

Environment Minister inaugurates training workshop on capacity building of Indian Zoo Veterinarians on Animal Health Management in Captivity

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Appreciating the difficulties faced by the Zoo Veterinarians in the diagnosis of diseases and treatment of the wild animals kept in captivity, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has said that advancements such as C.A.T scan and M.R.I must be used for the benefit of animals. Speaking at the inaugural session of the training workshop on "Capacity Building Of Indian Zoo Veterinarians On Animal Health Management In Captivity" here today, the Minister said that such capacity-building workshops should be organised more by the Central Zoo Authority, in association with organisations having expertise similar to that of the Smithsonian National Zoological Park. He reiterated that National Zoological Park, New Delhi must strive to become the best Zoological Park in the world.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan gave an assurance that the Government will adequately support the proposals from zoos that come up with ideas to develop model zoos. The Minister noted that interaction of the participants with the experts from the Smithsonian National Zoological Park will certainly help our zoos in adoption of modern trends in animal care. He also recalled the importance of the day, being the 125th anniversary of the historic speech of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religion held at Chicago in the year 1893.

The Minister also released two manuals on the occasion, namely Manual for Biological Sample Collection and Preservation for Genetic, Reproductive And Disease Analyses and Manual on Chemical Immobilization of Wild Animals.

The Training Programme is being organised by the Central Zoo Authority in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Zoological Park (SNZP), Washington D.C., U.S.A. at the National Zoological Park, New Delhi from September 11-19, 2017. The veterinarians are responsible for the diagnosis of diseases of the wild animals kept in captivity, their treatment, nutrition and diet and for taking measures for preventive healthcare. In the present training programme, the veterinarians will not only be exposed to the technique and procedures being followed in USA, but they will also carry out hands-on exercises. It is expected that these hands-on exercises, coupled with discussion and sharing of experiences with experts and among participants would develop higher level of confidence. The ultimate aim of the training is to impart necessary knowledge, skill and attitude to the Veterinarians of the Zoos, at par with the international levels in the field.

An MoU was signed between the CZA, intended to develop and implement joint research studies focussed on animal health and capacity building. This MoU is upto March, 2020. After signing of the MoU, a delegation comprising of Senior Veterinary officers visited the National Zoological Park, Delhi, the Lion Safari, Etawah, Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, Mysuru, the Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bengaluru and the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, Chennai in the month of June, 2016 and shared technical information for improvements in the conservation of endangered species of wildlife in India.

The training of Zoo Keepers is conducted on regional basis, considering the linguistic diversity of India. In all, 240 personnel working in the Zoos for the animal housing, upkeep, veterinary care and other management aspects are covered through training programmes every year. Recently, the training of Zoo Directors was conducted at Dehradun Zoological Park, Dehradun in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on "Identification and marking of animals in captivity". The Zoo Keepers' training has been conducted at the Sepahijala Zoological Park, Sepahijala for Zoos of North-East Region, Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park, Patna for Zoos of Eastern Region, Kanpur Zoological Park, Kanpur for Zoos of Northern Region, Kamla Nehru Zoological Garden, Ahmedabad for Zoos of Western Region and the Zoological Garden, Thiruvananthapuram for Zoos of Southern Region respectively.

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is a statutory body created under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It came into existence in 1992 to oversee the functioning of zoos and provide them technical and other assistance. Zoos in India are regulated under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and are guided by the National Zoo Policy, 1998. The Government of India has formulated Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009 to lay down standards and norms for management of zoos in the country. At present there are 166 recognized zoos in the country.

The Central Zoo Authority has executed MoU for cooperation in the field of research & education with reputed international organizations. Some of them include - Wildlife Reserve, Singapore; National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Nepal; Leipzig Zoo, Germany; University of California, USA; Prague Zoo, Czech Republic; Smithsonian National Zoological Park, Washington D.C., USA.

Smithsonian National Zoological Park (SNZP), Washington DC

The Smithsonian National Zoological Park (SNZP), Washington DC is a part of the Smithsonian Institution, mandated by the Congress of the United States of America. It is home to approximately 2,000 individual animals of nearly 400 different species. SNZP is also a research, conservation and education centre for endangered species, with a state-of-the-art veterinary hospital and extensive research facilities. The SNZP has its campuses in Washington DC and Front Royal, Virginia besides field stations around the world.

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