

**F. No. 15-14/2025-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 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority held on December 21, 2025-reg.**

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith a copy of the summary record of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, as approved by the Hon'ble MEF&CC/ Chairman NTCA, which was held on December 21, 2025 at the Sundarban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal for kind perusal and record.

**(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)

## **Summary Record of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority held under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change.**

The 28th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, on December 21, 2025 at Sundarban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal. The meeting was attended by the Members of the NTCA as listed at Annexure I.

Shri Sanjayan Kumar, Member Secretary (i/c), NTCA, welcomed the Hon'ble Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and all Members of the Authority, and briefed them on the agenda items placed for consideration. The details of the agenda-wise deliberations are given below.

### **Agenda Item No. 1: Release of NTCA Publications**

Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for MoEF &CC and Chairperson, NTCA released the following four publications of NTCA.

- i. *Project Cheetah Booklet*: highlighting major milestones and key developments during three years of implementation of Project Cheetah.
- ii. Latest edition of *STRIPES* magazine: focusing on technology-enabled tiger monitoring and commencement of the sixth cycle of the All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE).
- iii. *NTCA booklet*: documenting India's tiger conservation journey, policy milestones and key initiatives.
- iv. *Tigerverse*: an outreach publication showcasing lesser-known aspects of biodiversity, geology, history and culture conserved through India's tiger reserves.

The Authority appreciated the outreach and documentation efforts undertaken by NTCA.

### **Agenda Item No. 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the 27th Meeting**

The minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority were confirmed.

### **Agenda Item No. 3: Action Taken on the Decisions of the 27th Meeting**

The Authority took note of the action taken on decisions of the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Agenda Item No. 4: Ratification of Meetings of the NTCA and Advice to the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife**

The Authority ratified decisions of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee of the NTCA and inputs provided to the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife

### **Agenda Item No. 5: Updates on Directions of the 7th National Board for Wildlife**

The Authority was updated on action taken with respect to directions of the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife. Updates were provided on the expansion of Project Cheetah to Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary with relocation of a male coalition followed by release of a female cheetah, as well as the proposed expansion of the

project to the Banni grasslands in Gujarat and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.

The launch of the project on management of tigers outside tiger reserves during Wildlife Week was reiterated.

The Authority was also apprised of the preparations underway for the Global Big Cat Summit. It was reported that a series of pre-summit programmes are being conducted at both national and international levels, including a curtain-raiser held in May 2025, as well as a meeting of Ambassadors from range countries convened on 8 December 2025.

### **Agenda Item No. 6: Updates on Activities of the National Tiger Conservation Authority**

The Authority was apprised of the ongoing and recent activities of the National Tiger Conservation Authority undertaken during the period under review.

- The Authority was informed about the progress of the Sixth All India Tiger Estimation (AITE), including preparatory activities, capacity building and coordination with tiger range States for smooth implementation of the estimation exercise across landscapes.
- The Authority was further apprised of Project Cheetah-related international visits undertaken for technical review and cooperations. It was informed that an official delegation visited South Africa in June 2025 and Namibia in July 2025 to review source population management, capture protocols, veterinary procedures, and translocation experiences, and to strengthen institutional collaboration under Project Cheetah. It was also informed about efforts towards international sourcing of cheetahs from Botswana, including preliminary consultations and technical assessments, in line with the approved framework for expansion of Project Cheetah.
- The Authority was informed about the observance of Global Tiger Day, 2025, including a week-long outreach, awareness and communication initiative with students from schools across the National Capital Region, undertaken to highlight India's leadership in global tiger conservation.
- The Authority was also apprised of the initiative titled "Silent Conversations: From Margins to the Centre", aimed at strengthening inclusive dialogue, knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement in tiger conservation, particularly focusing on lesser-represented perspectives.

### **Agenda Item No. 7: Appraisal of Order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 17.11.2025**

The Member Secretary apprised the Authority about the latest orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court passed in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202 of 1995, pertaining to Corbett Tiger Reserve, and its wider implications for tiger conservation and management across the country. He also informed that the directions of the Hon'ble Court have a pan-India bearing, particularly with respect to governance, regulation, and management of tiger reserves and protected areas.

The Authority took note of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court these directions be complied by all tiger range States and tiger reserve managements.

## Inputs from Members

The inputs received from each member are as below-

1. **Shri Manoj Kumar, Additional Secretary, Legislative Department, Ministry of Law & Justice**, highlighted the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court relating to regulation of tiger safaris and tourism management in tiger reserves. He suggested that the NTCA may consider developing model standard operating procedures and guidelines for regulation of religious tourism in and around tiger reserves, in order to assist State Governments in ensuring effective and uniform implementation of these directions across the country.

2. **Shri S. S. Srivastava, Expert Member**, raised concerns regarding tiger mortalities caused by railway lines, citing repeated incidents in Ratapani Tiger Reserve. He also drew the attention of the Hon'ble Chairperson to the recent rise in tiger captures, referring to instances in Karnataka where more than 22 tigers were captured within a period of one month. He suggested that a scientific study on tiger dispersal, particularly movement of tigers outside tiger reserves, may be undertaken to inform mitigation and management planning.

3. **Shri Rahul Bhatnagar, Expert Member** raised management issues relating to Kumbhalgarh WLS and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve, including cases of orphan tigers and challenges associated with rewilding. He also pointed out that while several invasive weed species are present across the country, about five to six species (including *Lantana* and *Adulsaa/Adhatoda*) require priority attention and focused management and suggested preparation of five-year invasive species management plans for tiger reserves. Further, he emphasized on the consideration of Rawatbhata area in Rajasthan for the expansion of Project Cheetah.

4. **Shri Ravi Singh, Secretary General, WWF–India and Expert Member**, highlighted that four key themes emerging from the regional workshops, namely human–wildlife conflict, habitat degradation and invasive species, financial constraints, and shortage of frontline staff, require focused attention. He also suggested the need to address the issue of canine distemper disease among tigers, particularly in tiger reserves. He emphasised the importance of insurance cover and welfare measures for frontline staff, in view of the high-risk nature of their duties and increasing attrition.

5. **Dr. Roop Narayan Mandwe, Expert Member**, drew attention to **poorly planned road and railway infrastructure** in landscapes such as **Ratapani and Nauradehi**, where wildlife mitigation measures were found to be inadequate. He suggested that **project approvals may be linked to completion of mitigation structures**. He also urged **expeditious settlement of Forest Rights Act (FRA) processes** to avoid delays in conservation interventions and voluntary village relocation.

6. **Dr. H. S. Negi, Expert Member**, reiterated that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change may address the key themes emerging from the regional workshops, namely human–wildlife conflict, habitat degradation and invasive species, and financial constraints. He also drew the attention of the Hon'ble Chairperson to the need for enhancement of project allowance for staff and ration allowance for anti-poaching watchers. He further emphasised the need to exercise restraint in capturing tigers and to handle press and media appropriately during such capture operations.

7. **Shri Prem Kumar Jha, Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha**, highlighted the need for protection of the corridor between Satkosia and Similipal Tiger Reserves and also shared field-level management and enforcement challenges.

8. **Shri Rakesh Kumar Dogra, Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu**, informed the Authority that the State has prepared an action plan to make the tiger reserve invasive-free by March 2026. He reported that most frontline vacancies have been filled and informed about the establishment of a State Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to strengthen intelligence gathering and enforcement, adding an additional layer of protection for tiger reserves.

9. **Shri Arun Prasad, Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan**, expressed his views on the decision to not allow mobile phones in core areas of tiger reserves.

10. **Shri Arun Kumar Pandey, Chief Wildlife Warden, Chhattisgarh**, highlighted **incidents of wildlife mortality due to electrocution** and urged stronger coordination with **Electricity Boards**. He also shared innovations undertaken in the State for **conversion of *Eupatorium* biomass into vermicomposting**, emphasizing need for similar interventions for other invasive species.

11. **Shri Vivek Pandey, APCCF and representative of the Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand**, reported high densities of tigers and leopards in the State, resulting in increased human-wildlife conflict. He also mentioned a rise in bear attacks in recent years, possibly due to climatic factors influencing bear hibernation patterns, leading to increased human-bear interactions.

12. **Shri Ramesh Kumar Pandey, Additional Director General (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, highlighted the need for tiger reserve-wise profiling and the trend in the spread of invasive species, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India. He also informed the Authority that NTCA is using M-STripes for monitoring of tigers, including in tiger reserves and tiger occupancy areas outside tiger reserves, and that this best practice may be highlighted in the next NTCA meeting for wider adoption across the country. He further expressed the need for an in-house discussion on the implications of having a one-kilometre Eco-Sensitive Zone beyond the buffer area, in light of the latest directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. He also highlighted the need for establishing rescue centres for each tiger reserve to address the increasing incidence of human-animal conflict, and suggested that such initiatives may be supported through CAMPA funding.

13. **Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi, Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, stressed the need for taking necessary steps to address the issues highlighted during the regional workshops conducted by NTCA. He also emphasised the importance of creating region-wise rescue centres in each State to address human-animal conflict, with support under CAMPA. This must be taken up by the States on an urgent basis.

14. **Shri Tanmay Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, highlighted the need for studying the performance of Tiger Conservation Foundations with respect to utilisation of funds across all tiger reserves.

15. **Shri Sanjay K. Jha, Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha**, the Hon'ble MP through the letter addressed to NTCA, stressed on the need to make tiger tourism non-intrusive as

persistent disturbance driven by sighting centric tourism may contribute to altered tiger behaviour and reduce sighting defeating efforts to conserve tiger numbers beside causing stress to the animals. He highlighted that the tiger reserves are natural system and not zoological parks for which systematic counselling should be given to visitors.

### **Directions of the Hon'ble Minister, MoEF&CC and Chairperson, NTCA,**

In his remarks, the Hon'ble Chairperson directed the NTCA to undertake the following actions on priority:

1. In NTCA meetings in tiger reserves, the host Field Director shall make a detailed and comprehensive presentation highlighting best practices, management innovations, and challenges faced by the tiger reserve, so that experiences can be shared and replicated across other reserves. This practice shall be institutionalised for future meetings.
2. The Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand, was directed to take immediate steps to contain human-animal conflict involving bears and leopards and to submit an Action Taken Report in this regard within fifteen days.
3. The status of the Committee on Kumbalgarh, the status of orphaned tigers in Mukundra, and an assessment of the scope for reintroduction of cheetahs in Rawatbhata, Rajasthan, shall be presented in the next meeting.
4. It was further decided that the Authority shall include a workshop with start-ups working in the areas of medicinal plants, indigenous knowledge systems, and tribal communities.
5. The actions taken by enforcement agencies during the previous one year for curbing wildlife crime shall be compiled and presented before the next NTCA meeting.
6. NTCA was directed to compile the following information from all 58 tiger reserves and present the same in the next NTCA meeting:
  - i. Number of pending Forest Rights Act cases
  - ii. Approved infrastructure projects inside tiger reserves and the status of implementation of mitigation measures
  - iii. Status of railway lines(s) passing through tiger reserves and the need for any mitigation measures.
  - iv. Status of village relocation from core areas of tiger reserves.
  - v. Status of Eco-Sensitive Zone notifications.
  - vi. Mapping of invasive weed species and management measures undertaken.
  - vii. Status of Self-Help Groups in villages located in and around tiger reserves
  - viii. Number of Central schools, including Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, in and around tiger reserves, and whether Zoology and Botany are being taught to sensitise students about local flora and fauna
  - ix. Number of schools in and around tiger reserves having active Eco-Clubs and Atal Tinkering Labs.
  - x. Tiger reserves having potential and capacity to initiate the Green Credit Programme
7. NTCA was directed to prepare the budget requirement for the next financial year within fifteen days and submit the proposal by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 to MoEF &CC.

8. While noting that India has achieved several milestones in tiger conservation, the Hon'ble Chairperson stressed the need to place greater emphasis on science-based conservation initiatives, aligned with global best practices, to further strengthen India's leadership in wildlife conservation.
9. An inter-ministerial meeting to be conveyed to address cross-sectoral issues impacting tiger conservation.
10. Emphasis was laid on capacity building of local communities and encouragement of indigenous knowledge-based start-ups linked to conservation and livelihoods.
11. State Forest Departments were advised to create a separate protocol or tourism management division within tiger reserves, so that core field staff may focus on protection and management functions.
12. It was directed that the next NTCA meeting be organised as a two-day conference in Tamil Nadu, in collaboration with SACON, Coimbatore, and the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, with participation of experts and veterinarians. Detailed deliberations shall be held on various aspects of wildlife conservation.
13. Bandipur, Mudumalai, Anamalai, Parambikulam, Sathyamangalam, and Wayanad shall make presentations on the status and activities undertaken in their respective tiger reserves, along with a presentation by the Eco-Club of a school located in the vicinity of the respective tiger reserves.
14. It was also directed that timely media communication be undertaken to prevent the spread of misinformation and to keep the public informed about the policies and initiatives of the Department relating to wildlife conservation.
15. Directions were also issued for establishment of animal rescue centres, identification of areas for redistribution of tigers in high-density landscapes, and submission of pending reports within the stipulated timelines.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.