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Development not obverse to environment, says min

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Chandrapur: Central government is keen on using scientific technology to bring synchronization between environment protection and development, said Union minister for environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) Bhupender Yadav. Yadav along with his deputy minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey was here to take part in the Global Tiger Day programme organized by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) on Friday.

“Environment and development are not opposite to each other. Government is focused on including new technology in the process of development, while adopting digital innovations, artificial intelligence and latest discoveries in the veterinary science to protect the flora and fauna,” he said.

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Yadav said two bills — one to amend Wildlife Protection Act and another on biodiversity law — are to be tabled in the monsoon session of Parliament. He, however, maintained that forest rights and development of forest dwellers are equally important for the government.

“Tribals have played important role in protection and conservation of forests and wildlife since ages. Forest department would have not achieved its goals of conservation without the participation of the communities living in the forests. Hence, our government is committed to safeguard their rights over the forest,” said the minister.



He claimed five big projects for protection and conservation of tiger, elephant, lion, dolphin, and reintroduction of cheetah, which became extinct from the country in 1952, into the forests of the country are underway. “We have signed an MoU with Namibia to bring cheetah back into our forests. Similar MoU is also going to be signed with South Africa,” said Yadav. He, however, maintained that projects focused on conservation tiger, lion or elephants do not mean that other aspects are overlooked. “These projects mean inclusive conservation of every wild animal, avian, plant species and entire ecological system around the apex predator,” he explained.

Choubey lauded the success in conservation and protection of tigers. He claimed there were 1,411 tigers left in the country when Project Tiger was launched in 2006. As per the fourth tiger census held in 2018, tiger population has grown to 2,967. “Fifth tiger estimation is underway and the tiger population is likely to see further increase,” he said.

During the programme, various awards given by the NTCA were handed over by the minister duo. Later meetings of field directors of different tiger reserves and National Wildlife Board members were held.

MLA from Chandrapur, Kishor Jorgewar, ADG (Project Tiger) and member-secretary NTCA, SP Yadav, PCCF (wildlife), Maharashtra, Sunil Limaye, head of forest force, YNK Rao, officials of NTCA and forest department, members of National Wildlife Board and local officials were present during the programme.

Woman commando faints in front of dais

Extreme humidity and heat took toll on some of the women commandos of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) as one fainted just in front of the dais while another showed signs of delirium during the Global Tiger Day programme, which lasted little over an hour.

This, however, put a question mark on the training and physical endurance of the STPF staff, which has to brave harsh weather and difficult terrains of tiger reserves, for the protection of tigers, wildlife and forests.

The organisers had to circulate water bottles among the commandos.