

190 and counting: Mapping **butterfly** diversity in Eastern Ghats of Vizag

USHA PERI @ Vizag

WHAT began as a humble task of gardening a butterfly park has transformed into a significant scientific contribution for 33-year-old Appanna Saragada, whose research paper, “Exploring the Enchanted Wings: A Comprehensive Study on Butterfly Diversity in the Eastern Ghats of Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, India,” was recently published in *The Indian Forester*.

Appanna’s journey started in 2014 during his bachelor’s degree when he was assigned to maintain the butterfly park at Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP), Visakhapatnam. He later worked at the zoo for five years. His daily interactions with butterflies sparked a deep fascination, leading him to document their diversity through photography. “I wanted to understand butterflies bet-



ter and make others aware of their importance. I started documenting them in 2017,” Appanna shared.

To enhance his skills, Appanna completed a photography diploma at Andhra University. His explorations expanded beyond IGZP to the lush terrains of Kailasagiri, Kambalakonda, and agency areas like Araku, Paderu, and Lambasingi. However, the Covid-19 pandemic forced him to pause his work due to financial challenges.

Despite the hurdles,

he recorded 190 butterfly species from 122 genera across six families. The Nymphalidae family dominated, followed by Lycaenidae, Hesperidae, Pieridae, Papilionidae, and Riodinidae. Among the species documented, 27 are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; nine are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); and one, the Common Birdwing, is included in Appendix II of CITES.

Appanna’s research highlighted the presence of the Marbled Map butterfly, an endemic species exclusive to the Eastern Ghats and Odisha. Discussing the study’s objectives, he said, “The primary goal was to assess butterfly diversity in Visakhapatnam’s Eastern Ghats and understand their distribution patterns across different habitats. We also aimed to identify species of conservation significance and assess threats to their habitats.” His work underscores the ecological richness of Visakhapatnam’s urban and hilly areas.



Appanna Saragada

200 trees felled, over 2-acre land cleared in Aravali leopard corridor near Damdama lake

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AREA UNDER NO-CONSTRUCTION ZONE



Gurgaon: More than two acres of protected Aravali land under the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) were cleared, with approximately 200 trees felled. The area — part of the leopard corridor near Damdama lake and within Mangar Bani's buffer zone — was discovered by villagers who alerted forest authorities, though the damage was already done when officials arrived.

Villagers found the chopped trees and notified the forest department. By the time officials arrived at the spot, the trees were already cut down.

The land is protected under sections 4 and 5 of the PLPA, which was enacted in 1990 to safeguard the forested area from erosion by restricting land excavations. It is significant that any form of tree felling in the

buffer zone and Bani area is prohibited as the area falls under a no-construction zone.

Residents voiced apprehensions over escalating illegal activities in the vicinity, asserting they could cause irreversible damage to the ecologically sensitive zone if not curtailed promptly and disrupt the wildlife. They highlighted that the forest department's in-

sufficient surveillance resulted in tree felling and land leveling.

Environmentalists expressed fears over increasing urbanisation in the area. The leopard corridor in Gurgaon and Faridabad — an extension of the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary in Delhi — is already fragmented as urban settlements have encroached into it,

intensifying human-animal conflict. The number of verified leopard sightings in the city and adjoining districts increased from two each in 2020 and 2021 to four in 2022 and five this year.

"The area is sensitive around Mangar and Bandhwari. Any disruption will affect the ecosystem. Incidents of tree felling and clearing land are becoming rampant as miscreants perceive forest department teams are not vigilant," said Sunil Harsana, an ecologist and wildlife expert.

In the past decade, urbanisation accelerated substantially. The city's total cropland in 2010 was 71% of its total area, while the built-up area was 16%. By 2021, cropland cover diminished by half to 36%, while the built-up area more than doubled to 37%. The city expan-

ded towards the Aravalis, incorporating not just new residential sectors but also thoroughfares like the Sohna highway and the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, around which future development will occur.

"We require a robust mechanism to monitor the sensitive zones of the Aravalis and ensure these wildlife corridors remain undisturbed. We have been observing an increase in man-animal conflicts as trees are being felled and forest areas are being transformed into urban spaces," said Vaishali Rana, an environmental activist.

Forest officials said they carried out regular checks and took action against violators. "We will get it checked and stepped up vigil around the area to curb illegal activities," divisional forest officer Raj Kumar said.

8th tiger reserve inaugurated at Ratapani in MP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHOPAL, 13 DECEMBER

The Ratapani wildlife sanctuary officially became the eighth tiger reserve of Madhya Pradesh on Friday, Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav inaugurated it by lighting a lamp and leading an environment and heritage conservation bike rally.

Located just about an hour's distance by road from the state capital Bhopal, the Ratapani Tiger Reserve (RTR) is presently estimated to be home to nearly 100 tigers. It is spread across a huge area of 1272 square kilometres, spread across two districts of Raisen and Sehore. The RTR's core zone is about 764



km and the buffer zone is 508 km.

The RTR has three entry gates including Jhiri, Delawadi and Bhimbetka. The CM lit a lamp during the inaugural function organised at Jhiri in Raisen district.

The Chief Minister also

took part in a heritage bike rally on the occasion. Spreading the message of responsibility and road safety, the CM wore a helmet while riding a bullet motorcycle, as he led the bike rally.

Madhya Pradesh already has seven tiger reserves, namely Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Panna, Pench, Satpura, Sanjay Dubri and Veerangana Rani Durgavati tiger reserve.

Forest officials expect that better conservation and management of wildlife and particularly tigers would be possible in the RTR due to the area being declared a tiger reserve. Officials hope that the tiger population in RTR will reach around 150 by 2026.

Bheemunipadam waterfalls: Birdwatchers' paradise



Bheemunipadam waterfalls is located in the Gudur forest range of Mahbubabad district.

SAALINI LOKESH | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 13

The Bheemunipadam waterfalls, a relatively unexplored location in Pakhal wildlife sanctuary, is gaining recognition as a heaven for bird enthusiasts.

In 2024, birders documented an impressive 184 species, bringing the total count from this location to 197. Among the highlights are 12 species of flycatchers, eight of owls, six woodpecker and five thrush species—including the pied thrush, a rare bird sighted in Telangana for only the second time—three oriole species and five drongo species.

The area's strategic location along the migratory flyway from the Himalayas to southern India enhances its appeal, as it connects to the Eastern Ghats, offering crucial

stopover points for migratory birds.

Bheemunipadam waterfalls are located in the Gudur forest range of Mahbubabad district, about 200 km from Hyderabad and 50 km from Warangal. This birding hotspot is located about 22 km from Pakhal lake.

The waterfalls are located on the road from Warangal towards Narsampet, via the Gudur route. From a spot on the route, a five-minute walk in the forest leads directly to the waterfalls.

The name Bheemunipadam comes from a large, foot-shaped rock at the top of the waterfall, linked to Lord Bhima. Over 30 birding trips were conducted this year, significantly boosting the understanding of the area's biodiversity.

"Bheemunipadam waterfalls is a hidden treasure

As more birdwatchers visit, we might discover rare and interesting species, adding to our understanding of the region's bird diversity.

— **SRIRAM REDDY,**
Hyderabad-based birdwatcher

for birdwatchers," said Hyderabad-based birdwatcher Sriram Reddy, who visited the waterfalls 22 times in 2024. "It's largely unexplored by India's birding community. "As more birdwatchers visit, we might discover rare and interesting species, adding to our

understanding of the region's bird diversity," he added.

Speaking with *Deccan Chronicle*, Gudur forest divisional officer Chandra Sekhara Rao said they were committed to preserving the site's natural charm. "We aim to maintain its pristine condition by limiting access to serious birders and conservationists," said Rao.

The sanctuary's strict protection measures and minimal human disturbance have ensured the survival and thriving of its avian population.



The pied thrush, a rare bird sighted in Telangana for only the second time.



Birders, forest dept officials working on Delhi 'Bird Atlas'

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi forest department is planning to bring up a Bird Atlas, which will be a comprehensive guide with bird species in the Capital, their geographical distribution, and habitats. The publication will be prepared with the help of surveys to be majorly conducted by citizen birders across groups such as the Delhi Bird Group, Bird Count India, students and NGOs, forest department officials said on Friday. A final approval from the government, however, is pending.

According to the plan, two surveys will be carried out to dig the information for Bird Atlas -- the first survey is scheduled to start next month while the second one is planned in July -- and the Atlas is likely to be released in December 2025.

The methodology for the atlas involves first dividing Delhi into grids of 6.6 sq km each. Each grid has a quadrant of size 3.3 sq km, which is further divided into sub-cells of 1.1 sq km. As part of the survey, 145 sub-cells of 1.1 sq km each will be covered by birders.

"The plan is to commence the preparation of Bird Atlas from next month. The file has been sent to the government for final clearances and once approved, the Atlas survey can commence on the ground. We plan to involve experienced birders, photographers, people from NGOs and even students to make it a citizen-based survey. A detailed book is planned to be released in December next year," a senior forest department official said.

The flying guide

Bird Atlas to be prepared from surveys carried out by birders, NGOs, and volunteers

Bird Atlas to include:

Scientific survey on bird distribution and their habitats

Process of survey

Delhi to be divided into 53 grids of 6.6 sq km each

These grids to be divided into 145 sub-cells

Four checklists to be prepared for each subcell

580 Total checklists

145 Total birding hours

The Delhi Bird Atlas, officials said, will be created as an influence from surveys carried out in other places like Kerala, Mysore, Pune, Coimbatore and Goa. Birders said that an Atlas not only gives a comprehensive assessment of the avian diversity in a region, it also helps compare changes in bird diversity over the years.

"Over the years, one can use it to study changes in habitats of certain species and how the diversity is changing," Pankaj Gupta, a birder and part of the team involved in preparation of the Delhi Bird Atlas, said.

Gupta said each sub-cell of roughly a sq km each will be covered four times, with an average of 15 minutes being spent per assessment. Thus, for 145 sub-cells -- 580 checklists will be prepared, with a total of 145 hours spent birding-on-ground.

"One need not cover the entire 1km stretch too. The team will simply have to identify a good birding habitat and 15 minutes is enough

to identify the species there. Since each area will be covered four times, it is unlikely that species will be missed," Gupta explained, adding that each team will get around eight locations to cover. "These checklists will be uploaded on the eBird portal, which will help collate a detailed list," he stated.

The department said over 150 people -- mostly volunteers -- will be required to conduct the field survey. Each team will consist of a veteran birder, a photographer and a volunteer.

Birder Nikhil Devasar, who has organised several bird counts in Delhi, said a Bird Atlas is an essential resource for understanding the distribution and abundance of bird species in a region. "Birds are a great indicator of the health of our environment and the data from the Bird Atlas is crucial for assessing the health of our city. Bird Atlas encourages volunteers from all fields to participate so that they are all stakeholders in managing our ecosystems."



CM dedicates Ratapani Tiger Reserve, names it after archaeologist Vishnu Wakankar

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bhopal: Chief minister Mohan Yadav on Friday dedicated the Ratapani Tiger Reserve to the public and said it will be named after the world-famous archaeologist Dr Vishnu Wakankar. The World Heritage site of Bhimbetka located in Ratapani Tiger Reserve has received recognition due to the relentless efforts of Dr Wakankar.

Yadav, on behalf of the people of the state, expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for granting permission for Ratapani Tiger Reserve to further enrich

ENRICHING WILDLIFE WEALTH OF STATE

the wildlife wealth of the state. He said that among all the state capitals of the country, Bhopal is the only capital that houses a Tiger Reserve. Yadav dedicated Ratapani Tiger Reserve from Jhiri Gate and flagged off the unique bike rally of "Virasat Se Vikas" started for awareness regarding Tiger Reserve from 'Gol Jod' located on Kolar Road. Yadav himself led the rally riding a bike.

Earlier, Yadav was welcomed by offering Gajmala at 'Gol Jod'. Film actor Randeep Hooda was also present.

Yadav, who completed one year in office on Friday, said employment opportunities in the area will also increase



CM flags off bike rally during inauguration at Kolar road on Friday

with gifts like Ratapani Tiger Reserve and it has created huge potential for tourism activities in Bhopal. Hotels, lodges, and other tourism facilities will provide employment, skill and entrepreneurship opportunities. The state govt is also ready to provide all possible cooperation in this direction. The Ratapani reserve is a gift to three districts including Bhopal, Sehore and Raisen, he said.

Yadav said that MP is the Tiger State with the highest number of tigers among all the states of the country and directed to carry out all the necessary development work in the Tiger Reserve, conduct employment activities, help the residents & provide them with guidance.

Yadav also interacted with the villagers after dedicating the Tiger Reserve. While greeting the chief minister Yadav, the villagers also presented mementos. Sports & youth welfare minister

A Moeed Faruqui

Vishwas Sarang, MSME minister Chaitanya Kumar Kashyap, minister of state for backward classes and minority welfare, Krishna Gaur, minister of state for forest, Dilip Ahirwar, MLAs Surendra Patwa, Rameshwar Sharma, Bhagwan Das Sabnani, BJP organisation general secretary Hitanand Sharma, public representatives and a large number of citizens were present on the occasion.

₹758 Cr devpt projects gifted to Bhopal on 'Jan Kalyan Parv'

Chief minister Mohan Yadav on Friday announced that 'Jan Kalyan Parv' is being celebrated across the state to mark one year of the current govt's tenure. The festival focuses on both development and ensuring that eligible individuals, who were previously excluded, are now integrated into various welfare schemes. As part of the 'Jan Kalyan Parv' in Bhopal division, Yadav performed the 'Bhoomi Pujan' and dedicated 70 development projects worth Rs758.92 crore to the public. The programme was held at Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Center day.

Yadav emphasised that Bhopal, as the capital of Madhya Pradesh, stands as a symbol of cultural and historical pride. Reflecting on the contributions of Raja Bhoj and Samrat Vikramaditya, he highlighted the importance of promoting & preserving city's rich cultural heritage.

The chief minister highlighted the plans to enhance the city's aesthetic appeal by giving a majestic look to its access roads and constructing entrance gates dedicated to Raja Bhoj and Samrat Vikramaditya. He praised Bhopal's iconic lakes and architectural heritage, which continue to serve as exemplary models of water conservation and design. Yadav stressed the importance of reviving traditional water conservation techniques to address modern challenges, adding that the historical lakes of Bhopal remain both technically remarkable and relevant in contemporary times. TNN

Dogs stabbed : PETA announces Rs 50K reward

NEW DELHI: Animal rights organisation PETA India has announced a reward of up to Rs 50,000 for any information on suspects involved in the stabbing of two stray dogs in north east Delhi. The attacks, which took place two days apart in Kabir Nagar last week, left one dog dead and another injured, an official from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) said. While the dog stabbed late December 5 is undergoing treatment, the other attacked on the night of December 6 died at the hospital, the official added. The culprits remain unidentified and the police are investigating the matter, he said, adding that anyone who can identify the perpetrators to assist with the investigation will receive a reward of up to Rs 50,000 from the organisation. "Those who abuse animals often move on to harming humans.

Forest officials share best practices for elephant, tiger conservation

Staff Reporter

RAIPUR

Both the states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh stressed the need to adopt 'landscape approach' for the conservation of elephants and tigers. It is was considered highly effective in conserving the habitat of these species and reducing the increasing threats to their natural habitats.

A one-day inter-state conference was organized by the Forest Department recently in the capital Raipur, in which senior forest officials of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh participated. The conference was organized with the objective of discussing best practices and coordination between the two states for the conservation of elephants and tigers.

On the occasion, officials of both the states agreed to make joint efforts for the conservation of elephants and tigers. In the conference, mutual best measures will be exchanged to protect the habitats of wildlife and emphasis was laid on continuous work towards the conservation of elephants and tigers by establishing continuous coordination between the forest departments of both the states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) of Madhya Pradesh Shubhranjan Sen, Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) of Chhattisgarh Sudhir Kumar Agarwal and Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Chhattisgarh Prem Kumar, Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Sanjay Gandhi Tiger from Madhya Pradesh were present in the conference. Forest officers of the reserve along with Tiger Reserve and Bilaspur and Surguja forest divisional officers from Chhattisgarh were also present.

Injured rare Eurasian Griffon vulture rescued from Wadala

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Mumbai: A rarely-sighted Eurasian Griffon Vulture was rescued from Wadala on Friday after the large bird collapsed inside the compound of the Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society. Members of the Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWW), led by Mahesh Itihape, who went to the spot for the rescue, said that the rare vulture species was possibly dehydrated and disoriented, leading to this situation.

The founder and president of RAWW, Pawan Sharma, who is also the honorary wildlife warden with the state forest department, said: "The Eurasian Griffon Vulture was first seen lying on the ground by the staff of the Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society. They then contacted RAWW in order to rescue the bird. This is the first recorded rescue of this vulture species in MMR."

Sharma added that the vulture is now safely kept under the care of RAWW, under the medical supervision of veterinarian Dr Rina Dev.



The vulture is being cared for by RAWW members and a vet

The forest officials have also been intimated in this regard. The bird is currently kept under observation and will be rehabilitated in coordination with the forest department once it recovers.

Listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, these species of vultures are among the top protected species in India. Bird watcher and author Sunjoy Monga commented: "It is rather uncommon to sight a Eurasian Griffon Vulture in the Mumbai region.

This species is more seen in north-central India. Like all vulture species, the Eurasian Griffon Vulture also feeds on carrion (animal carcasses)."

The Eurasian Griffon vultures are also referred to as Old World vultures. Old World vultures are those that are found in the Old World, that is the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, and which belong to the family Accipitridae, which also includes eagles, buzzards, kites, and hawks.

Leopard enters warehouse area, rescue efforts on

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THANE: The forest department is keeping a close watch and stepping up its rescue efforts after a leopard was sighted in Janwal village in Bhiwandi, on Friday. The big cat reportedly entered the premises of a warehouse of Paramount Logistics, sparking fear among the employees and villagers.

At around 6am on Friday, a

FOREST DEPT HAS SET UP A CAGE FOR ITS SAFE CAPTURE AND RELOCATION

driver working for the warehouse spotted the leopard on a narrow stretch of road between two warehouses. He immediately raised a hue and cry, and people gathered. Upon receiving the information, a team from the forest department, along

with local police, reached the spot to manage the situation.

“As I was going towards the main road, I spotted this big cat following my vehicle. I was shocked and started shouting, but by then, it had entered the warehouse premises. Some of my colleagues gathered, and we checked the CCTV footage, which confirmed it was a leopard,” said truck driver Vishwakarma. “We went in the direction the leopard had gone and found

a boundary wall near a sewage line, where we assumed it got stuck. We immediately called the forest department.”

An officer from the forest department of Bhiwandi said the leopard had likely wandered in from a nearby forest. “We believe it entered a stormwater drainage situated between two warehouses, possibly seeking shelter,” he said.

He further said that a dedicated rescue team, including 10

officers, is carefully evaluating the situation to ensure the animal’s safe rescue. “As a precaution, one end of the drainage has been blocked, and a cage has been set up at the other end to facilitate its capture and relocation. However, we are yet to achieve success,” he added.

The local administration and police are ensuring the safety of the residents and the workers while closely monitoring the situation.

PROCURE EXOTIC ANIMALS FOR ZOOS: SUREKHA

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, DEC. 13

Zoos and parks should adopt more carbon-neutral practices and take up new initiatives like glass enclosures for tigers, wildlife experience centres, environmental education centres and procure exotic animals to enhance zoo collections, said minister for forests Konda Surekha. She was addressing the 13th governing body meeting of the Zoos and Parks Authority of Telangana (Zapat), held at Secretariat in Hyderabad on Friday.

Surekha, who is also chairperson of Zapat, virtually inaugurated several new initiatives at the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad. These included the integrated FASTag parking facility, a rhino sculpture made from scrap metal, the newly procured wildlife radiology facility, the Zoopedia mobile app and an upgraded zoo website.

Additionally, brochures, a diary and a coffee table book were unveiled.

Zoos director Dr Sunil S. Hiremath made a presentation on the developmental works carried out under Zapat.

Womans Era (Monthly)

New Delhi, December 2024

Protect Wildlife

The Earth is home to all species, not just humans. It is unethical to exploit animals for their fur, feathers, or ivory. Opting for “cruelty-free” products, which are not tested on animals, supports more humane practices. Additionally, contribute to preserving wildlife in their natural habitats by supporting ecotourism, photo safaris, and educational programmes that enhance human understanding of wildlife.

If you encounter or suspect illegal wildlife trade, report it to the appropriate authorities immediately. For instance, in November 2021, authorities in Bangalore seized 571 star tortoises over three days. In Chikballapur, three poachers were arrested that same month for killing a deer for venison. In Bangalore, police recovered 20 pairs of deer antlers in November 2021. Similarly, endangered species like red-eared sliders, turtles, and iguanas are often smuggled. By remaining vigilant and supporting wildlife protection efforts, we can help safeguard the planet’s biodiversity and ensure a more ethical coexistence with all species.



SGNP's ecological benefits greater than BMC budget: HC

Court was hearing a petition alleging violation of earlier orders regarding the phased rehabilitation of slum dwellers within park limits

Prateem Rohanekar

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MUMBAI: The Bombay high court on Friday said that if the ecological benefits accruing from Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) were to be monetised, they would surpass the budget of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the richest civic body in the country.

"No one sitting in this court can let this go," the division bench of chief justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and justice Amit Borkar said, while hearing the Conservation Action Trust's petition alleging violation of earlier orders of the court pertaining to the phased rehabilitation of slum dwellers residing within national park limits. The petition also alleged that a slew of ongoing projects posed a threat to the park's existence.

SGNP, the only national park located within municipal limits of an urban metropolis in India, houses approximately 86,000 tenements, mostly from tribal communities, who live in scattered hamlets.

In 1995, Conservation Action

Threats galore

SGNP is the only protected forest and national park within municipal limits in India, home to a diversity of flora and fauna

300 species of birds



61 species of spiders



170 species of butterflies



1,300 species of flora



35 species of mammals



86,000 approx no of tenements within park limits



Conservation Action Trust claims a host of projects pose a threat to SGNP's existence:



The Metro Line 3 car shed in Aarey poses a threat to flora and fauna and the ecosystem of the area.

- Underground twin tunnel from Goregaon to Mulund
- Widening of road from Borivali to Kanheri Caves
- Natural gas pipeline along Ghodbunder Road
- Underground twin tunnel from Borivali to Thane
- Construction of wall along river inside SGNP
- 12-lane (120-meter wide) Delhi Mumbai Super Expressway
- Cable Car from Borivali to Thane
- Ghodbunder Road
- Surya dam pipeline
- Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train
- Widening of Western Express Highway
- Metro rail projects
- Parking lot inside SGNP
- Construction of bridge over Vasai Creek

Trust, a nonprofit focussed on the environment, had filed a petition in high court seeking removal of encroachers and illegal structures from SGNP. The court had passed an interim order in 1997 and the final order in 2003, directing the removal of encroachments and rehabilitation of eligible encroachers at a site identified by the forest department at Shirdon near Kalyan.

With January 1, 1995 as the cut-off date, families residing in around 33,000 hutments in the national park were found eligible for rehabilitation, the state government had told the court via an affidavit while the case was ongoing.

Only 1-2% of these residents have been rehabilitated as per the court's orders, the trust stated in its latest petition filed in 2023. Forest officials have

failed to rehabilitate eligible encroachers, construct a boundary wall around the park, and remove all encroachments, it noted.

On Friday, senior advocate Janak Dwarkadas, counsel for the petitioner, claimed that many slum dwellers who were shifted out of the national park following the court's earlier orders had now returned to the premises.

"While they want to have a second bite at the cherry, real estate agents are selling plots of land in the national park," the senior advocate alleged.

Dwarkadas further alleged that the committee to oversee rehabilitation, constituted following earlier court orders, was acting on its own whims and even changing the cut-off date.

The next hearing in the case is scheduled for Monday.

Study confirms Konkan is a habitat for tigers

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PUNE: A recent study conducted by the forest department, Sahyadri Tiger Reserve (STR), and the Wildlife Conservation Trust using camera traps has confirmed that the Konkan region serves not only as a corridor but also as a habitat for tigers in the Western Ghats. The findings, submitted to the state forest department in May 2024 and accessed by Hindustan Times on Friday, recorded the presence of 12 tigers, including two cubs, primarily in the corridor spanning Sindhudurg and Satara districts.

The STR, the northernmost

tiger reserve in the Western Ghats, is situated in south-eastern Maharashtra and encompasses parts of Ratnagiri, Satara, and Kolhapur districts. Established in 2008, the reserve includes the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary and Chandoli National Park, spanning the Koyna River and Vasant Sagar Reservoir.

Despite extensive efforts in 2022, which included 17,400 trap nights, no tigers were directly captured on camera in the STR, and the reserve was noted to lack a stable tiger population. However, tiger presence was detected in surrounding forests, with images captured at the Radhana-

gari Wildlife Sanctuary during the same period.

To address this, the forest department and STR partnered with the Wildlife Conservation Trust, launching a two-year scientific camera trap project. Conducted between December 2022 and May 2023, this study involved installing camera traps at 104 locations across the reserve and corridor areas, with each site equipped with at least two traps. This marked the first comprehensive coverage of the entire corridor. The findings documented eight adult tigers and two cubs, with two additional tigers currently spotted within the reserve.



The findings documented eight adult tigers and two cubs, with two additional tigers currently spotted within the reserve.

TG to develop zoo, urban forest parks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Environment, Forest, and Endowments, Konda Surekha, has directed officials to implement comprehensive action plans to upgrade zoo and urban forest parks across the State, making them visitor-friendly and environmentally sustainable. The Minister emphasised creating facilities that cater to public preferences without disturbing the ecological balance, ensuring revenue generation for the Forest department.

At the 13th governing body meeting of the Zoos and Parks Authority of Telangana (ZAPAT) held at the BR Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat, Surekha unveiled the Animal Adoption Scheme brochure, diary and a coffee table book. The meeting witnessed participation from senior officials, including Forest department Principal Secretary Ahmad Nadeem, PCCF RM Dobriyal, Chief Wildlife Warden Alu Singh Mehra, CCFs Priyanka Varghese and

Bhima Nayak and Zoo Parks Director Sunil S. Heramat.

Surekha stressed the need to adopt best global practices in zoo management and urged officials to study and implement effective strategies from across the world in Telangana's nine zoo parks and various urban forest parks. She particularly highlighted the Nehru Zoo Park, Kakatiya Zoo Park and other facilities, calling for additional visitor amenities such as online ticket booking and integrated fast-track parking systems.

The Minister also directed officials to address challenges such as staff shortages, with approval for filling vacant positions at Nehru Zoo Park. She emphasised the importance of providing insurance for zoo staff and ensuring the regular health monitoring of animals with the support of veterinary experts. Kakatiya Zoo Park in Warangal received special attention during the discussions. Surekha instructed officials to resolve issues related to the drainage system, which has been causing odour problems.

MP'S 8TH TIGER RESERVE | CM says Ratapani Tiger Reserve to be named after archaeologist Dr Vishnu Wakankar

'TIGER NOT LION REAL KING'

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday reiterated that tiger, not lion, is the real king of the jungle. Tiger hunts for its food, while lion relies on its pride, he added. He also said the Ratapani Tiger Reserve will be named after renowned archaeologist Dr Vishnu Wakankar. It was due to the hard work of Wakankar that world famous Bhimbetka caves, known for its rock paintings and a world heritage site, received its identity.

The CM was addressing the inauguration programme of the Ratapani Tiger Reserve on Friday. Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for granting the tiger reserve status to Ratapani sanctuary, he said it is the fortune of Bhopal that Van Vihar is located close to Upper Lake and now Ratapani Tiger Reserve has



CM Mohan Yadav flags off bike rally in Ratapani on Friday

come up in its neighbourhood.

Bhopal is the lone state capital of the country which

has a tiger reserve in its "Aagan", Yadav said. He said

Randeep Hooda praises Yadav

Actor Randeep Hooda was the guest at the programme. He praised the works of the CM, including providing succor to sports persons and spreading the message of Gita. Yadav also praised Hooda for essaying the role of Veer Savarkar in the movie Swatantrya Veer Savarkar.

Ratapani has all the ingredients of thrill, mystery, history, culture and archaeology.

He asserted that after becoming a tiger reserve, employment opportunities for locals will increase. They could get employment through the medium of home stay facility and other such things. There is vast room for opening hotels, restaurants and lodges etc. It will even create tourism opportunities in Bhopal.

Urban wildlife syndrome catching up in monkeys: Wildlife NGO head

Causes hormonal imbalance, modifies their behaviour and reproductive patterns

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 13

"The readily available food that the macaques get does not do much good for the animal," said Kartick Satyanarayan, co-founder and CEO of Wildlife SOS regarding the condition of monkeys in the country.

December 14 is observed as Monkey Day worldwide to raise awareness about the ecological significance of primates and the challenges they face.

Human-primate conflict has become a significant conservation concern in India, where urbanisation and deforestation have brought primates into closer proximity to human settlements. "Of



A monkey having leftover food from a dustbin. December 14 is observed as Int'l Monkey Day.

the 22 primate species found in the country, some, like the rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) and the grey langur

(*Semnopithecus entellus*), have adapted to living in urban areas. However, this adaptation has created fric-

tion, as these animals often raid garbage bins and snatch food from people leading to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Urban ...

retaliatory actions," Wildlife SOS CEO said.

He highlighted the negative consequences of urbanisation on primate behaviour: "It causes hormonal imbalance, increases stress, and modifies their behaviour and reproductive patterns. This can commonly be termed as the urban wildlife syndrome," he said.

"With their natural habitats shrinking, monkeys are forced into human-dominated areas, leading to dangerous situations such as getting stuck on electric poles, barbed wires, and nets, or being involved in vehicular accidents," he rued.

Rhesus macaques are a

common sight in cities like Delhi, Agra, Vadodara, Chandigarh, Lucknow, and Varanasi. "These areas offer easy access to food, often from garbage bins or direct feeding by humans. Unfortunately, this dependency has long-term implications for the health and behaviour of these primates," he added.

Geeta Seshamani, co-founder and Secretary of Wildlife SOS, said, "These instances show how fragile their situation is, and how much encroachment can impact the lives of these primates. We always urge people to contact our rescue helplines if they see any monkey in distress. It is our primary goal to ensure and promote co-existence between humans and wild animals."