

DAILY NEWS

ANALYSIS



18th April

Explained

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Article 142 of the Indian Constitution | 1 |
| 2. India Justice Report 2025 | 3 |
| 3. International Big Cat Headquarters | 4 |
| 4. Asola Bhati WLS | 6 |

Decoded

- | | |
|--|---|
| 5. Controversy on De-Extinction of Species | 8 |
|--|---|

DNA Quiz

Playlist Link:

What to Read: <https://bit.ly/3FYdutC>

Daily News Analysis: <https://bit.ly/4ge9BgF>

EXPLAINED

1. ARTICLE 142 OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Backdrop: Recently, the Vice-President has described Article 142 of the Constitution as a “nuclear missile against democratic forces available to the judiciary 24x7”

Relevance: GS2/ Structure, Organization and Functioning of Executive and Judiciary.

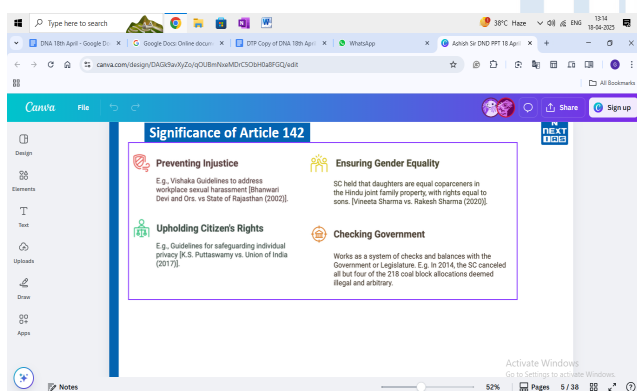
About the news:

Recently, the Supreme Court sought to fix a timeline for the President and Governors to grant assent to the Bills reserved for their consideration.

Article 142 of the Constitution

- Article 142 of the Indian Constitution grants the Supreme Court broad powers to ensure “complete justice” in any case before it. It allows the court to pass any order or decree necessary for achieving this, even if it deviates from existing laws.
- It allows the SC to intervene in matters related to public interest, human rights, constitutional values, or fundamental rights, safeguarding them against any form of violation or infringement.

Significance of Article 142



- Prevents Injustice by addressing the legislative vacuum:** E.g., Vishaka Guidelines to address workplace sexual harassment [Bhanwari Devi and Ors. vs State of Rajasthan (2002)].
- Uphold citizen's rights:** E.g., Guidelines for safeguarding individual privacy [K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)].
- Ensure Gender Equality:** SC held that daughters are equal coparceners in the Hindu joint family property, with rights equal to sons. [Vineeta Sharma vs. Rakesh Sharma (2020)].

- Check on Government:** Works as a system of checks and balances with the Government or Legislature. E.g. In 2014, the SC canceled all but four of the 218 coal block allocations deemed illegal and arbitrary.

Criticism of Article 142:

- Ambiguity:** The phrase ‘complete justice’ is still blurred. Thus, the judgments passed under Article 142 have created a lot of confusion in the past.
- Against Separation of powers:** Judges legislate, perform executive functions, and act as a super Parliament.
- Promotes Judicial Overreach**
- Inconsistent judgments under Article 142:** It complicates litigation planning and operations for individuals and businesses.
- Negative impact on the economy:** E.g., Judgement on the ban on sale of liquor near national and state highways has resulted in the unemployment of lakhs of people.
- Article 145(3)** of the Indian Constitution mandates that a minimum of five judges must sit to decide any case involving a substantial question of law regarding the interpretation of the Constitution.

What can be done?

- Strict guidelines by the SC** that define “complete justice” and justify the use of Article 142, and promote judicial restraint.
- Ensure scrutiny and accountability** of decisions under Article 142 to prevent their misuse.
- Referral of all cases invoking Article 142 to a **Constitution Bench** of at least five judges.

2. INDIA JUSTICE REPORT 2025

Backdrop: Recently, the India Justice Report 2025 has been released.

Relevance: GS2/ Structure, Organization and Functioning of Executive and Judiciary.

About the news:

Recently, the India Justice Report 2025 has been released by Tata Trusts in collaboration with other organisations.

Key Findings of India Justice Report 2025:

- Southern states dominate:** Karnataka (1st), Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu secured the top 5 ranks among large states.

Prison:

- **Extreme overcrowding in Indian jails:** National average occupancy rate is more than 131%.
 - ♦ India's prison inmate population is projected to reach 6.8 lakh by 2030, even though prison capacity is only likely to grow to 5.15 lakh.
- **Rise in prisoners with mental illnesses:** Number of such prisoners has jumped from 4,470 in 2012 to 9,084 in 2022.
- **Shortage of Health Professionals:** Prisons record a 43% vacancy among medical officers.
 - ♦ Only 25 psychologists for the entire nation's prisoners.
 - ♦ India's national average for the prisoner-doctor ratio is 775 prisoners per Doctor. (Model prison manual (2016) recommends 300 prisoners to one doctor).
- **Poor condition of Person with Disability:** Non-availability of health data on prisoners entering jail with a disability, and those who acquire a disability within the prison.

Police:

- **High Vacancy:** 23% vacancy in police force and over 50% vacancy among forensic staff across the country.
- **Inadequate women Representation:** Nationally, there are only 8% women officers in senior positions, and no states/UTs meet their reserved quotas for women in the police.
 - ♦ Bihar recorded the highest proportion of women in the state police.
 - ♦ [National benchmark is 33% as advised by central government in 2009].

Judiciary

- **Rising Judicial Efficiency:** While High Courts have disposal rate above 100%, subordinate courts are also showing marked improvements.
- **Enhanced access to justice** due to technological interventions like live-streaming, e-Sewa Kendras, and digital legal aid tracking.
- **Low Judge-to-Population Ratio:** 15 judges per 10 lakh population [1987 Law Commission: 50 judges per 10 lakh population].
- **Inadequate Representation:**
 - ♦ Women constitute 38% of judges in the lower judiciary and only 14% in high courts.
 - ♦ Other Vulnerable Sections: Only Karnataka meets SC, ST, and OBC quotas in the judiciary.

India Justice Report (IJR)

- A national ranking assessing the capacity of States/UTs to deliver justice effectively and equitably.
- **Released by:** Tata Trusts in collaboration with organisations such as CHRI, DAKSH, Vidhi Centre, and TISS-Prayas etc.
- **Pillars:** Assesses states across four pillars—Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid.
- (Human Rights Commissions added as a supplementary area).
- **Performance indicators:** Human Resources, Budgets, Infrastructure, Workload, and Diversity.

3. INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT HEADQUARTERS

Relevance: GS3/ Environment and Ecology.

Backdrop: India and International Big Cat Alliance sign agreement to host its headquarters.

In the News:

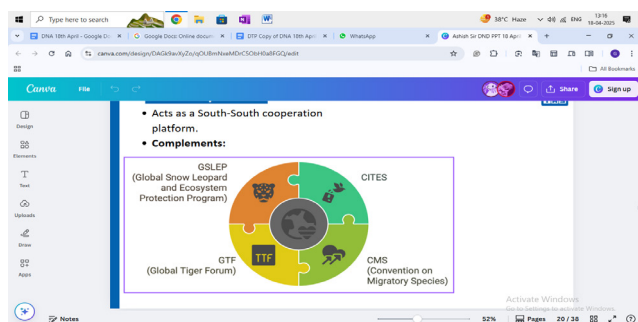
- The agreement provides for India to be the host for the IBCA headquarters and secretariat
- India formally joined the IBCA in September 2023. After five signatory countries—India, Liberia, Eswatini, Somalia, and Nicaragua—ratified the IBCA framework agreement

What is the International Big Cat Alliance?

- The **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** is a **multilateral, transcontinental conservation initiative launched by India**
- To **protect and conserve seven major big cat species** across their natural ranges, through **collaboration, research, and funding**.
- **Launched: April 2023**, at the **Global Big Cat Alliance Summit** in Mysuru, Karnataka
- By **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** on the **50th anniversary of Project Tiger** (1973–2023)
- Big Cats Covered under IBCA (7 Species) **Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Lion, Jaguar, Cheetah and Puma**
- **Membership : 27 countries including India have consented to join IBCA**
- **Five countries - Nicaragua, Eswatini, India, Somalia and Liberia** - ratified under the Article VIII (1) of the Framework Agreement

Global Importance.

- Acts as a **South-South cooperation platform**.
- Complements



India's Role & Leadership

- India is home to: **Tiger** (75% of global population) **Leopard, Asiatic Lion, Snow Leopard, Cheetah** (reintroduced in 2022), India hosts 5 of the 7 big cats:
- India's experience with **Project Tiger, Project Lion, and Project Snow Leopard** is a **model for the world**.
- Home to **Asiatic Lion**, found nowhere else in the wild

Big Cat	Habitat Region	IUCN Status	Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
Tiger	Asia (India, SE Asia, Russia)	Endangered	Schedule 1
Lion	Africa, India	Vulnerable	Schedule 1
Leopard	Africa, Asia, Middle East	Vulnerable	Schedule 1
Snow Leopard	Central & South Asian highlands	Vulnerable	Schedule 1
Jaguar	Central & South America	Near Threatened	Not found in India
Cheetah	Africa, Iran; Reintroduced in India	Vulnerable	Schedule 1
Puma	Americas (USA to South Chile)	Least Concern	Not Found in India

4. ASOLA BHATI WLS

Relevance: GS3/Environment and Ecology.

Backdrop: The Delhi Forest and Wildlife Department reported a fresh sighting of a leopard at Asola Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary, the city's lone wildlife sanctuary near Tughlakabad.

In the news:

- Asola Bhati has seen its leopard count go up to 12 since last September, indicating that the animals were also breeding inside the park.
- According to a 2022 report by the Bombay Natural History Society, eight leopards were caught on camera in a year.
- Asola Bhati is home to 25 species of mammals, including leopards, Striped Hyena, Golden Jackal and Fruit Bat. It is also home to 115 bird species.

Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary



Location & Physiography

- Located in the **Southern Ridge of Delhi**, the **northernmost extension of the Aravalli Range**.

- Declared as a **Wildlife Sanctuary in 1992** under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)** under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- Forms part of the **Northern Aravalli Leopard Wildlife Corridor**, which is **crucial for genetic connectivity** of leopards across Delhi-Rajasthan-Haryana..
- **Tropical Thorn Forest** — **semi-arid, open forest**, with dry deciduous characteristics.
- Originally **stone and sand mining pits** in Bhatti Mines area.
- Now restored into **wetland ecosystems** through afforestation and rainwater harvesting.
- ABWS is also part of the Sariska-Delhi Wildlife Corridor, which runs from the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan to the Delhi Ridge.
- **Indian Leopard** – Apex predator; **Schedule I**, WPA 1972 classified as “**Vulnerable**” by the **IUCN Red List**.

Feature	Wildlife Sanctuary	National Park	Biosphere Reserve
Definition	Protected are where wildlife (flora & fauna) are conserved	Strictly protected area for ecosystem, biodiversity, and species	Large ecosystem for conservation, sustainable use, scientific research
Legal Basis	Wildlife Protection Act, 1972	Wildlife Protection Act, 1972	UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme India MoEFCC Guidelines
Primary Focus	Protection of animals and limited conservation	Preservation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems	Integrating conservation with human activity (eco-development)
Human Activity	Some human activity (e.g., grazing, firewood collection) may be allowed with restrictions	No human activity allowed	Human settlements allowed in buffer and transition zones , not in core
Boundary	Not necessarily fixed by law	Clearly demarcated and legally defined	Divided into Core , Buffer , and Transition zones
Notification	Can be declared both by the Union and state governments	Can be declared both by the Union and state governments.	National Government recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

DECODED

5. CONTROVERSY ON DE-EXTINCTION OF SPECIES

Backdrop: Recently, biotech company Colossal Biosciences has announced that it had “resurrected” a dire wolf, a large predator that went extinct more than 12,000 years ago.

Relevance: GS 3/ Science & technology

About the News:

What Are Dire Wolves?

- Scientific name: *Aenocyon dirus*
- Extinct ~10,000 years ago
- Native to the Americas
- Bulkier and more muscular than modern grey wolves
- Genetically distinct from grey wolves – diverged over 6 million years ago

How Were They "Brought Back"?

8-Step De-extinction Process by Colossal:

De-extinction of the dire wolf

- De-extinction is the process of generating an organism that either resembles or is extinct.
- Colossal Biosciences claims that it had facilitated the birth of three dire wolf Pups.
- To create these 'dire wolf' pups, Colossal scientists edited the genome of a gray wolf and implanted embryos with the modified genome into surrogate dog mothers. The scientists made precise genetic edits on the genome of a gray wolf to "recreate" the dire wolf.

Have dire wolves been de-extinct?

- Colossal Biosciences claims that the genomes of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and the dire wolf (*Aenocyon dirus*) are 99.94% identical. However, this small difference is enormous in genetic terms. Humans and chimpanzees share about 98.77% of their DNA, however, these differences are what make the two distinct.
- A 2021 study published in Nature suggested that, despite genetic similarities, dire wolves may not be true wolves at all, but rather a distinct canid lineage that diverged long before modern wolves evolved.

Arguments for De-Extinction:

- **Restoring Biodiversity:** Can potentially restore lost biodiversity and ecological roles played by extinct species.
- **Symbolic Importance:** Bringing back extinct species can be seen as a sign of hope for future conservation efforts.
- **Technological Advancements:** De-extinction efforts can drive innovation in fields like genomics and gene editing, leading to broader applications in medicine and other areas.

Why is de-extinction controversial?

- **Uncertain Ecological Impact:** Bringing back animals that lived thousands of years ago in different environmental conditions and climates may potentially disrupt current ecosystems.
- **Detrimental effect on lawmakers' priorities:** Misguided claims can divert resources meant to protect and conserve currently threatened species. E.g. Colossal's dire wolf announcement could weaken federal protections for endangered species in the USA.

- **Complexity of De-Extinction:** De-extinction may not be able to fully replicate the genetic diversity or ecological role of the extinct species.
- **Ethical Concern:**
 - ♦ **Animal Welfare:** The processes, such as cloning and genetic manipulation, can lead to suffering and health issues in the resurrected animals. E.g., the cloned Pyrenean Ibex lived in pain and died quickly.
 - ♦ **Playing "God" with nature:** Some question the ethics of human intervention in natural extinction processes, raising concerns about playing "God" with nature.
 - ♦ **Moral Hazard:** By reducing the urgency to prevent future extinctions.
 - ♦ **Commercialization:** De-extinction may be driven by commercial interests, raising questions about the potential for exploitation of resurrected animals and the environment.
 - ♦ **Arguments in Favor:**
 - ♦ **Restorative Justice:** Some argue that de-extinction could be a form of restitution for the extinctions caused by human activities.

Mains Question:

Q. Reviving extinct animals is important, but it is more prudent to apply the new technologies to protect and strengthen existing ecosystems rather than reviving extinct ones. **(10 marks, 150 words)**

===== DNA QUIZ =====

1. With reference to the Constitution of India, prohibitions or limitations or provisions contained in ordinary laws cannot act as prohibitions or limitations on the constitutional powers under Article 142. It could mean which one of the following?
 - (a) The decisions taken by the Election Commission of India while discharging its duties cannot be challenged in any court of law.
 - (b) The Supreme Court of India is not constrained in the exercise of its powers by the laws made by Parliament.
 - (c) In the event of a grave financial crisis in the country, the President of India can declare a Financial Emergency without counsel from the Cabinet.

- (d) State Legislatures cannot make laws on certain matters without the concurrence of Union Legislature.
2. "Rule of Law Index" is released by which of the following?
- Amnesty International
 - International Court of Justice
 - The Office of UN Commissioner for Human Rights
 - World Justice Project
3. Consider the following statements :
- Lions do not have a particular breeding season.
 - Unlike most other big cats, cheetahs don't roar.
 - Unlike male lions, male leopards do not proclaim their territory by scent marking.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3
 - 1, 2 and 3
4. Consider the following statement
- Asola Bhati wildlife sanctuary is part of the Sariska-Delhi Wildlife Corridor, which runs from the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan to the Delhi Ridge.
 - Indian Leopard is protected under Schedule I, WPA 1972 and classified as "Endangered" by the IUCN .
 - Asola Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary lone wildlife sanctuary in Delhi
- Which of the following statements is/are correct ?
- 1 and 2
 - 2 and 3
 - 1 and 3
 - 1,2 and 3

Answer			
1 (b)	2 (d)	3 (a)	4 (c)