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Important Facts for Prelims (21st December 2018)

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Asiatic Lion Conservation Project

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched the “**Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**” with an aim to protect and conserve the world’s last ranging free population of Asiatic Lion and its associated ecosystem.
- The Asiatic Lion Conservation Project is aimed to **strengthen the ongoing measures for conservation and recovery of Asiatic Lion** with the help of state-of-the-art techniques/ instruments, regular scientific research studies, disease management, Modern surveillance/ patrolling techniques.
- The project will be funded from the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitat (CSS-DWH)** with the contributing **ratio being 60:40 of Central and State share**.
- Asiatic lions that **once ranged from Persia (Iran) to Palamau in Eastern India** were almost **driven to extinction by indiscriminate hunting and habitat loss**.
- A single population of less than 50 lions persisted in the Gir forests of Gujarat by late 1890's. With timely and stringent protection offered by the State Government and the Center Government, Asiatic lions have increased to the current population of over 500 numbers.
- **Gir Protected Area Network** (1648.79 sq. km.) includes **Gir National Park, Gir Sanctuary, Pania Sanctuary, Mitiyala Sanctuary** adjoining reserved forests, Protected Forests, and Unclassed Forests.
- The Environment Ministry in the past has supported **Asiatic Lion** in Gujarat by including it in **list of 21 critically endangered species for recovery programme**.

21 species identified under the recovery programme are:

Snow Leopard, Bustard (including Floricans), Dolphin, Hangul, Nilgiri Tahr, Marine Turtles, Dugongs, Edible Nest Swiftlet, Asian Wild Buffalo, Nicobar Megapode, Manipur Brow-antlered Deer, Vultures, Malabar Civet, Indian Rhinoceros, Asiatic Lion, Swamp Deer, Jerdon’s Courser, the Northern River Terrapin, Clouded Leopard, Arabian Sea Humpback Whale, and Red Panda.

