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Hopes fading for future of Indian tigers

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11th April, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Hopes fading for future of Indian tigers

The survival of the tiger in India is doomed, according to Indian conservationists, who say hope is fading fast for the big cat. They say an increase in poaching and a non-caring government are the final nails in the coffin for what is India's national symbol. This is in contrast to a successful conservation initiative started in 1973 called Project Tiger. This scheme had the full backing of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and managed to double the number of tigers in the wild. However, in recent years, enthusiasm for the project has dropped as government ministers have focused more on the economy. The result is a rather shameful situation in which all of the tigers in India's premier wildlife reserve, Sariska in Rajasthan, had been killed by 2005. There are now only 1,200 of the majestic beasts on the whole subcontinent.

Valmik Thapar, a well-known tiger conservationist said in a BBC documentary that: "We are living with the last tigers of India." He said the Indian government was wholly responsible for the animal's survival, saying: "If the government wants to save tigers it can, if it doesn't want to save tigers, it'll allow them to go extinct." He added: "Never before in the history of this country has wildlife and forest governance been at such a low ebb.... It is inevitable that our tigers, leopards, lions and other wildlife will vanish." The BBC says two factors are behind the current poaching of India's tigers. One is the market for tiger bones, used in traditional Chinese medicine; the other is the demand for tiger skins, used in ceremonial dress in Tibet. The trade in tiger products is extremely lucrative. A tiger skin fetches up to \$20,000, while the bones fetch around \$3,000 per kilo.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M A TIGER: You are a tiger. Walk around the classroom and talk to the other "tigers" in your class. What's tiger life like? After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share and talk about what you heard.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

hopes / doom / conservation / poaching / big cats / the wild / enthusiasm / BBC / India / survival / extinction / wildlife / bones / Chinese medicine / tiger skin

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. ANIMAL PRODUCTS: With your partner(s), talk about these animal products. Rank them using this scale: 10 = the trade should be banned forever; 1 = I'd like to start selling this/these.

- tiger bones
- ivory
- whale meat
- alligator skin
- frogs' legs
- stuffed eagles
- seal fur
- beef

4. DOOMED: With your partner(s), talk about these headlines. Make a story about each headline. Swap partners and exchange stories. How possible is it they will come true?

- World's last elephant dies
- Scientists bring back small dinosaurs
- Tigers now as common as pigeons
- Whale overpopulation in the oceans – hunters allowed to kill millions
- Human race in crisis - Tenth anniversary since the last human birth
- Animals fight back

5. QUICK DEBATE: Have this quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think there's little point in saving tigers as they are doomed; students B think it is possible to save the tigers and their habitat. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

6. TIGER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with tigers. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. People are worried about the future of ten tigers lost in the jungle. T / F
- b. Many Indian tigers are being buried in human coffins in India. T / F
- c. India's ex Prime Minister Indira Gandhi championed the tiger. T / F
- d. There are only twelve hundred tigers left in India. T / F
- e. An Indian conservationist recommended living with tigers as pets. T / F
- f. The conservationist accused India of not caring about tigers. T / F
- g. The BBC says a demand for tiger bones is endangering the tiger. T / F
- h. Tiger bones fetch up to \$3,000 a kilo and are very lucrative. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| a. doomed | magnificent |
| b. poaching | support |
| c. initiative | profitable |
| d. backing | strategy |
| e. majestic | disappear |
| f. wholly | unavoidable |
| g. vanish | ill-fated |
| h. inevitable | sell for |
| i. lucrative | entirely |
| j. fetch | illegal hunting |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. hope is fading | conservation initiative |
| b. the final nails | dress in Tibet |
| c. This is in contrast to a successful | whole subcontinent |
| d. the full backing of | the current poaching |
| e. 1,200 of the majestic beasts on the | fetches up to \$20,000 |
| f. the Indian government was wholly | fast for the big cat |
| g. such a low | then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi |
| h. two factors are behind | responsible |
| i. used in ceremonial | ebb |
| j. A tiger skin | in the coffin |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Hopes fading for future of Indian tigers

The _____ of the tiger in India is doomed, according to Indian conservationists, who say hope is fading fast for the big cat. They say an increase in poaching and a non-caring government are the final _____ in the coffin for what is India's national _____. This is in contrast to a successful conservation initiative started in 1973 called Project Tiger. This scheme had the full _____ of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and managed to double the number of tigers in the wild. However, in recent years, _____ for the project has dropped as government ministers have focused more on the economy. The result is a rather _____ situation in which all of the tigers in India's premier wildlife reserve, Sariska in Rajasthan, had been killed by 2005. There are now only 1,200 of the _____ beasts on the whole _____.

Valmik Thapar, a well-known tiger conservationist said in a BBC documentary that: "We are living with the _____ tigers of India." He said the Indian government was _____ responsible for the animal's survival, saying: "If the government wants to save tigers it can, if it doesn't want to save tigers, it'll allow them to go _____." He added: "Never before in the history of this country has wildlife and forest _____ been at such a low ebb.... It is inevitable that our tigers, leopards, lions and other wildlife will _____." The BBC says two factors are behind the current poaching of India's tigers. One is the market for tiger bones, used in traditional Chinese medicine; the other is the demand for tiger skins, used in ceremonial _____ in Tibet. The trade in tiger products is extremely _____. A tiger skin fetches up to \$20,000, while the bones _____ around \$3,000 per kilo.

backing

nails

subcontinent

shameful

survival

enthusiasm

majestic

symbol

wholly

fetch

extinct

last

dress

vanish

lucrative

governance

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Hopes fading for future of Indian tigers

The _____ in India is doomed, according to Indian conservationists, who say hope is fading fast for the big cat. They say an increase in _____ government are the final nails in the coffin for what is India's national symbol. This is in contrast to a successful _____ 1973 called Project Tiger. This scheme had the full backing of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and managed to _____ tigers in the wild. However, in recent years, enthusiasm for the project has dropped as government ministers have _____ economy. The result is a rather shameful situation in which all of the tigers in India's premier wildlife reserve, Sariska in Rajasthan, had been killed by 2005. _____ 1,200 of the majestic beasts on the whole subcontinent.

Valmik Thapar, a well-known tiger conservationist said in a BBC documentary that: "We are living with _____." He said the Indian government was wholly responsible for the animal's survival, saying: "If the government wants to save tigers it can, if it doesn't want to save tigers, _____ extinct." He added: "Never before in the history of this country has wildlife and _____ such a low ebb... It is inevitable that our tigers, leopards, lions and other wildlife will vanish." The BBC says two factors are _____ India's tigers. One is the market for tiger bones, used in traditional Chinese medicine; the other is the demand for tiger skins, _____ Tibet. The trade in tiger products is extremely lucrative. A tiger _____ \$20,000, while the bones fetch around \$3,000 per kilo.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'tiger' and 'skin'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "TIGERS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about saving tigers and other animals from extinction.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• according• final• 1973• double• dropped• majestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• living• extinct• ebb• factors• traditional• fetches
--	--

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) Do you like tigers?
- c) How interested are you in animal conservation?
- d) Do you think there is much hope for India's tigers?
- e) If the tiger disappears, what will this say about mankind?
- f) Why do you think India's government is not concerned about its national symbol?
- g) Are there any animals that are endangered in your country?
- h) What do you think of the fact there are only 1,200 tigers in the whole of India?
- i) What do you think is needed for Indian politicians to once again care about the tiger?
- j) Whose responsibility do you think it is to save the tiger?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What images spring to mind when you think of tigers?
- c) Do you think it's possible for all big cats to become extinct?
- d) Do you think it's possible to breed enough tigers and introduce them in the wild?
- e) What do you think of poaching?
- f) What punishment should be given to people who trade in products from endangered species?
- g) If you saw tiger products for sale, what would you do?
- h) If you could make \$20,000 from the sale of a tiger skin, would you sell it?
- i) How can the world stop the trade in tiger products?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

TIGER MOVIE SCRIPT:

With your partner(s), plan the script/story for how the last tigers on earth were saved.... (or not). Use the table to help you:

Your ideas	Notes
Movie title	
Location	
Actors	
Opening scene	
Biggest action scene	
Turning point	
Message	
The End	

After you finish, compare stories with other groups. Suggest improvements. Vote on the best story.

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Hopes fading for future of Indian tigers

The survival of the tiger in India is doomed, (1) _____ to Indian conservationists, who say hope is fading fast for the big cat. They say an increase in poaching and a non-caring government are the final (2) _____ in the coffin for (3) _____ is India's national symbol. This is in contrast to a successful conservation initiative started in 1973 called Project Tiger. This scheme had the full backing of (4) _____ Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and managed to double the number of tigers in the wild. However, in recent years, enthusiasm for the project has dropped as government ministers have focused more on the economy. The result is a (5) _____ shameful situation in which all of the tigers in India's premier wildlife reserve, Sariska in Rajasthan, had been killed by 2005. There are now only 1,200 of the () _____ beasts on the whole subcontinent.

Valmik Thapar, a well-known tiger conservationist said in a BBC documentary that: "We are living with the (7) _____ tigers of India." He said the Indian government was (8) _____ responsible for the animal's survival, saying: "If the government wants to save tigers it can, if it doesn't want to save tigers, it'll allow them to (9) _____ extinct." He added: "Never before in the history of this country has wildlife and forest governance been at such a low ebb.... It is (10) _____ that our tigers, leopards, lions and other wildlife will vanish." The BBC says two factors are behind the current poaching of India's tigers. One is the market for tiger bones, used in traditional Chinese medicine; the other is the demand for tiger skins, used in ceremonial dress in Tibet. The trade in tiger products is extremely (11) _____. A tiger skin (12) _____ up to \$20,000, while the bones fetch around \$3,000 per kilo.

1. (a) according (b) in accord (c) accordance (d) accordion
2. (a) tails (b) sails (c) mails (d) nails
3. (a) it (b) this (c) that (d) what
4. (a) old (b) last (c) before (d) then
5. (a) farthest (b) rather (c) prefer (d) lather
6. (a) royal (b) highness (c) majestic (d) majesty
7. (a) last (b) list (c) lost (d) least
8. (a) wholly (b) wholesome (c) woolly (d) holy
9. (a) became (b) go (c) come (d) been
10. (a) inedible (b) inevitable (c) inefficient (d) ineligible
11. (a) lucrative (b) laxative (c) lubricant (d) lucky-dip
12. (a) fetching (b) fraught (c) fought (d) fetches

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about Bengal tigers. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. TIGER POSTER: Make a poster about different tigers around the world. Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the tiger and how endangered it is. In particular, write about what the world would be like without tigers. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the prime minister of India. Ask him/her three questions about why his country is not acting to save the tiger. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| a. doomed | ill-fated |
| b. poaching | illegal hunting |
| c. initiative | strategy |
| d. backing | support |
| e. majestic | magnificent |
| f. wholly | entirely |
| g. vanish | disappear |
| h. inevitable | unavoidable |
| i. lucrative | profitable |
| j. fetch | sell for |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. hope is fading | fast for the big cat |
| b. the final nails | in the coffin |
| c. This is in contrast to a successful | conservation initiative |
| d. the full backing of | then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi |
| e. 1,200 of the majestic beasts on the | whole subcontinent |
| f. the Indian government was wholly | responsible |
| g. such a low | ebb |
| h. two factors are behind | the current poaching |
| i. used in ceremonial | dress in Tibet |
| j. A tiger skin | fetches up to \$20,000 |

GAP FILL:

Hopes fading for future of Indian tigers

The **survival** of the tiger in India is doomed, according to Indian conservationists, who say hope is fading fast for the big cat. They say an increase in poaching and a non-caring government are the final **nails** in the coffin for what is India's national **symbol**. This is in contrast to a successful conservation initiative started in 1973 called Project Tiger. This scheme had the full **backing** of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and managed to double the number of tigers in the wild. However, in recent years, **enthusiasm** for the project has dropped as government ministers have focused more on the economy. The result is a rather **shameful** situation in which all of the tigers in India's premier wildlife reserve, Sariska in Rajasthan, had been killed by 2005. There are now only 1,200 of the **majestic** beasts on the whole **subcontinent**.

Valmik Thapar, a well-known tiger conservationist said in a BBC documentary that: "We are living with the **last** tigers of India." He said the Indian government was **wholly** responsible for the animal's survival, saying: "If the government wants to save tigers it can, if it doesn't want to save tigers, it'll allow them to go **extinct**." He added: "Never before in the history of this country has wildlife and forest **governance** been at such a low ebb.... It is inevitable that our tigers, leopards, lions and other wildlife will **vanish**." The BBC says two factors are behind the current poaching of India's tigers. One is the market for tiger bones, used in traditional Chinese medicine; the other is the demand for tiger skins, used in ceremonial **dress** in Tibet. The trade in tiger products is extremely **lucrative**. A tiger skin fetches up to \$20,000, while the bones **fetch** around \$3,000 per kilo.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - d 3 - d 4 - c 5 - b 6 - c 7 - a 8 - a 9 - b 10 - b 11 - a 12 - d