

F. No. 15-7/2025-NTCA

भारत सरकार
Government of India
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
राष्ट्रीय व्याघ्र संरक्षण प्राधिकरण
National Tiger Conservation Authority

Date: As per esign

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Summary record of 27th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority held on April 18, 2025-reg.

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith a copy of the summary record of the 27th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, as approved by the Hon'ble MEF&CC/ Chairman NTCA, which was held on April 18, 2025 at the IIFM, Bhopal for kind perusal and record.

Digitally signed by
Vaibhav Chandra Mathur
Date: 16-05-2025
11:32:59

(Dr. Vaibhav C. Mathur)
Deputy Inspector General (NTCA)
Email: dig1-ntca@nic.in
Tel: + 91 11 24367837-39
Fax: +91 11 24367836

Distribution:

1. All NTCA Members (list enclosed).

Copy to:

1. PS to Hon'ble MEF&CC
2. PS to Hon'ble MoS, EF&CC
3. Sr. PPS to Secretary, EF&CC
4. Sr. PPS to DGF&SS, EF&CC
5. PS to ADG (PT&E) & Member Secretary (NTCA)/ PA to IGF, NTCA)

Address: B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi –
110 003 Tel: + 91 11 24367837-39 Fax: +91 11 24367836, website: <https://ntca.gov.in>

Minutes of the 27th meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority held under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change on April 18, 2025 at Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal

The 27th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change on April 18, 2025 at the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal. The meeting was attended by members as at **Annexure I**.

The Chairman welcomed the participants and initiated the deliberations. The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) welcomed the newly appointed Member of Parliament of the Hon'ble Rajya Sabha, Shri Sanjay Kumar Jha to the NTCA.

Details of agenda wise deliberations are as below:

Agenda Item No. 1

Releases: Status of Ungulates in tiger habitats of India

The Hon'ble Chairman, NTCA/ HMEFCC released the document titled "Status of Ungulates in tiger habitats of India. This publication is the first of its kind in India wherein data collected over the last 5 cycles of All India Tiger Estimation has been compared and presented.

Agenda Item No. 2

Confirmation of minutes of the 26th meeting and observations received from Members

The minutes of the 26th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) were confirmed.

Agenda Item No. 3

Action taken on the decisions of the 26th meeting

The NTCA took note of the action taken on decisions made during the 26th meeting of the NTCA.

Agenda Item No. 4

Updates on activities of the NTCA

1. Ratification of the decisions of the Technical Committee
 - a. 12th Technical Committee held on February 24, 2025
2. Update on NBWL proposals (35)
3. Madhav Tiger Reserve notified on 07.03.2025
4. 6th All India Tiger Estimation initiated

The Authority ratified and took note of the above.

5. PM Announcements

- Project TOTR (Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves)
- Cheetah Conservation in Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh
- Cheetah Conservation in Banni Grasslands, Gujarat
- International Conclave of Big Cat Range Countries

The Hon'ble Chairman briefed members about the announcements made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife.

The Chair elaborated that the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) is an instrument for soft diplomacy which was envisaged by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2019. He mentioned that out of the 95 range countries 26 countries had consented to become members and 7 countries had already ratified the framework agreement to become members of the IBCA. He stated that the IBCA in collaboration with the Authority shall be organizing an international conference on big cat conservation towards the end of this year. This shall be a platform for capacity building and research in different thematic areas including wildlife veterinary and health sciences. This opportunity should be leveraged by one and all to demonstrate the leadership role of the country in big cat conservation

In respect of the project titled Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves, the Chairman highlighted the fact that 30% of the India's tigers are outside tiger reserves which need to be effectively managed, especially with respect to conflict situations. The Chair then invited comments from all members with respect to announcements made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

Inputs from Members:

1. Shri Sanjay Kumar Jha, Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha reflected upon the recent media coverage on tiger poaching and requested the Authority to take note and keep a strong record of the same to analyse trends and formulate effective control and prevention strategies.

2. Shri Harish Chandra Meena, Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha highlighted that conservation issues should have primacy over tourism matters which however, was not the case in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, wherein commercialization had resulted in negative ramifications. He emphasized the need of proper planning of the newly notified Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan.

3. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha expressed satisfaction on the action taken on the points raised by him during the 26th meeting of the Authority. However, he strongly emphasized the need for enhancing budget allocation under Project Tiger as the existing budget is insufficient for even routine activities of tiger reserves. He stated that voluntary village relocation itself would require an amount of 9,000 crores which needs to be provided in a phased manner for nearly 600 villages with 60,000 families. In respect of management of buffer areas, he stressed on the need to have regulations for solid waste disposal as well as noise and visual pollution. In addition, a satellite carrying capacity should be formulated in these areas in order to

sustainably manage eco-tourism. A briefing session for tourists clearly highlighting the do's and don'ts is required to be institutionalized in all tiger reserves in order to have a true wilderness experience. Online ticketing should be made available in all tiger reserves which should include a separate facility for enthusiasts such as photographers within the overall norms. Electric vehicles should be tried out wherever possible.

The member requested the Authority for notification of new areas where suitable welfare factors for tigers are available in order to facilitate tiger translocation as per existing protocols of the Authority. He requested the Authority for a national standard for rescue vehicles with respect to the tigers in the country besides a national level veterinary and health centre in the country. He requested the Chair to address other Members of Parliament whose constituency includes tiger reserves to contribute Rupees 20 lakhs from their Local Area Development Fund for the benefit of tiger conservation.

The Member requested the Authority to update the water atlas as well as the atlas on forest rest houses with respect to wildlife. The member advised to explore the possibility of underground gravity pipes for water and fire management in tiger reserves. In addition, he stressed in the need to have a documentation of India's heritage in and around tiger reserves for the benefit of all. In order to evolve a syllabus for naturalists, he advised the Authority to coordinate with the Ministry of Human Resource Development and constitute a Task Force for finalizing the same.

4. Dr. H. S. Negi, Expert member appreciated progress made in Project Cheetah and suggested that dispersing cheetahs need to be managed based on the landscape approach to conservation as they tend to move large distances because of their exploratory nature. He also pointed out to conflict being a major concern wherein too, a landscape approach would give positive outcomes rather than adopting a piece meal approach. He suggested that joint collaboration between the State of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan needs to be strategized in order to sustain Project Cheetah in the long run. Vis-a-vis the International Big Cat Alliance and its initiative, the expert member remarked that apart from showcasing our best practices, the platform should also be used to learn from others to refine our skill sets and protocols.

5. The expert member also highlighted the issue of left-wing extremism (LWE) in Kanha Tiger Reserve. This problem has gradually escalated, starting from portions of core critical areas of Kanha Tiger Reserve falling within Balaghat District to the areas of Mandla District. The Naxalite presence is causing a serious fear psychosis among field personnel deployed in the remote patrolling camps (backbone of the protection system) of the Tiger Reserve. The Bamhni Dadar plateau—one of the reserve's key habitats—has been converted into a large campsite for security forces (Hawk Force), which itself is detrimental to the ecological integrity of Kanha. The State of Madhya Pradesh needs to strategically address this issue without adverse consequences to the Tiger Reserve besides shifting the Hawk Force establishment from Bamhni Dadar to adjoining areas in the buffer zones of the Kanha Tiger Reserve.

6. Mr. Ravi Singh, Expert member stressed on the need to refine corridors as they contribute to tigers outside tiger reserves. He remarked on the coordination that is required with Nepal and Bhutan in respect of tiger conservation and the implementation of M-STripes in areas outside tiger reserves which needs to be strengthened for accountability. Vis-a-vis the IBCA, the expert member suggested that their organization can reach out to 95 countries and bring in experts for all big cats for the international conclave. He stated that resource persons for lion, jaguar and puma have already been identified. In view of mis-reporting of conservation initiatives in the media and other fora,

he suggested that a strong rebuttal needs to be given to all those who attempt to tarnish India's image without understanding the strong foundations of our works.

7. Mr. Pradeep Malik, Expert member mentioned that the best vaccines have been imported for cheetahs in India because of which no infectious diseases have been reported. He said that there is a need of enhancement of competency of forest front-line staff at conflict interfaces which will also be positively reflected in the eyes of citizens.

8. S. S. Srivastava, Expert member stressed on refining corridors and the need to translocate cheetahs from Kuno to other suitable habitats in the country.

9. Rahul Bhatnagar, Expert member In respect of the project Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves, the member mentioned that all affected and sensitive areas should have quick reaction teams with proper training to manage human-tiger conflict. He emphasized that the ambit of the proposed project should fall with the Field Director of the nearest tiger reserve. In respect of Project Cheetah, the member remarked that the Rawatbhata area in Rajasthan should be developed for cheetah introduction. He reiterated the need to notify the Kumbalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve.

10. Roop Narayan Mandwe, Expert member requested the Authority to propose guidelines for dispersing tigers to which it was informed that Standard Operation Procedures are already in place for the same. He mentioned that the formalities under The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act, 2005, need to be complete before notification of tiger reserves. Vis-a-vis Project Cheetah, the expert Member suggested that the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary should be developed owing to suitable habitat conditions.

11. Mr. Vivek Pandey, APCCF (WL) representative of Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand mentioned that there are several divisions in the State which are as good as tiger reserves where the scheme Tiger Outside Tiger Reserves would be beneficial. The member also emphasized on the requirement of increasing the budgetary allocation under Project Tiger in order to address the growing challenges besides existing needs.

12. Mr. Rajesh Gupta, APCCF (WL), Representative of Chief Wildlife Warden Rajasthan informed the Authority that the State is in advanced stage of discussions with the Government of Madhya Pradesh to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the two States in context of Project Cheetah.

13 Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha informed the Authority that the project Tiger Outside Tiger Reserve shall be restricted to the Similipal landscape only in the State.

14. Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu welcomed the Tiger Outside Tiger Reserves initiative and mentioned that areas like the Nilgiris district in the State shall benefit from the said scheme. He requested the Authority to explore the possibility of extending the instrument of the Tiger Conservation Foundations beyond tiger reserves also. He highlighted the initiative taken by the State of Tamil Nadu in respect of removal of invasive alien species from wildlife habitats and the use of M-STriPES beyond tiger reserves also. He went on to mention the institutionalization of an Advanced Institute of Wildlife Conservation and the State level Wildlife Crime Control Bureau which can be demonstrated to other big cat range countries using the platform of International Big Cat Alliance.

15. Chief Wildlife Warden, Chhattisgarh informed that the State is taking proactive measures to restore prey base issues in the newly notified Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla

Tiger Reserve. He informed members that Bhoramdev Wildlife Sanctuary and Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary are priesting habitats with occasionally harbour tigers that stand to benefit from the Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves scheme.

16. ADG(WL) mentioned that human tiger conflict is an emerging challenge for tiger reserve managers in view of the successes of Project Tiger wherein numbers are going up. A detailed action plan should be prepared for Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves in order to implement it effectively.

17. DGF&SS highlighted the unprecedented success which India has had with respect to Project Cheetah. He emphasized that 21 cheetahs were born in India within a short span of 2 years which is not been observed anywhere else in the world. In respect of the conference on big cat conservation, he mentioned that for the first time such an initiative has been taken wherein India has taken a lead.

18. Secretary, EF&CC stated that resource mobilisation has been initiated with respect to organizing the international conference on big cat conservation as well as for the project tigers outside tiger reserves. In respect to cheetahs, he mentioned that habitat and prey issues need to be adequately addressed which shall highlight India's global leadership towards the overall conservation of big cats.

In his concluding speech, the Chairman, NTCA/ HMEFCC directed that the NTCA should organize a two-day workshop on landscape basis, inviting the members to deliberate upon various issues discussed during the meeting. The landscape can be chosen from the following -

- i. Shivalik hills and Gangetic Plains (Bihar/ Uttarakhand/ Uttar Pradesh)
- ii. Central Indian Landscape (Chhattisgarh/ Jharkhand/ Madhya Pradesh/ Maharashtra/ Odisha/ Rajasthan)
- iii. Western and Eastern (Telangana/ Andhra Pradesh/ Karnataka/ Kerala/ Tamil Nadu)
- iv. North East Hills and Brahmaputra Plains (Arunachal Pradesh/ Assam/ Mizoram/ West Bengal)
- v. Sundarbans

He also instructed that the NTCA needs to prepare a format for collating this information from the States and present it in the next Authority meeting in July, 2025, tentatively at the Similipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by the Chairman.

Annexure I

- Shri Bhupender Yadav, Chairman NTCA and Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change
- Shri Sanjay Kumar Jha, Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha
- Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha
- Shri Harish Chandra Meena, Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha
- Shri S.S. Srivastava, Expert Member
- Shri Ravi Singh, Expert Member
- Shri Rahul Bhatnagar, Expert Member
- Dr. Roop Narayan Mandwe, Expert Member
- Dr. H.S. Negi, Expert Member
- Shri Tanmay Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi, Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Shri Anjan Mohanty, Director, Wildlife Preservation, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Shri P. K Jha, Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha
- Shri Rakesh Dogra, Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu
- Rajesh Gupta, APCCF, WL, representative of Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan
- Shri Sudhir Agarwal, Chief Wildlife Warden, Chhattisgarh
- Vivek Pandey, APCCF, WL, representative of Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand
- Caralyn Khongwar Deshmukh, Additional Secretary, representative of Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- Dr. K. V. Kumar, Joint Secretary and Legislative Counsel, Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice
- Dr. G. S. Bhardwaj, Member Secretary, NTCA and Additional Director General of Forest (Project Tiger), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change