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Tadoba

D I A R I E S

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



Omkar Phatak

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur

TOMORROW'S GUARDIANS OF TADOB

Dear Reader,

Conservation begins not inside a protected forest but within the hearts and minds of people who share their lives with it. At Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, we have always believed that the future of wildlife lies in nurturing a generation that understands, values and protects nature. Guided by this philosophy, our flagship initiative "Chala Majhya Tadobala" (Come to My Tadoba) under the Nisarganubhav programme has evolved into a powerful movement that transforms the forest into a living classroom. For thousands of children living around Tadoba, many of whom had never explored the wilderness that exists just beyond their villages, the programme offers an opportunity to experience the forest not as a place of fear, but as a source of wonder, knowledge and shared heritage. It is this emotional connection that inspires lasting conservation values.

During the past year, 4,270 students from 163 schools participated in guided jungle safaris and structured conservation education activities under this initiative. Before entering the forest, students engaged in classroom sessions, biodiversity awareness programmes, poster campaigns, educational films, interactive games and discussions on forests, wildlife and coexistence. Scientific learning was complemented by experiential education, allowing children to observe biodiversity in its natural setting. The impact has been remarkable. Post-programme assessments showed that students' knowledge of local flora and fauna increased from 30 per cent to 70 per cent, while positive perceptions towards forests and wildlife improved from 38 per cent to 62 per cent. These encouraging outcomes reaffirm that meaningful conservation education is best achieved when learning extends beyond textbooks into nature itself.

One of the most inspiring outcomes of the

programme has been the selection of 20 Wildlife Ambassadors, representing ten Ambassador Schools, with equal participation of boys and girls. These young ambassadors are more than programme participants—they are the voices of conservation within their schools, families and villages. They will carry forward messages of peaceful coexistence, responsible stewardship and respect for wildlife, encouraging their communities to become active partners in conservation. This initiative has been made possible through the collective efforts of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Conservation Foundation, the Bombay Natural History Society, and the support of the Born Free Foundation, UK. Together, we have demonstrated that empowering children is one of the most effective investments we can make for the future of biodiversity.

As we look ahead, our vision extends beyond today's achievements. Every child who walks through the forests of Tadoba carries home memories that can shape attitudes for a lifetime. We are committed to expanding Chala Majhya Tadobala across the Greater Tadoba Landscape so that many more young minds experience the magic of the forest and understand their responsibility towards protecting it. By nurturing these young Wildlife Ambassadors today, we are ensuring that the forests of tomorrow will continue to echo with the sounds of thriving wildlife, sustained by informed, compassionate and conservation-conscious communities.



Dr. Prabhu Nath Shukla (IFS)

Conservator of Forests & Field Director, TATR
Executive Director, TATR Conservation Foundation

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SURVIVAL IN THE WILD

The forest has its own rules, its own silence, and its own stories. Every safari offers the possibility of an unforgettable sighting, but only a handful leave an everlasting impression. As a wildlife photographer, I have spent years observing nature through my lens, yet nothing prepared me for the extraordinary chain of events I witnessed during a morning safari in the Navegaon Buffer of Tadoba in May 2026. In just a few hours, I saw the beauty, drama and harsh reality of the wild unfold before my eyes.

Our gypsy was the first vehicle to enter the forest that morning. The cool air, golden rays of the rising sun and the calls of birds created a magical atmosphere. Excitement filled the vehicle as we ventured deeper into the jungle. Within half an hour, we encountered a magnificent male tiger popularly known as Trishul. For nearly ninety minutes, we watched him patrol his territory with remarkable confidence and grace. Spending so much time with such a majestic tiger is a dream for any wildlife enthusiast and photographer.

After Trishul disappeared into the forest, we headed towards the Alizanja Zone in search of a famous tigress lovingly called Chandani. Along the way, we spotted a pack of wild dogs, moving together with remarkable discipline. Their presence suggested that hunting activity had taken place nearby, but none of us imagined what awaited us ahead.

Near the Kini Chua water body, we found Chandani standing beside the road. She was staring intently at a large tree. As we followed her gaze, we were astonished to see an adult leopard perched high on a branch. What we didn't know was there was a leopard cub under the tree! Nearby lay a severely injured deer,

apparently caught in a struggle involving the leopard and the dholes. Suddenly, the forest became the stage for a rare encounter involving multiple predators.

What happened next was both dramatic and heartbreaking. Chandani asserted her dominance over the area, confronting the leopard beneath the tree. In the chaos, the leopard's cub was killed, while the frightened adult escaped higher into the branches. After several tense moments, the leopard finally leapt to safety and disappeared into the forest, chased briefly by the tigress. Although it survived, the loss of its cub was a stark reminder that survival in the wild comes at a heavy price.

The drama was not over. Chandani returned calmly, paused near the cub, and then walked into the nearby water body to cool herself. Meanwhile, the injured deer continued its desperate struggle to escape. Guided by its scent, Chandani swiftly caught up with it, ended its suffering, lifted the carcass effortlessly in her jaws and disappeared into the forest.

As we drove back towards the gate, silence filled our gypsy. In a single safari, we had witnessed a dominant male tiger, a pack of dholes, a leopard, a leopard cub, a tigress and an intense struggle for survival. It was a powerful reminder that the jungle is neither cruel nor compassionate—it simply follows nature's timeless laws. For a wildlife photographer, moments like these are impossible to forget. They reveal that behind every breathtaking image lies a story of resilience, instinct and survival, making the wild both beautiful and brutally honest.

Chaitanya Pande
Engineering Student, Nagpur

A VISIT TO REMEMBER

Having been fortunate enough to experience wildlife safaris in several countries over the years, I can honestly say that my visit to Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in June 2026 was one of the finest safari experiences I have ever had.

From the moment we arrived, it was evident that the Reserve is managed with great professionalism. The Forest Department officials and the entire team were exceptionally well organised, methodical, and clearly passionate about both wildlife conservation and ensuring visitors have a rewarding experience. Their dedication was reflected in every aspect of our safari.

The wildlife did not disappoint. Across our five safaris, we were incredibly fortunate to enjoy 16 tiger sightings—far more than we had ever imagined possible. The highlight was witnessing a mating pair of tigers, a rare and unforgettable experience. We also had sightings of three sloth bears, a pack of wild dogs, and many other fascinating animals and birds that make Tadoba such a remarkable destination.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone at TATR for their



dedication, hard work, and warm hospitality. The memories and photographs I brought home will stay with me for a lifetime, but more importantly, so will my admiration for the people who work tirelessly to protect this extraordinary wilderness for future generations.

I look forward to returning to Tadoba one day.

Rivindu Nanayakkara

Retired Banker, Colombo, Sri Lanka

THE LAST WALK TOGETHER

The rain hadn't let up since dawn. Moharli's dirt tracks had turned to rust-red rivers, and every leaf in the forest seemed to be dripping in rhythm. It was the final safari of the season — one last chance before the gates of Tadoba would close for four long monsoon months.

Then, through the grey curtain of rain, they appeared. T-163, popularly known as Collarwali walked ahead, calm and assured, patrolling ground that had been hers for years. Behind her, a sub-adult cub padded along, tongue out, still carrying that unmistakable softness of youth not yet ready to let go.

For a full hour, they simply were — walking, pausing, scent-marking, staring straight down the track as if posing for a farewell portrait. Neither of us in the jeep spoke much. Some moments don't need commentary.

It struck me only later what we were really watching. This litter, born over two years ago, was now in its



separation phase — that quiet, inevitable unravelling of a tigress's family as cubs grow into independence and rivals. By October, when Tadoba reopens, mother and cub will likely never be seen side by side again. Different territories, different paths.

So this wasn't just a sighting. It was a closing chapter — the last known frame of a bond written entirely in stripes and silence, dissolving into the rain, into the forest, into time.

Prathamesh Bendre

Brand Consultant, Nashik



THE ARMY AND THE ASSASSIN-1

Whenever we think of big cats, two legendary predators immediately come to mind: the African lion and the Asian tiger. While they are close genetic cousins capable of growing to similar massive sizes, they live radically different social lives.

Lions are famously social, living in family groups called prides that can number anywhere from ten to thirty individuals. They groom each other, sleep in big heaps, and hunt as a coordinated team. Tigers, on the other hand, are the ultimate introverts. Once a cub reaches adulthood, it will spend the rest of its life as a solitary wanderer, fiercely guarding its territory and hunting entirely alone.

Why is the "King of the Jungle" a social team player, while the actual jungle monarch is a strict loner? The answer isn't about personality; it is driven by the ruthless laws of evolutionary biology and the landscape they call home.

To understand how a predator behaves, you first have to look at the geometry of its dining room.

In the open African savanna, prey animals like wildebeest and zebra live in massive, sprawling herds. In this open environment, there is no place to hide. A single lion cannot easily sneak up on a herd of a thousand watchful eyes in short grass. Therefore, lions evolved to use team tactics to drive prey into waiting traps.

Now, transport yourself to the dense, tangled forests of India. The landscape here is a thick labyrinth of bamboo, teak, thorny undergrowth, and dry, crunchy leaves. Jungle prey like spotted deer and sambar live in much smaller, scattered groups, constantly

on high alert in the dark undergrowth.

Hunting in a tiger's domain requires absolute, pinpoint stealth, what biologists call Ambush Hunting Mechanics. To catch a deer, a tiger must become an invisible ghost, silently stalking within ten meters before launching a lightning-fast explosive charge.

Imagine if ten tigers tried to hunt a deer together in a dense forest. They would constantly trip over each other. One cat would step on a dry twig, another would brush against a noisy bamboo clump, and their collective scent would saturate the wind. In the jungle, ten hunters are not better than one, they are a liability.

Hunting, however, is only the beginning. Once a cat makes a kill, it has to keep it.

In the African savanna, there is nowhere to hide your food. Lions share the landscape with spotted hyenas, which live in massive clans of up to eighty individuals. A lone lion can easily be surrounded, exhausted, and robbed by a large clan of hyenas. Lions need the numbers of a pride to intimidate massive mobs of scavengers.

The tiger does not have this problem. While they share the jungle with pack-hunters like wild dogs (dholes), a tiger uses the forest as its shield. It doesn't have to defend a carcass in the wide open; it simply drags the heavy kill deep into impenetrable brush where scavengers cannot easily see or smell it.

Shaillendra Singh Deora
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



DARKNESS REVEALS A SECRET! When darkness falls, Tadoba reveals its hidden treasures. A rare camera trap image captures the secretive Striped Hyena silently patrolling the buffer forest.

THE WORLD'S SMALLEST WILD CAT

The Rusty-spotted Cat (*Prionailurus rubiginosus*) is the smallest wild cat in the world, weighing barely 1–1.6 kg—about the size of a domestic kitten. Found in India and Sri Lanka, it inhabits forests, scrublands and grasslands. This elusive, mostly nocturnal hunter is rarely seen, making every sighting a special one. The species is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List, with an estimated global population of fewer than 10,000 mature individuals.

Despite its tiny size, the Rusty-spotted Cat is a skilled predator. Its soft grey fur is beautifully marked with rusty-brown spots and streaks, while its large eyes and agile body help it hunt rodents, birds, lizards and insects with remarkable precision. It is an excellent climber but spends much of its time searching for prey on the ground under the cover of darkness.

Although still found in parts of India, the Rusty-spotted Cat faces growing threats from habitat loss, agricultural expansion and road development. It occasionally comes into conflict with people when it preys on poultry, and in some areas it is also hunted. Protecting forests and reducing human disturbance are essential to ensuring that this tiny yet extraordinary feline continues to thrive in the wild.



MYSTERY OF A HANGING TAIL

When the Kolara Buffer Safari Gate opened on 18 November 2014, I had the privilege of joining as a safari guide from the very first day. Since then, the forests of Tadoba have become my second home. Over the years, I have witnessed countless memorable moments, but one incident from the summer of May 2016 remains etched in my mind forever.

It was an afternoon safari with a couple who had travelled to Tadoba hoping to experience the thrill of the wild. The heat was intense, and the forest seemed unusually quiet. We drove through promising areas, but there were no alarm calls, no fresh movement, and not even a glimpse of a predator. Just when it seemed like another silent afternoon, I noticed something on the dusty road—a fresh set of leopard pugmarks. I stopped the vehicle and pointed them out to my guests. They were fascinated. The husband smiled and said, "We've seen tigers before, but never a leopard."

I explained that leopards are among the most elusive animals in the forest, masters of camouflage that often remain unseen even when they are very close. They eagerly asked if there was any chance of finding it. I replied, "We can certainly try, but it will take patience." They agreed without hesitation.

I began tracking the pugmarks, carefully following every footprint until they led us to an artificial waterhole. There, the trail suddenly vanished. I knew there were no other water sources nearby, and in the scorching summer heat, a leopard would most likely remain close to water while resting. Trusting my instinct, I asked the driver to park the gypsy beneath the shade of a large Crocodile Bark tree overlooking the waterhole. Minutes turned into an hour. The forest remained silent. There were no alarm calls, no movement, nothing to suggest a leopard was anywhere nearby. Thankfully, my guests were true lovers of nature. Instead of growing impatient, they enjoyed watching birds while I spoke about the surrounding trees, plants and the hidden life of the forest.

Seventy-five minutes had passed. Safari time was almost over, and we had to begin our return journey. I informed the couple that it was time to leave. They looked disappointed. The wife requested, "Brother,



AI Generated

can we please wait just five more minutes?" I smiled and agreed, though deep inside I had almost given up hope. Sitting beside the driver, I stretched my arms, tilted my head back and yawned. As I looked up, I noticed something hanging from the branch directly above us. At first, I assumed it was the tail of a langur. But within seconds, my heart skipped a beat. The tail was thicker, beautifully spotted and unmistakably feline. I quietly asked the driver to move the vehicle a few feet forward. As the angle changed, the mystery unfolded before our eyes.

There, stretched comfortably along the thick branch, lay the leopard we had been searching for all afternoon. It was fast asleep, completely relaxed, with its long tail dangling almost directly above our heads. The couple stared in stunned silence before breaking into wide smiles of disbelief. We had spent more than an hour waiting for the leopard to appear, never imagining that it had been resting above us the entire time. That unforgettable afternoon taught me one of the greatest lessons of guiding in Tadoba—the forest always reveals its secrets, but only to those who have the patience to wait and the humility to keep looking.

Gajanan Shankar Sidam

Guide, Kolara Gate, TATR (Buffer)

Contribute to 'Tadoba Diaries'

Are you a forest department staff, tourist, guide, driver, working with a resort, managing a home stay or a community member from TATR vicinity? Do you want to join our effort to spread awareness on forest and wildlife conservation through 'Tadoba Diaries'? Please share your interesting photographs (not less than 4 MB) and experiences (not more than 250 words) on tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com. Your photograph/experience must be related to TATR only. The best content will be published with due credit.



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RED PIERROT

One of the smallest butterflies found in India, the Red Pierrot (*Talicada nyseus*) is a dazzling blend of white, black, and crimson. Despite its striking appearance, this tiny butterfly is often overlooked. Around the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, it can occasionally be seen fluttering close to the ground in gardens, village landscapes, forest edges, and rocky habitats where its host plants flourish.

A Specialist with Succulent Tastes

Unlike many butterflies that depend on forest trees, the Red Pierrot has evolved a unique relationship with succulent plants of the family Crassulaceae, particularly Kalanchoe and Bryophyllum. Females lay their eggs on the fleshy leaves of these plants, and the caterpillars tunnel into the leaf tissue to feed. Their feeding leaves distinctive blotches, making their presence easy to detect. This close association is a fascinating example of the delicate ecological links between insects and native vegetation.

Big Ecological Role

The Red Pierrot remains active throughout the year, with its numbers increasing during and after the monsoon when fresh vegetation is plentiful. Adults visit tiny flowers for nectar, playing an important role in pollination as they move from bloom to bloom. Although not currently threatened, local populations can decline if their host plants disappear due to habitat alteration. Protecting native flora within and around Tadoba not only benefits iconic wildlife like tigers but also safeguards these tiny pollinators that quietly sustain the forest ecosystem.

- Yogita N. D. Chhapekar
Biologist, Nagpur



CC Wikipedia

UKSHI

At first glance, Ukshi (*Calycotris floribunda*), locally known as Kukdi or Kukud-ranjhi, may not appear to be a plant worth celebrating. This vigorous woody climber sprawls over shrubs and small trees, often gripping and covering them so densely that many consider it a nuisance. Yet, in the forests of Tadoba, this seemingly controversial creeper quietly plays an important ecological role, making it one of the reserve's most valuable understory plants.

A Lifeline in the Summer Heat

Tadoba's summers are harsh, and Ukshi becomes a welcome refuge for wildlife. Its dense foliage provides much-needed shade and shelter for deer, tigers and countless other forest inhabitants seeking relief from the blazing sun. For generations, people living around the forest have also benefited from this remarkable climber. During periods of water scarcity, sections of its thick stems have traditionally been cut to access the water stored within, making Ukshi a natural source of hydration when streams and pools run dry.

More than Just a Climber

Ukshi climbs over surrounding vegetation to reach sunlight, adding structure and complexity to the forest understorey. Between February and May, it produces clusters of tiny, fragrant, yellowish-green flowers, sometimes called Paper Flowers. Although each flower is small, together they create a beautiful display, reflected in the species name *floribunda*, meaning "abundantly flowering." These are followed by distinctive five-winged fruits that spin gently to the ground like miniature helicopters, helping disperse the seeds.

- Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist, Nagpur



ICE APPLE MUSHROOM

The Ice Apple Mushroom (*Trichaleurina javanica*) is a distinctive cup-shaped fungus that can often blend naturally with the forest floor because of its earthy brown coloration, resembling the surrounding soil, dry leaves, and decaying organic matter. Its broad, irregular shape and thick, fleshy appearance resemble the foot of an elephant. Hence it is also referred to as the Elephant Foot Fungus.

Small Natural Vessel

The outer surface is dark, slightly velvety, and soil-like in appearance, while the inner surface is comparatively lighter and forms the spore-producing layer. As the mushroom matures, the cup gradually opens out, revealing a soft, jelly-like interior with a rubbery texture. In some specimens, the cup may also contain a clear, odourless fluid, giving it the appearance of a small natural vessel holding water. In the Tadoba landscape, this species is frequently observed near the base of Tamarind trees, particularly around decaying woody material.

Ecological Importance and Role

The Mushroom forms part of the forest food web by providing a food source for small organisms such as larvae, snails, and other invertebrates. These organisms, in turn, become prey for larger forest animals, linking the fungus to different levels of the ecosystem. Its cup-shaped structure may also provide a microhabitat for tiny organisms. It contributes to the decomposition of organic matter and nutrient cycling. It is also recognized as a wild edible mushroom, highlighting its ecological and ethnomycological importance.

- Muhammed Suhail N A
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



HOUSE SPARROW

The House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) is one of the world's most familiar birds and a constant companion of human settlements. Commonly seen across the buffer villages of TATR, this cheerful little bird fills the air with its lively "cheep-cheep" calls, reminding us that even ordinary species are an essential part of the region's biodiversity.

Thrives Alongside People

Measuring just 14–16 cm in length, the House Sparrow is a compact bird with a stout, conical bill perfectly adapted for feeding on seeds and grains. Males are easily recognised by their grey crown, chestnut-brown back, white cheeks, and distinctive black bib, while females and juveniles have a softer brown plumage with darker streaks and a pale eyebrow stripe. Originally native to Eurasia and North Africa, the species has spread across much of the world by living alongside humans.

Guardian of the Rural Landscape

House Sparrows are highly social birds, usually moving in noisy flocks. Although seeds and grains make up most of their diet, they also feed on insects during the breeding season, providing protein-rich food to their chicks and helping control insect populations. They nest in cavities such as holes in walls, roof eaves, crevices, nest boxes, and dense shrubs, where both parents raise several broods each year. While globally listed as Least Concern, local populations have declined in some urban areas due to modern architecture and shrinking green spaces.

- Rundan Katkar
Range Forest Officer, Kolasa, TATR

BRICS Delegation Visit to Tadoba



A high-level delegation of Ministers and senior officials from the BRICS nations visited Tadoba and experienced its remarkable wilderness during an insightful safari. The delegation gained valuable insights into Tadoba's science-based conservation practices, habitat management strategies, and community-centric initiatives. They appreciated the Reserve's integrated approach to wildlife conservation, which successfully balances ecological stewardship with active community participation, making Tadoba a model for sustainable conservation and responsible ecotourism.

School Chale Hum



School Chale Hum is an inspiring initiative by Matrushakti, Sitarampeth, reflecting the unwavering commitment of women towards education and community development. Through their collective efforts in nurturing young minds and encouraging learning, the initiative is helping build a more informed, empowered, and brighter future for the next generation. It stands as a testament to the transformative role of community participation in shaping an inclusive and educated society for the children of tomorrow.

Devendra Van - A Green Legacy for the Future



On the occasion of the birthday of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnavis, the Buffer Forest Division of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve launched the "Devendra Van" initiative, pledging to plant 11,000 native trees, including bamboo and indigenous fruit-bearing species. The initiative aims to strengthen biodiversity, enhance wildlife habitats, support groundwater conservation, and promote long-term environmental sustainability through active participation of forest officials, local communities, students, NGOs, and nature enthusiasts.

Science-Led Conservation - Chital Translocation



The successful completion of the first phase of the spotted deer (chital) translocation from Jamni Grasslands to Kolsa Grassland marks a significant milestone in Tadoba's science-based conservation efforts. A total of 30 chital were safely relocated using advanced Boma Technology with zero injuries and zero fatalities. This initiative strengthens the prey base, enhances habitat carrying capacity, and contributes to the long-term conservation of tigers and the ecological balance of the landscape.

School Bus for Remote Village Students



The school bus initiative for students from remote villages is a meaningful step towards ensuring equitable access to education and building stronger, more inclusive communities. By providing safe and reliable transportation, the initiative creates opportunities for young learners to pursue their education without barriers. It reinforces the belief that sustainable development begins with investing in the well-being, education, and future aspirations of children living in remote forest landscapes.

Empowering Local Youth



Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, in collaboration with MITCON and SBI Foundation, successfully completed the 22nd batch of its Solar Technician and Nursing Training Programme at the Wildlife Academy Training Centre, Pangdi. All 60 students secured 100% job placements in reputed institutions across Nashik, Nagpur, and Hyderabad. The programme reflects Tadoba's continued commitment to creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local youth through skill

Healthy Communities, Stronger Conservation



Through the Mobile Health Unit initiative, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, in collaboration with the Urvi Ashok Piramal Foundation and Conservation Wildlands Trust, has provided doorstep primary healthcare services to more than 30,000 villagers across 29 remote buffer villages. By ensuring regular medical care, health awareness, and free essential medicines, the programme is improving community well-being while strengthening partnerships between local communities and wildlife conservation, reaffirming that healthy communities are integral to sustainable conservation efforts.

STAR OF THE MONTH JUNE 2026

Let's celebrate the dedication and impact of our frontline staff who go above and beyond to protect our forests and wildlife. It is a token of appreciation for their outstanding service, vigilance, and commitment to conservation on the ground.



R. B. Waghare
Forest Guard, Range: Tadoba (Core)

- Regular foot patrolling according to M-Stripe data.
- Removed encroachments in Ghasari beat.
- Fruit tree plantation in Tamasi beat and nursery in compartment no 115.
- Completed all works in the KRAs.



M. K. Naglot
Forest Guard, Range: Palasgaon (Buffer)

- Protected forests and wildlife in Vihirgaon-2 beat
- 355.98 Km patrolling as per M-Stripe
- Public awareness to avoid man-wildlife conflict
- Completed all assigned tasks in time



MOMENTUM

The jungle doesn't introduce itself loudly. It doesn't perform for you. It simply exists. It asks nothing from you except your attention.

It asks you to listen.

And when you finally do, the voice is beautiful.

This is what happened to me when I stopped trying to conquer nature and simply believed it exists around me.

The more time I spent there, the more I found myself thinking about Momentum.

We spend our lives believing we are moving ahead.

Believing we are achieving something simply because we are constantly moving.

But in the wild, I realised that movement and momentum are not the same thing.

In our world, momentum is often an illusion.

In the jungle, momentum is everything. Life continues because everything moves, even without a purpose. Every sunrise begins the search. Every sunset resets it. There is no pause. No distraction. Only the instinct to continue.

Not because it is about movement, but it is about the force that keeps every living thing connected to the next moment.

I came hoping to photograph wildlife.

I left wondering who was actually being observed.

One false look; one false move and you are dead

meat.

Every sunrise resets that equation. Every sunset completes it. Life. Death. Survival. Again.

Animals don't spend their days proving themselves. They don't compare. They don't perform. They survive because survival is enough. We, on the other hand, were given something different.

We were given a choice. We don't live only to survive. We live to feel. To unfeel. To feel again. Perhaps that is our greatest gift. The more time I spent watching animals, the less I thought about their strength and the more I admired their silence. Their decency to maintain habitat.

To wake with the sun and sleep with the sun. The water their breath, the air their prayer and each other their fuel.

Maybe we never needed much more than that either. We built our concrete palaces, while they kept their kingdom, we crowned ourselves rulers of a world we barely understand, and then return on safari hoping to catch a glimpse of something we secretly envy.

Not the tiger.

Freedom.

Maybe we were never meant to stand above nature. Maybe we were only ever meant to stand within it. To coexist. To return to the same earth. To become part of the same story again.

Aayushi Patel

Creative Producer, Mumbai



THE LESSER KNOWN KHAKI #17

We implement the FOREST LAWS. They are not ANTI-DEVELOPEMENT or ANTI-PEOPLE but only PRO-FOREST!!! What matters is protecting the scarce resource that remains...

Hope you get this...
All this is only to PROTECT that is dying!!!



(Piyusha Jagtap (IFS))

LESSER KNOWN KHAKI

Do you want to know what work the foresters do?

This series will take you to the world of forest warriors in Khaki.

Piyusha Jagtap (IFS)

Forest laws are perceived as hurdles in the 'developmental projects' but they are necessary to conserve that is left. We as humans make the laws, we as humans might perceive them differently but we know they are needed! Else the tragedy is not far away!



Ready for a jungle challenge?

Take this quiz and see how much you know about forests and wildlife?

- Which deer species is the largest found in the forests of Tadoba?
 - Barking Deer
 - Spotted Deer
 - Blackbuck
 - Sambar
- Which bird is known for stitching leaves together to make its nest?
 - Sunbird
 - Tailorbird
 - Weaver Bird
 - Parakeet
- Which wild cat is the best swimmer?
 - Leopard
 - Fishing Cat
 - Jungle Cat
 - Rusty-spotted Cat
- Which animal is most active during dawn and dusk?
 - Nocturnal Animal
 - boreal Animal
 - Crepuscular Animal
 - Aquatic Animal
- What is a group of elephants called?
 - Herd
 - Pack
 - Troop
 - Clan

Check page no. 15 for correct answers.

JUNGLE DETECTIVE

Do you want to be a Jungle Detective?
Solve the following puzzles and check your knowledge.

GUESS WHO?

THE GENTLE ACROBAT

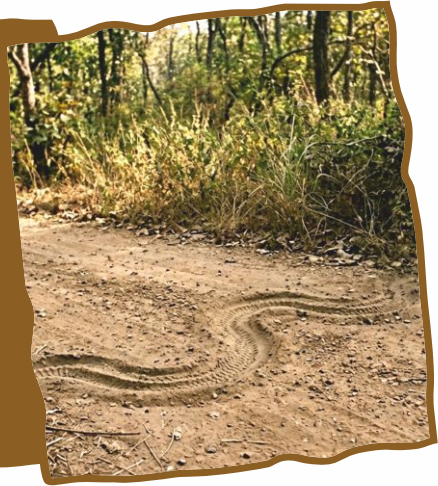
Long-tailed leaper dressed in grey,
Through towering trees I spend my day.
Black-faced watcher, calm and wise,
Always alert with curious eyes.

My little ones cling tight to me,
As I jump from branch to branch with glee.
A playful primate wild and free,
Can you guess who I might be?

TRACK THE TRAIL

Who Walked This Way?

A winding trail cuts gently across the sandy forest floor.
No legs, no paws—only smooth curves in the dust.
Bird calls suddenly stopped nearby.
Fresh scales glimmer faintly beside a rock crevice.
Silent and cautious, the traveller slipped away unseen.
Fear followed long after the movement disappeared.



MATCH-UP

WHO EATS WHAT?

Who Leaves This Sign?

Animals

1. Tiger



2. Sloth Bear



3. Sambar Deer



4. Porcupine



5. Elephant



Sign

A. Large dung piles

B. Quills

C. Antlers shed on forest floor

D. Broken termite mound

E. Scratch marks on tree

Check page no. 15 for correct answers.



Bring this dancing peacock
to life with colours!
Let your imagination
run wild!

WILD WISDOM

1-D, 2-B, 3-B, 4-C, 5-A

GUESS WHO?

Langur



TRACK THE TRAIL



Indian Python

MATCH-UP:

Animals

1. Tiger
2. Sloth Bear
3. Sambar Deer
4. Porcupine
5. Elephant

Sign

- A. Large dung piles
- B. Quills
- C. Antlers shed on forest floor
- D. Broken termite mound
- E. Scratch marks on tree

ONE ROAD, TWO GIANTS!

A tiger crosses the forest track as a herd of gaur watches every move. No panic, no chase—just a timeless moment of mutual respect between two of Tadoba's most powerful inhabitants.

[[Ganesh Joshi

STRENGTH VS. STRATEGY!

When survival hangs by a heartbeat, every second counts. A pack of dholes surrounds a pair of sambar deer in one of nature's most dramatic encounters.

[[Indrajit Madav