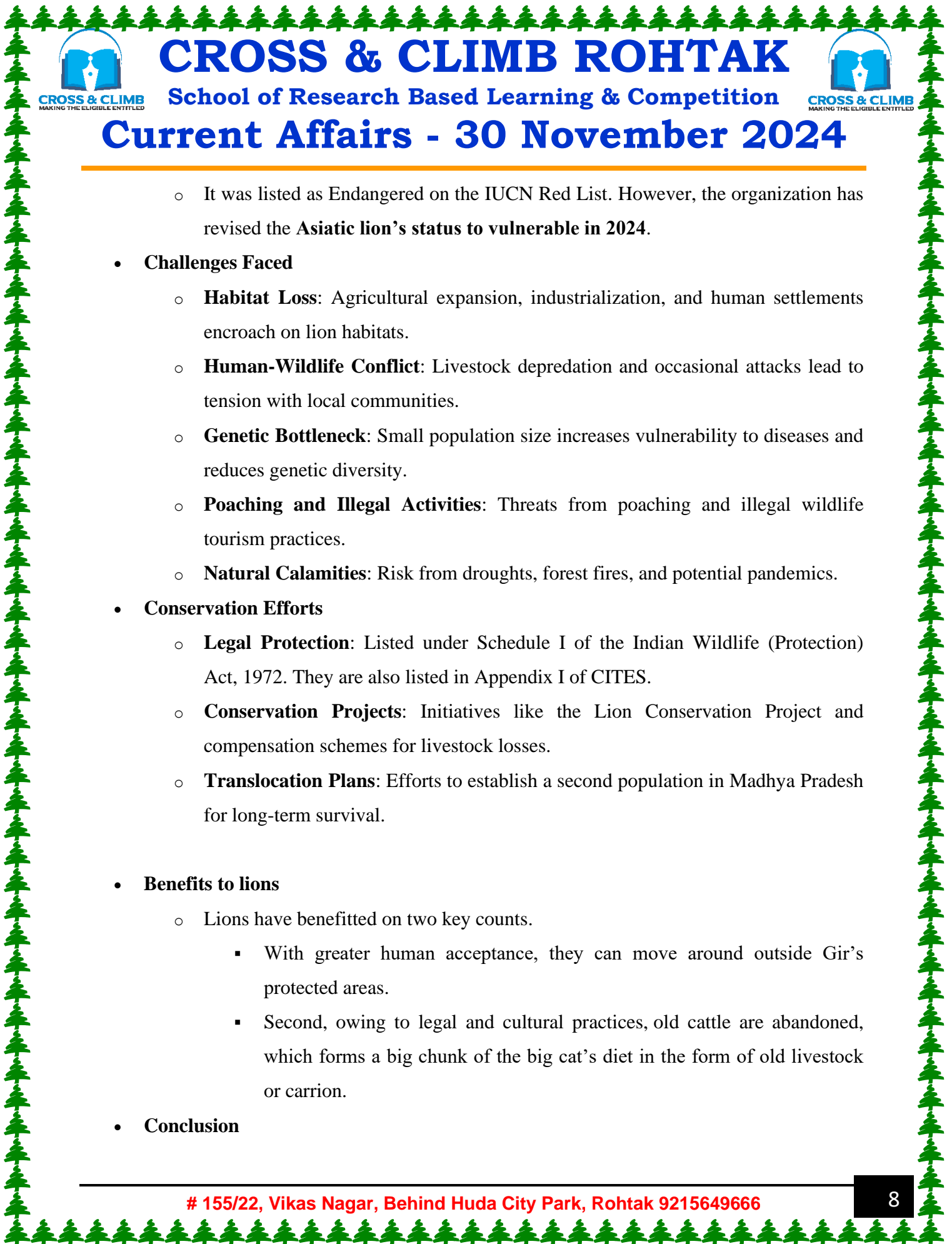
SUSTAINING HUMAN-LION COEXISTENCE IN GUJARAT

Recently, new research revealed that the entire population of 674 Asiatic Lions, confined to Gujarat, coexists with humans due to mutual adaptation, strict legal protection, economic incentives, and government compensation for livestock losses.

The research analyzed over 14,000 livestock depredations, 11,000 compensation claims, human attacks, and surveys from 277 villages to explore the factors enabling human-lion coexistence.

Asiatic Lion

- Also known as the Indian Lion, it is a subspecies of the lion found exclusively in India. It is a symbol of courage and strength in Indian culture and is an integral part of the country's wildlife heritage.
- **Features**
 - **Physical Appearance:** Smaller and more compact than African lions, with a less developed mane in males.
 - **Distinctive Traits:** A unique fold of skin runs along their belly, and they have shorter, sparser manes compared to their African counterparts.
- **Habitat**
 - **Preferred Habitat:** Dry deciduous forests, scrublands, and open grassy patches.
 - **Current Habitat:** Confined to the Gir Forest and surrounding areas in Gujarat, India.
- **Geographical Range**
 - Historically ranged across the Middle East and India but now restricted to Gujarat.
 - The population has expanded beyond Gir Forest into neighboring districts, covering an increasing geographic range.
- **IUCN Status**



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- It was listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. However, the organization has revised the Asiatic lion's status to vulnerable in 2024.
- **Challenges Faced**
 - **Habitat Loss:** Agricultural expansion, industrialization, and human settlements encroach on lion habitats.
 - **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Livestock depredation and occasional attacks lead to tension with local communities.
 - **Genetic Bottleneck:** Small population size increases vulnerability to diseases and reduces genetic diversity.
 - **Poaching and Illegal Activities:** Threats from poaching and illegal wildlife tourism practices.
 - **Natural Calamities:** Risk from droughts, forest fires, and potential pandemics.
- **Conservation Efforts**
 - **Legal Protection:** Listed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. They are also listed in Appendix I of CITES.
 - **Conservation Projects:** Initiatives like the Lion Conservation Project and compensation schemes for livestock losses.
 - **Translocation Plans:** Efforts to establish a second population in Madhya Pradesh for long-term survival.
- **Benefits to lions**
 - Lions have benefitted on two key counts.
 - With greater human acceptance, they can move around outside Gir's protected areas.
 - Second, owing to legal and cultural practices, old cattle are abandoned, which forms a big chunk of the big cat's diet in the form of old livestock or carrion.
- **Conclusion**

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- The lions and communities are co-adapting to co-exist. And benefits to each other, lions and people, exceed the costs of living together, resulting in co-existence.

Challenges and Recommendations

- **Conservation Concerns:**
 - Co-existence is fragile and requires management to reduce conflicts and protect lions.
 - Translocation of lions to Madhya Pradesh for genetic diversity and disease prevention remains unimplemented despite Supreme Court orders.
- **Conflict Mitigation:**
 - Proactive monitoring of lion prides in risk areas using radio collars with virtual geofences that can trigger warning signals.
 - This can pre-empt lion movement and mitigate negative human-lion interactions.
 - Revising livestock compensation schemes to match market rates and exploring livestock insurance schemes.

Community Tolerance and Conflict

- High- and moderate-conflict villages showed greater tolerance due to economic benefits from lions.
- Pastoralist communities exhibited the highest intolerance, primarily due to economic losses.

Livestock Losses

- 91% of livestock depredations occurred outside protected areas.
 - Amreli district reported the most livestock death claims, followed by Junagadh, Gir Somnath, and Bhavnagar.
 - Cattle were the most common prey, followed by goats, sheep, and buffalo.
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