



THE HINDU



GS Paper 3-Species

‘Neither ecologically sustainable nor ethical’: new study expresses concern over translocation of African cheetahs

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BENGALURU

A new study by the Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), which examines the ethical, ecological and welfare challenges associated with the translocation of African cheetahs to India, has expressed concern over the translocation of the animals and also raised questions about its scientific merit and long-term viability.

The study, ‘Delineating the environmental justice implications of an experimental cheetah introduction project in India’, was published in *Frontiers in Conservation Science*.

According to the CWS, the study highlights that the translocation of African cheetahs to India has



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav releasing a female cheetah in the Kuno National Park on February 5. FILE PHOTO

so far 20 African cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*), eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023, were introduced into the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh.

ary interventions, raising concerns about their physical and mental health.

It also said that African cheetah populations are already under pressure, with only around 6,500 mature individuals remaining in the wild.



Cheetahs have experienced high levels of stress, with over 90 chemical immobilisations and regular veterinary interventions, raising concerns about their physical and mental health

CENTRE FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES

ble population is established. The researchers of this paper argue that the project’s reliance on a continuous supply of cheetahs from southern Africa, is neither ecologically sustainable nor ethical,” it said.

The study was led by

hannesburg, South Africa; and Louise C. de Waal, Blood Lions Non Profit Company (NPC), South Africa.

Inclusive approach

The authors have suggested that a more justice-informed approach would ensure that conservation decisions are based on inclusive, participatory processes, which take into account the diverse values people place on nature.

“Our current approach risks overlooking diverse knowledge systems and values, the nuanced ways in which people interact with nature, their perceptions of wildlife, and importantly, their consent to bear the consequences of such initiatives,” said Mr. Joshi.

“Conservation efforts



KEY POINTS

Cheetahs, the fastest land animals, have five subspecies. They are found mainly in southern Africa, with Iran hosting the Asiatic cheetah. African cheetahs are larger, and all subspecies are vulnerable, except the Northwest African and Asiatic, which are critically endangered. Cheetahs were declared extinct in India in 1952.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 2-Governance

Centre sanctions ₹608 cr. relief to A.P. under NDRF

The Hindu Bureau

VIJAYAWADA

The High-Level Committee, headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on Wednesday approved ₹608.08 crore to Andhra Pradesh as additional assistance under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).



KEY POINTS

- The State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) helps state governments respond to disasters, with the Central Government contributing 75% (90% for special states). It covers disasters like floods, cyclones, and droughts. States can use up to 10% for local disasters. The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) supplements SDRF for severe disasters and is fully funded by the Central Government.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 3-Disaster Management

On building resilient telecom infrastructure

What does the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure report state? Why do telecom networks face elevated risks in coastal regions in times of disaster and calamity? Why are undersea cables preferred over overland cables? Is power failure a significant challenge?

EXPLAINER

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), a multilateral organisation launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019, put out a report earlier this month studying Indian telecom networks' preparedness in the event of disasters. The report suggests ways in which State governments can better prepare for calamities that may impact telecom networks.

Why is it important?

Telecom networks are crucial to handling disasters, because they allow the State and National Disaster Management Authorities to communicate quickly with local municipalities and the State and Union governments; something that is important when lives and property are at stake. Telecom networks are particularly vulnerable, as they comprise cabling that may not be fully underground, towers that may not be able to withstand high wind speeds, and because they rely on a



Major hazard: Officials remove Optical Fibre Cables which were hanging in Bengaluru, 2018. FILE PHOTO

measures to develop a resilient telecom network. These include greater data collection and more coordination among officials, a more robust power infrastructure (resilient power infrastructure is also an area where CDRI focuses an enormous amount of effort on), and requiring cell towers to withstand higher wind speeds, especially in coastal States and districts where hurricanes make landfall. The CDRI also advocates for a dig-once policy, which recommends building as much underground civil infrastructure, like water and gas supply lines, drainage and fibre optic cables simultaneously, reducing the risk of cables being damaged when other infrastructure is built. Existing damage to underground cables can greatly exacerbate disruptions when other parts of a network go down.

"The short- to medium-term roadmap suggests the need to update disaster damage and loss data format, mainstream disaster risk modelling into telecommunications infrastructure planning across all miles, strengthen telecommunications asset design based on local and regional hazard vulnerability profiles," and other steps to plan ahead, the report says. There are also

THE GIST

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The CDRI report recommends a few measures to develop a resilient telecom network. These include greater data collection and more coordination among officials, a more robust power infrastructure, and requiring cell towers to withstand higher wind speeds, especially in coastal States and districts where hurricanes make landfall.

Coastal regions face elevated risks, as that is where undersea cables connect India with the

KEY POINTS

- The CDRI's report highlights the vulnerability of Indian telecom networks during disasters, which are crucial for communication in emergencies. It suggests improving power infrastructure, strengthening tower designs, and adopting a "dig-once" policy for underground cables. It also recommends real-time data collection, coordination, and parametric insurance to encourage rapid recovery





GS Paper 3-Defense

War games



KEY POINTS

- The 3rd edition of Exercise CYCLONE began on February 10, 2025, at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan and will run until February 23. Held annually between India and Egypt, the exercise aims to strengthen military ties, enhance interoperability, and promote the exchange of special operations tactics. It focuses on physical fitness, joint planning, and tactical drills.



The Indian EXPRESS

GS Paper 2(IR)

Why Europe 'Dunki' route is gaining popularity

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 19

OF THE 333 individuals who have been deported from the US to India thus far, many did not take traditional 'Dunki' routes that pass through South America. Rather they arrived in Central America via Europe in what is a relatively novel way to illegally enter the United States.

Dunki routes

Dunki routes refer to the long-winding, often dangerous pathways that South Asian immigrants take to reach the Western world, most often the US. These difficult journeys are made due to the lack of requisite legal permits, and are organised in lieu of hefty financial compensation by "agents" and a

well-oiled machinery of human traffickers.

Historically, these routes have passed through South American countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Guyana — countries for which Indians can easily get visas. From there, immigrants travel north, through the isthmus of Panama into North America. They finally enter the US through the Mexico border. The journey, which involves treacherous on-foot travel through dense forests, often sees immigrants getting ripped off and assaulted by gangs and middlemen, and poses tremendous risks at all stages.

European option

Now, many migrants are arriving in Central American countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador, or Mexico via Europe. Often, they

prefer to secure a Schengen visitor visa which allows them to travel to multiple European countries. Once in Europe, they plan ahead for their journey to Central America.

Some individuals also travel to Mexico via the Middle East — the UAE, Qatar, and Turkey are popular pitstops. "Officials in every country along the route are aware of what's happening, but nobody cares — they take their cut and let immigrants continue on their journey to the US," one agent told *The Indian Express*.

The European route has gained popularity as it offers a quicker, less treacherous alternative to the South American route in which migrants have to cross the Panama jungle on foot. This route allows migrants to cover most of their journey by air, and the roughly 3-4 hour stretch they do have to

travel on foot in Nicaragua and El Salvador is much safer and less strenuous than crossing the Darien Gap in Panama, which can take days, if not weeks.

Agents with final say

At the end of the day, the route which one takes is chosen by the agent, who is all-powerful in this situation. While some agents have strong networks in Europe, others have connections in South America and around the Panama route. Those making the journey do not choose the path on which they travel.

Also, for migrants, both routes are equally expensive. Most end up spending between Rs 40 and 60 lakh to make the journey — a several-times multiple of what the journey actually costs, one agent told *The Indian Express*. Agents cash in on people's desperation to charge vastly inflated amounts.

**EXPLAINED
GLOBAL**

KEY POINTS

1. "Dunki" or "donkey journey" refers to the long-winding, often dangerous routes that people across the world take to reach the places they want to immigrate to. These difficult journeys are undertaken due to a lack of requisite legal permits or financial resources.





PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



GS Paper 2-IR

Ministry of Defence



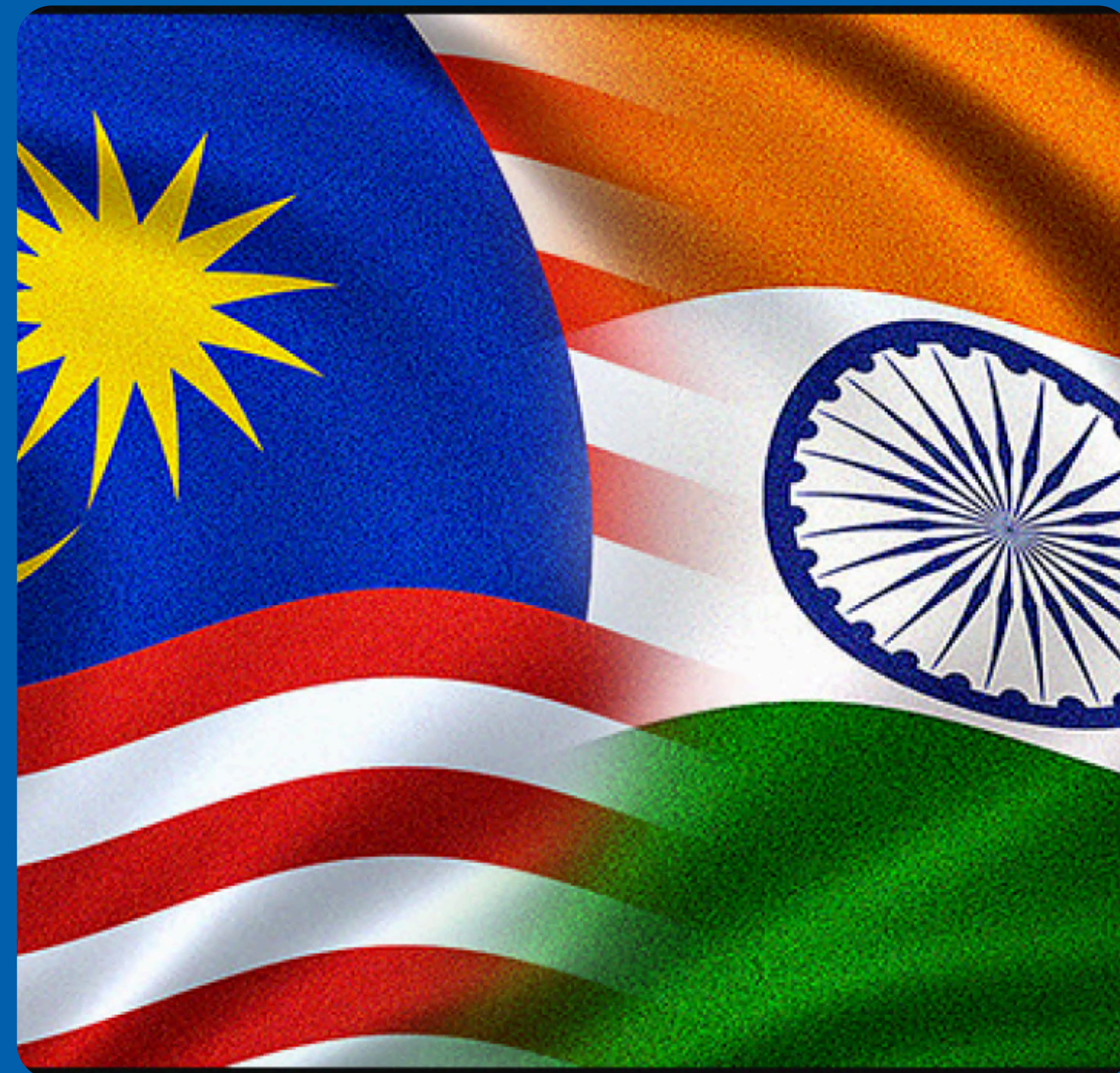
Defence Secretary co-chairs 13th Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur

Both countries enhance cooperation in domains of defence industry, maritime security, multilateral engagements & emerging areas

Posted On: 19 FEB 2025 12:49PM by PIB Delhi

KEY POINTS

1. The 13th Malaysia–India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM) meeting on February 19, 2025, focused on enhancing bilateral defence cooperation, particularly in cybersecurity, AI, maritime security, and defence industry. Both sides agreed to form new working groups and forums, including a Su-30 forum.





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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



GS Paper 2-Governance

Ministry of Panchayati Raj



Fifteenth Finance Commission Grants Released for the Rural Local Bodies of Bihar, Haryana and Sikkim

Posted On: 19 FEB 2025 3:38PM by PIB Delhi

KEY POINTS

The Union Government has released Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) Grants during Financial Year 2024–25, for the Rural Local Bodies of Bihar, Haryana and Sikkim

- The Untied Grants will be utilized by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)/ Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) for location-specific felt needs, under the Twenty-Nine (29) Subjects enshrined in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, except for salaries and other establishment costs.





PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



GS Paper 3-Economy

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways



India elected to Vice Presidency of International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA) in Singapore

Posted On: 19 FEB 2025 5:47PM by PIB Delhi

KEY POINTS

- India was elected Vice President of the International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA) during its first General Assembly in Singapore, marking IALA's transition to an inter-governmental organization. This highlights India's leadership in maritime affairs. India will host the IALA Council meeting in 2025 and the IALA Conference & General Assembly in 2027 in Mumbai, emphasizing its commitment to maritime safety and global cooperation.

