

Tiger numbers increasing, need to build a social Movement for Tiger Conservation: Dr. Harsh Vardhan

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

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Global Tiger Day Celebrations to Conclude on July 29

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Pointing to the possibility of an increase in the number of tigers according to the preliminary indications from the on-going countrywide Tiger estimation/Census, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has reiterated the need to build a social movement for tiger conservation. Addressing the week-long Global Tiger Day celebrations here today, Dr. Harsh Vardhan underlined that social movements to create awareness in our country have often been built up with the help of children. In this context, the Minister quoted the example of spreading awareness on the spread of dengue some years ago and the movement for polio eradication. "Similarly, children must play a leading role on creating awareness for tiger conservation", Dr. Harsh Vardhan averred.

The Minister emphasised that tiger conservation must become a part of the Green Good Deeds movement. He added that though major steps need to be taken, the importance of small, green deeds to protect the environment must never be forgotten.



Dr. Harsh Vardhan addressing the gathering to celebrate Global Tiger Day

Earlier, Dr. Harsh Vardhan released a Manual on Health and Nutritional Management of Wild Animals in Indian Zoos to mark the occasion. This manual includes basic veterinary infrastructure for catering to the day-to-day & emergent needs in the Zoos. It also includes schedules for vaccination, disinfection and de-worming of animals for ensuring their safe health & well-being.



Protocol on Health and Nutritional Management of Wild Animals in Indian Zoos being released on the occasion

In his address, Secretary, MoEF&CC, Mr. C.K Mishra said that the issue is not merely tiger conservation, but the creation of a complete ecosystem. He pointed to the critical role of school children, as school children can create a huge impact on the society. Referring to the animal-human conflict, Mr. Mishra stated that it is important to understand that it is the human beings who have entered the tiger's habitat. He also stated that though a lot has been achieved, much more still needs to be done.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General, Forest and Special Secretary, MoEF&CC, Dr. Siddhanta Das said that the way our tiger conservation is going on, India is on the way to double its tiger population. He referred to tiger as the apex species and added that by conserving the tiger, all animals in the food chain are being protected. "If the number of tigers is increasing, it indicates that water security in the country is increasing. Tiger conservation is symbolic and will

save us from water crisis”, Dr. Das pointed out. He also stated that in order to protect a tiger, about 50 deer, adequate grasslands for the deer and moisture to support the grasslands is required.

The gathering comprised more than 200 school children, their teachers from different schools of Delhi, senior officers of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and National Tiger Conservation Authority including officials and personnel of conservation partners, namely World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) & Global Tiger Forum (GTF).

In the run-up to Global Tiger Day that is celebrated on July 29 every year, this year, several events had been organised to raise awareness amongst the younger generation. These events included story and poem writing, painting, skits and ‘Nukkad Natak (street play), besides a quiz competition and an exhibition at the Environment Ministry’s premises.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority, along with conservation partners held a week-long celebration to mark the Global Tiger Day in a series of events starting from July 25, 2018 at National Zoological Park, Delhi. The culmination of the celebration will be held on July 29, 2018 at National Zoological Park, New Delhi.

In 2010, at St Petersburg, Russia, the heads of Governments of Tiger Range states which *inter alia* include India, resolved to strive to double the number of wild tigers (T X 2) across their global range by 2022 and signed the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation, which decided to celebrate July 29 as Global Tiger Day. India has significantly contributed to this target and has resolved to safeguard tiger habitat and source populations to foster viable tiger population during the Global Stock Taking meeting held in 2012 at New Delhi to review progress vis-a-vis the St Petersburg Declaration.

India had launched Project Tiger in 1973 to conserve tigers. Till now, the coverage of “Project Tiger” has increased from 9 reserves to 50 tiger reserves spread across 18 states.

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