



Global Tiger Day

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Why in News

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has released a detailed '**Status of Tigers, Co-predators and Prey in India (2018) Report**' on the eve of the **Global Tiger Day (29th July)**.

The report compares information obtained from the **earlier three tiger surveys (2006, 2010, and 2014)** with data obtained from the **2018-19 survey** to estimate tiger population trends at country level.

Key Points

- **St. Petersburg declaration:**

- With **2,967 tigers**, India, four years in advance, has achieved the target set in the **2010 St Petersburg Declaration** of doubling tiger population by 2022. India had around 1,400 tigers in 2006.
- The Heads of the Governments of Tiger Range countries at **St. Petersburg, Russia**, had resolved to double tiger numbers across their **global range by 2022** by signing the St. Petersburg declaration on tiger conservation.

During the same meeting it was also **decided to celebrate 29th July as Global Tiger Day** across the world, which is since being celebrated to spread and generate awareness on tiger conservation.

- There are currently **13 tiger range countries** - India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

- **National Scenario:**

- The national tiger status assessment of 2018-19 estimated the overall **tiger population** in India at **2,967 - 33% increase from 2014 (2,226)**.
The **2018 census (once in every four years) has set a Guinness record** for being the **largest camera-trap wildlife survey**.
- Tigers were observed to be **increasing at a rate of 6% per annum** in India from **2006 to 2018**.
- The **largest contiguous tiger population in the world of about 724 tigers** was found in the **Western Ghats** (Nagarhole-Bandipur-Wayanad-Mudumalai- Sathyamangalam- Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple block).

- **Regional Scenario:**

- **Madhya Pradesh** has the highest number of tigers at 526, closely followed by Karnataka (524) and Uttarakhand (442).
- The Northeast has suffered losses in population. Further, the tiger status in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha has steadily declined, which is a matter of concern.
- Out of 50 tiger reserves in the country, three reserves - **Mizoram's Dampa reserve, Bengal's Buxa reserve and Jharkhand's Palamau reserve** - have no tigers left.
- **Corbett Tiger Reserve** (Uttarakhand) had the largest population of tigers at about 231 in 2018.

India's **Project Tiger** was launched in 1973 with 9 tiger reserves.

- **Concerns:**

- Most of the populations remain **confined to small Protected Areas**, some of which have habitat corridors that permit tiger movement between them.
- However, **most of the corridor habitats in India are degrading** due to unsustainable human use and developmental projects.
- Some **reserves nearing full capacity** is another issue.

- **Solutions:**

- In areas where tigers have not been recorded or the population has declined, restoration needs to be proceeded by improving **protection, augmentation of prey, and reintroduction of tigers** from an appropriate source.
- Some reserves like Similipal (Odisha), Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh) are below their potential and require resources and targeted management.

- **Government's Response:**

- Tigers and other wildlife are a kind of **soft power** that India has to show on the international front.
- Despite several constraints such as less land mass, India has **8% of biodiversity** because of its culture of saving and preserving nature, trees and its wildlife.
- India has **70% of the world's tiger population**. It is tirelessly working with all 13 tiger range countries towards nurturing the tiger.
- The Government is working on a programme to provide water and fodder to animals at the forest itself to deal with the challenge of human-animal conflict that is causing the death of animals.
 - For this, **Lidar-based survey technology** will be used for the first time.
 - **Lidar** is a method of measuring distance by illuminating the target with laser light and measuring the reflection with a sensor.

Source: PIB