SATPURA Saga

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Satpura: Conservation Beyond Boundaries



Shri Subharanjan Sen, IFS

MESSAGE
PCCF & HoFF

Madhya Pradesh has emerged as a global leader in wildlife conservation through science-based management, community participation, and dedicated field protection. Satpura Tiger Reserve exemplifies this vision by demonstrating that conservation extends beyond protected areas to encompass landscapes, livelihoods, and people. I congratulate the team of Satpura Tiger Reserve for launching the first edition of **"Satpura Saga",** which captures inspiring stories of resilience, innovation, and coexistence. May this newsletter serve as a bridge connecting people with nature and inspire future generations to protect our invaluable natural heritage.

MESSAGE
PCCF(WILDLIFE) & CWLW

Conservation today demands adaptive management, scientific monitoring, and strong partnerships with communities. The initiatives highlighted in this edition of **Satpura Saga** — from species recovery and translocation to citizen participation and environmental education — reflect the evolving face of wildlife conservation in Madhya Pradesh. I commend the dedicated staff of Satpura Tiger Reserve and all stakeholders who continue to work tirelessly towards securing a future for wildlife and people alike.



Dr. Sameeta Rajora,IFS



Shri L. Krishna Moorthy ,IFS

MESSAGE
APCCF(WILDLIFE)

Forests thrive when communities become partners and conservation is guided by science. Satpura Tiger Reserve has consistently demonstrated leadership in both these dimensions. This inaugural edition of **Satpura Saga** beautifully showcases the reserve's journey in conservation, research, outreach, and human resource development. I congratulate the team and wish the newsletter great success in spreading awareness and inspiring stewardship for nature.

MESSAGE FROM

Ms. Rakhi Nanda, IFS, FD STR

Every story in Satpura is a story of coexistence—between forests and people, wildlife and communities, science and compassion. Through Satpura Saga, we invite readers to join us in celebrating and safeguarding this extraordinary landscape.

Ms. Rishibha Singh Netam, IFS, DD STR

Conservation is most meaningful when it touches lives and inspires participation. Satpura Saga is a reflection of the collective efforts of field staff, communities, researchers, and citizens who together shape the future of Satpura.

THE BHOJPUR BROTHERS:

A Story of Brotherhood, Hope and Rewilding

On a summer day in March 2025, a young tiger cub was sighted repeatedly in the human-dominated landscape of Bhojpur in Raisen district, raising concerns of an impending human–wildlife conflict. To ensure the safety of both people and the animal, the forest department initiated a rescue operation and successfully captured the cub. But nature had another story to tell. As the rescued cub sat quietly inside the trap cage, another tiger of the same age emerged from the nearby vegetation and remained beside him for hours, refusing to leave his sibling behind. Moved by this extraordinary display of brotherhood, the rescue team decided to rescue the second cub as well, marking the beginning of the remarkable journey of the “Bhojpur Brothers.”

The two orphaned male cubs were brought to Satpura Tiger Reserve for an intensive rewilding programme, where they gradually rediscovered their natural instincts and learned to hunt independently. After months of careful monitoring and training, they were released into the wilds of Churna Range in January 2026. Today, at nearly two and a half years of age, the brothers continue to explore the landscape, often remaining in surprisingly close proximity to one another. Whether they eventually establish independent territories deep within the forests remains a question only time can answer. Their story is a testament to the power of science-based conservation, patience, and compassion—and a reminder that sometimes, giving nature a second chance is the greatest act of conservation.





GIANTS ON THE MOVE:

Satpura's Gift to Bandhavgarh



Satpura Tiger Reserve, home to one of central India's healthiest gaur populations, has emerged as a source landscape for strengthening wildlife populations across Madhya Pradesh. Following the successful reintroduction of gaur in Sanjay Tiger Reserve, Satpura once again played a pivotal role in conservation by contributing 50 gaur to Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in two phases, with the final translocation of 27 individuals completed in January 2026. The initiative aims to enhance genetic diversity, strengthen long-term population viability, and reduce the risk of inbreeding in Bandhavgarh's gaur population.Behind this historic translocation lay nearly 45 days of meticulous planning, health screening, elephant-assisted operations, and coordinated efforts by veterinarians, field staff, and logistics teams from multiple protected areas. Undertaken under a collaborative framework between the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, the project reflects the state's proactive wildlife management approach. As these majestic giants adapt and thrive in their new home, their journey stands as a shining example of how science, collaboration, and conservation can work together to secure the future of wildlife across landscapes.

LEOPARD'S RELENTLESS JOURNEY

A Tale of Patience, Pursuit and Final Fate



Wildlife conservation often involves difficult decisions, balancing the safety of people with the welfare of animals. In 2025, a young leopard involved in human–wildlife conflict near Pachmarhi became the focus of one of Satpura's most extensive wildlife management efforts. The animal was rescued, radio-collared, and released into secure forest habitats, offering it an opportunity to reclaim its place in the wild. However, being a young dispersing animal without an established territory, the leopard repeatedly returned to human-dominated landscapes, leading to renewed conflict situations.

Demonstrating patience and compassion, the forest department monitored the animal continuously, engaged local communities, and twice provided it with opportunities to settle back into the wild. Yet, despite sustained efforts, the leopard continued to gravitate towards human settlements. In the interest of both human safety and animal welfare, a carefully considered decision was eventually taken to shift the leopard to Mukundpur Zoo, where it could live safely without the risk of further conflict. Its journey highlights an important truth: conservation is not always about returning an animal to the forest—it is about making informed and humane decisions that give wildlife every possible chance while ensuring coexistence with people.

SATPURA SAATHI:

Conservation Beyond Boundaries



Conservation succeeds best when communities become partners in protecting nature. With this vision, Satpura Tiger Reserve launched Satpura Saathi—a people-centric movement aimed at fostering a culture of conservation across the entire Satpura landscape. Beginning with buffer and relocated villages, the initiative seeks to engage forest staff, local communities, students, guides, jeep drivers, Eco-Development Committees, and nature enthusiasts in a shared mission to safeguard forests and wildlife.

Through community interactions, awareness campaigns, cultural programmes, rallies, sports events, and nature-based activities, Satpura Saathi has already inspired nearly 1,600 individuals to pledge their support for conservation. Still in its infancy, the campaign envisions expanding across the landscape by involving institutions, youth, and diverse stakeholders. By nurturing a sense of ownership and coexistence, Satpura Saathi is laying the foundation for a future where thriving forests and empowered communities grow together.

EMPOWERING HANDS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

Conservation flourishes when communities prosper, and communities prosper when women are empowered. Recognizing this, Satpura Tiger Reserve initiated a livelihood programme for women from villages around the reserve, helping them build skills and achieve financial independence. Twenty women from Chedka, Siyarkheda, Tekapar, and Sehra underwent a month-long beauty parlour and cosmetology training programme designed to create sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Upon successful completion of the training, participants received professional makeup kits and certificates to help them begin their entrepreneurial journeys. The impact is already visible—one participant has started her own beauty parlour services and begun earning an income while continuing to upgrade her skills. By empowering women, Satpura Tiger Reserve is strengthening communities and demonstrating that conservation extends beyond forests to improving the lives of people who share the landscape with nature.



WHEN COMMUNITIES PLAY, CONSERVATION WINS

Organized under the Satpura Saathi Campaign, the EDC Sports Competition 2026 celebrated the enduring partnership between communities and conservation.

Bringing together 37 Eco-Development Committees and 427 players from villages in and around Satpura Tiger Reserve, the event used cricket, volleyball, and kabaddi as a medium to strengthen bonds with forests and wildlife. The finals at Jhirpa witnessed EDC Maili winning cricket, EDC Sehra triumphing in kabaddi, and EDC Ranipura emerging victorious in volleyball.

More than a sporting event, the competition inspired young people to reconnect with nature and take pride in the rich natural heritage surrounding them. A friendly match between office and field staff added to the spirit of camaraderie, while all participants took the Satpura Saathi pledge to protect forests and wildlife. Such initiatives nurture future ambassadors of conservation, proving that when communities come together, nature thrives.

MORE THAN A WORKSHOP: A DAY WHEN WOMEN CHOSE THEMSELVES



In a first-of-its-kind initiative for the Narmadapuram Circle, women personnel from Satpura Tiger Reserve, territorial divisions, working plan office, production division, and the Office of the Chief Conservator of Forests came together on a common platform to celebrate International Women's Day.From frontline forest staff to senior officers, women from every level of the department shared experiences, built connections, and discovered the power of collective support. For many participants, it was the first time in their professional lives that they felt truly recognized and celebrated.The workshop focused on two important themes—awareness about the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act and achieving work–family balance. Sessions led by Deputy Director Mrs. Rishibha Singh Netam and Field Director Mrs. Rakhi Nanda encouraged participants to value their rights, well-being, and personal growth alongside their professional responsibilities. The event left a lasting impact, inspiring women to prioritize themselves and reaffirming that empowered women build stronger institutions and more resilient conservation landscapes.

WINGS OVER WATER:

Safeguarding Satpura's Wetland Heritage

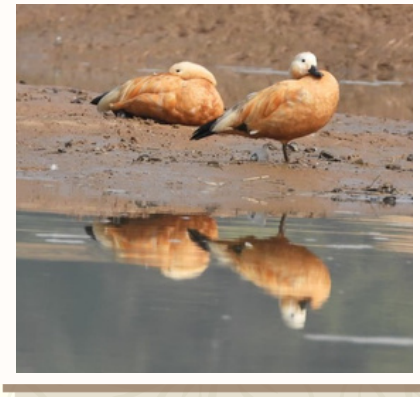


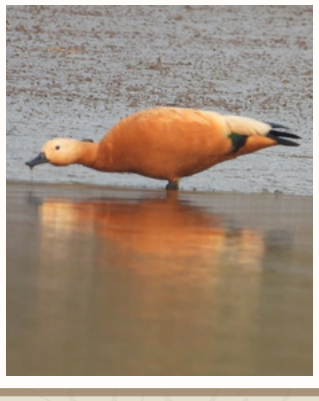
The wetlands of Satpura are vibrant havens of biodiversity, supporting not only birds but entire aquatic ecosystems. Through the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC)—one of the world's largest citizen-science programmes—Satpura Tiger Reserve assessed the health of its wetlands and documented their rich avifaunal diversity. During AWC 2026, teams surveyed 32 wetlands across the landscape and recorded nearly 140 species of water-associated birds.

Waterbirds are sensitive indicators of ecosystem health, reflecting changes in water quality, habitat condition, and climate. The census brought together forest staff, citizen scientists, birders, and local communities in a shared effort to document and conserve Satpura's natural heritage. The findings will guide future wetland management and long-term monitoring, ensuring that Satpura's rivers, reservoirs, and marshes continue to sustain life for generations to come.











ANUBHUTI:

Where Young Minds Meet the Wild



For over a decade, Anubhuti, a flagship programme of the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department implemented through the Madhya Pradesh Eco-Tourism Development Board, has been inspiring young minds to connect with nature. At Satpura Tiger Reserve, the programme offers students from government schools a rare opportunity to experience forests firsthand and understand their invaluable role in sustaining life.

During 2025–26, Anubhuti camps across seven ranges engaged 1,762 participants, including 1,674 students and 88 teachers from 17 schools. Guided by the themes “मैं भी बाघ”, “हम हैं बदलाव”, and “धरती के दूत”, children explored the wilderness through safaris, nature trails, and interactive activities. They learned about Satpura’s iconic wildlife—from tigers and leopards to gaur, barasingha, and birds—and embraced the principles of Mission LiFE: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. By sowing the seeds of curiosity and stewardship, Anubhuti is nurturing a generation of future conservation ambassadors.

RECONNECTING WITH NATURE:

Strengthening Bonds Beyond the Workplace



For employees who work tirelessly behind office desks, stepping into the forests of Satpura can be a truly rejuvenating experience. In a unique initiative on work–life balance, Satpura Tiger Reserve organized an exposure visit and family interaction programme for its ministerial staff and their families, offering them an opportunity to reconnect with nature and with one another.

A special work–family life session brought entire families together, helping spouses better understand the demands of forestry service and the commitment required for conservation. Children learned about healthy lifestyles and the importance of reducing screen time, with one young participant even deciding to stop using television or mobile phones while eating meals. The programme highlighted a simple truth: behind every dedicated employee stands a supportive family, and nurturing both is essential for building stronger institutions and enduring conservation success. The program still continues for the frontline staff and their families.

GUARDIANS OF THE SKY:

Raptors of Satpura



Raptors—the apex predators of the skies—are among the most important indicators of a healthy ecosystem. In collaboration with WWF-India, Satpura Tiger Reserve undertook a systematic survey of raptor diversity across its forests, grasslands, wetlands, and riverine habitats. The study recorded 36 species of raptors, including Critically Endangered vultures such as the Red-headed Vulture and Indian Vulture, reaffirming Satpura's significance as a refuge for threatened birds of prey.

The presence of iconic species like the Crested Serpent Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Osprey, and Peregrine Falcon reflects the ecological richness and healthy prey base of the Satpura landscape. By establishing a scientific baseline for long-term monitoring, the study will strengthen future conservation planning and ensure that these majestic guardians of the sky continue to soar over Satpura's forests.

ROARING ACROSS BORDERS:

IBCA Rally Comes to Satpura

As part of India's global vision for big cat conservation, the awareness rally of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) reached Pachmarhi in Satpura Tiger Reserve, highlighting the importance of protecting the world's iconic big cats. An initiative of the Government of India inspired by the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the IBCA seeks to strengthen international cooperation for the conservation of tigers, leopards, lions, snow leopards, and other big cats.

Through interactive programmes at Bison Lodge, educational institutions, tourist destinations, and the National Centre of Bharat Scouts and Guides, the rally sensitized students, tourists, and citizens about the ecological significance of big cats and responsible stewardship of nature. By hosting this global initiative, Satpura Tiger Reserve reaffirmed its role not only as a sanctuary for wildlife but also as a centre for conservation awareness, inspiring future generations to become guardians of the planet's magnificent big cats.



"Satpura is not merely a tiger reserve
it is a living landscape of science, communities, and hope."