

Tiger countries agree to preserve big-cat habitats

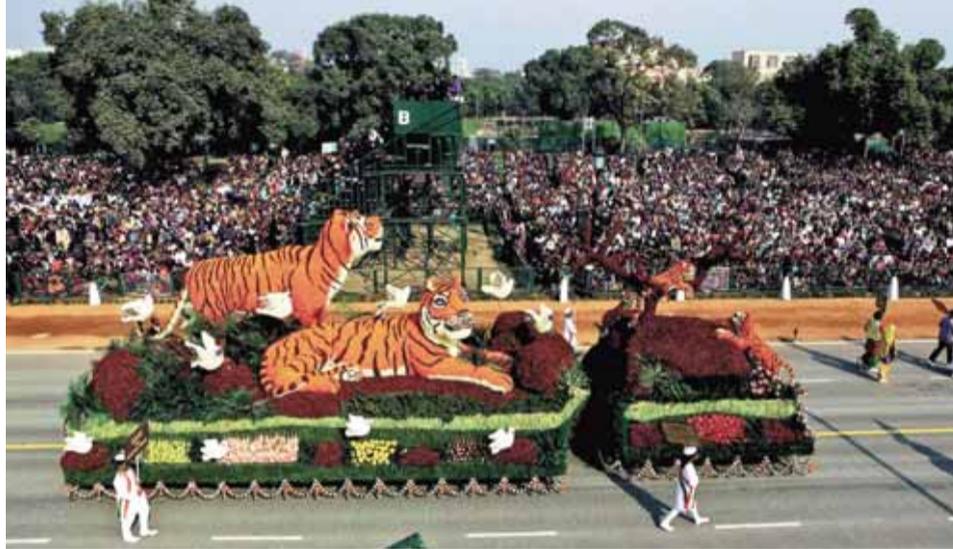
Countries with wild tiger populations have agreed to do more to protect tiger habitats that are shrinking drastically because of deforestation and urban sprawl, conservationists said yesterday.

Representatives from the 13 Asian countries with tigers, meeting this week in New Delhi, issued a resolution acknowledging that the forests in which tigers live are inherently valuable themselves and worthy of protection.

These forests can help preserve economic growth by safeguarding water supplies, improving air quality and providing homes for not only tigers but also birds, frogs and other mammals. "Before, there's always been this conflict of development versus conservation, as if countries had to choose," said Sejal Worah, the program director for World Wildlife Fund in India.

"But in this resolution, it clearly states that natural capital is important to the economy of a country," she said. "Countries understand that preserving tiger habitats does not compromise growth. And that's important. That's new."

The world's tiger countries are all in Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Malaysia, Myanmar, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam. India has the most by far, with about 2,500. None of the others have more than 500 and some have just a few.



A floral tableau by Central Public Works Department depicts the theme "Save Tigers" during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi, India. — AP

The goal

Many of the countries have growing human populations and fast-developing economies. By 2022, they want to double the world's wild tiger population from the all-time low of 3,200 hit in 2010. On Monday, conservation groups

announced that the world's tiger count had gone up to 3,890, according to 2014-15 survey data. That marked the first increase in the wild population census in more than a century. But that did not necessarily mean there were more tigers in the wild. The higher number may just

mean scientists are getting better at counting them, with more sophisticated survey methods including camera traps and DNA analysis of scat.

An actual increase in wild tiger populations would also be hard to reconcile with the fact that their habitat is shrinking so fast. In just the last five years, tigers lost a full 40 percent of their remaining natural habitat, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Cambodia this year declared its tiger population "functionally extinct," meaning it had no breeding tigers left in the wild. While in New Delhi this week, Cambodia's agriculture minister reportedly looked into repopulating the Southeast Asian country with Indian tigers.

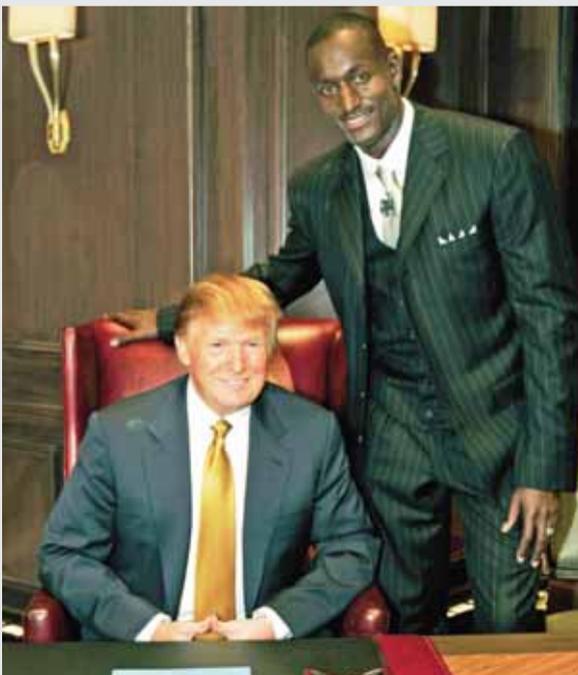
India is ready to help, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said. "India is willing to cooperate with any country which does not have or has lost its tiger population in the course of history," he said Thursday.

India, home to about two-thirds of the world's wild tigers, also agreed to strengthen controls against cross-border wildlife crimes, including trafficking in animals and animal parts such as tiger skins and bones and rhino horns. — AP

'Apprentice' contestants deplore Trump; he calls them 'wannabes'

A winner of "The Apprentice" and five other former contestants on Donald Trump's reality show are speaking out against the Republican front-runner's presidential campaign. Randall Pinkett, winner of the show's fourth season, says he disagrees with Trump's views and that the ex-contestants are very concerned about the direction of his campaign. Trump has criticized the six as "failing wannabes" and says nobody would know who they are if it weren't for him.

Pinkett and five other contestants held a news conference yesterday morning. They include Kwame Jackson, runner-up from season one; season two's Kevin Allen; Tara Dowdell from season three; Marshawn Evans Daniels from season four; and James Sun from season six. — AP



Randall Pinkett, winner of 'The Apprentice' season four with Donald J. Trump.

AMC Entertainment CEO backpedals: 'No texting allowed'

AMC Entertainment CEO Adam Aron is backpedaling on statements he made to Variety three days ago about being open to allowing texting in some theaters.

Following a social media outcry from moviegoers, the new head of AMC Entertainment said in a statement released to AMC guests on social platforms that there will be no texting allowed in theaters. "Not today, not tomorrow and not in the foreseeable future," he promised.

Aron caused a stir online following the Wednesday remarks, even promoting Alamo Drafthouse CEO Tim League to openly criticize his proposal on Thursday. "I disagree with his statements on texting in a movie theater," League said. "Innovation in this direction could seriously hurt our industry."

Aron, who assumed the reins of the country's second largest theater chain on Jan. 4 following Gerry Lopez's departure, told Variety during CinemaCon, the exhibition trade show which wrapped on Thursday, that he was open to making some theaters texting and mobile device-friendly.

He suggested that the laxer cellphone policy would appeal to millennials who are glued to their phone. "When you tell a 22-year-old to turn off the phone, don't ruin the movie, they hear please cut off your left arm above the elbow," Aron said. You can't tell a 22-year-old to turn off their cellphone. That's not how they live their life."

But Aron made clear that the online furor over the possibility of texting in theaters had led him to rethink that flexibility. "In this age of social media, we get feedback from you almost instantaneously and as such, we are constantly listening," Aron added in his statement. "Accordingly, just as instantaneously, this is an idea that we have relegated to the cutting room floor."

Here's Aron's full statement to AMC guests:

To our AMC guests,

At AMC, we are committed to innovation and to being imaginative in our efforts to deliver you the best. We strive every single day to make your movie going experience at AMC Theatres simply amazing. You love the magic of movies, and we love doing all we can to make them all the more magical for you.

During the past few days, you may have heard media reports about another idea AMC Theatres was considering, testing whether some movie goers might want texting allowed in a small selection of our theatres. Unlike the many AMC advancements that you have applauded, we have heard loud and clear that this is a concept our audience does not want. In this age of social media, we get feedback from you almost instantaneously and as such, we are constantly listening. Accordingly, just as instantaneously, this is an idea that we

have relegated to the cutting room floor.

With your advice in hand, there will be NO TEXTING ALLOWED in any of the auditoriums at AMC Theatres. Not today, not tomorrow and not in the foreseeable future.

Instead, we'll focus on our other ideas to delight and entertain you. In the next few years, we intend to invest more than \$1 billion to continuously enhance our theatres and systems. At AMC, you'll feel our commitment to providing you with the absolute best in sight and sound technology, a significant increase to the number of our large screens, including the incomparable experiences created by IMAX and Dolby Cinema, much more comfortable seating, including our hugely popular recliners, new sumptuous food and beverage offerings, a more engaging AMC Stubs program, as well as dramatically richer content in an enhanced website and more functional smartphone app. These are all in our immediate future - and yours-across the country at AMC.

We'll continue to be as creative as we can to elevate the AMC experience, doing so in partnership with you, our guests, and never in a way that will compromise your love of coming out to the movies.

So, as always, we invite you to join us in sharing the excitement of seeing stories told well. However, when the lights dim, we'll remember your advice that your fellow moviegoers should turn off their phones.

Adam Aron
CEO

AMC Theatres
— Reuters



AMC Entertainment
CEO Adam Aron