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VOL. XLV NO. 30 PAGES 24

NEW DELHI 5 - 11 DECEMBER 2020

₹12.00

## INDIAN RHINO VISION 2020- PROTECTING AND PROMOTING RHINO POPULATION

**Kanchan Puri & Dr. Ritesh Joshi**

The greater one- horned rhino, with its single black horn, is a rhinoceros species native to the Indian subcontinent. Its population is fragmented and geographically restricted and is considered a vulnerable species.

Rhinos contribute to economic growth through the tourism industry. Ecotourism can be an important source of income for local people. In India, wildlife tourism is increasing mainly because of the presence of rare species in forests like Bengal Tigers, Asian Elephants, Asian one horned rhinoceros, Asiatic lions, red panda etc. Also the presence of bird species and arrival of winter migratory birds attract the tourists to stay connected with protected areas of the country. Unique landscapes and frequent sighting of wild animals form major tourist attraction during wildlife expedition. Recent statistics reveal that wildlife safaris



Tourists seeing Greater- one horned Rhino in Kaziranga National Park, Assam (Picture: Dr. Ritesh Joshi)

in Indian forests account for one third of tourism sector. By protecting rhinos, we're also supporting local communities. In India, the One-horned Rhinoceros are found in three States of Assam, Uttar

Pradesh and West Bengal. The Government of India launched the "National Conservation Strategy for the Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros" in the year 2019.

The Minister of State for Environment, Forest & Climate, Government of India, Shri Babul Supriyo recently launched the Indian Rhino Vision (IRV) 2020 programme aimed to protect the existing rhino population and also to increase the distribution of the species in the country. The Minister addressed senior officials of the Ministry, State Forest Departments and other organizations such as Central Zoo Authority, WWF-India, Aaranayak, and UNDP through virtual platforms on the World Rhino Day, 2020. In his address, the minister said, timely efforts and stringent protection and management by the Governments of India and the State Governments have revived the population of Rhinos in the country. The population of Greater One-horned Rhinoceros reached to the brink of extinction by the end of the 20th century with fewer than 200 animals in wild. Approximately 75% of the entire

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### JOB HIGHLIGHTS

#### INDIAN OIL

Indian Oil, Marketing Division invites applications for engagement of **436** Technical and Non-Technical Apprentices.

Last Date : 19.12.2020

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#### CANARA BANK

Canara Bank invites applications for recruitment of Specialist Officers in various disciplines.

Last Date : 15.12.2020

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#### AIIMS

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubaneswar invites applications for recruitment of Faculty Posts (Group-A) in various departments.

Last Date : 30 days from the date of publication

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**Nidhi Prasad**

*Technology will not replace great teachers but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational. - George Couros*

Digital Learning is not a new term. It is in common use from couple of years since various sectors like banking, tourism, railways etc. and masses are getting attracted. It started being used slowly by adults but the young generation is adopting it rapidly. Recently, during lockdown due to Corona virus it has become the necessity. Education sector has been impacted by COVID-19 drastically, among others. Now the circumstances have forced almost all the section of the society to use it. Its use has become essential. It has forced not only the universities but also schools across India, indeed the

## DIGITAL LEARNING -RAPID EMERGENCE



world to suspend physical classroom and shift to the online classes.

With this sudden shift away from the classroom in many parts of the globe, some are wondering whether the adoption of online learning will continue to persist post-pandemic, and how such a shift would impact the worldwide education market.

Even Pre - COVID-19 Era, there was already high growth and adoption in education technology, with global Ed-tech

investments. Whether it is language apps, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, or online learning software, there has been a significant surge in usage since COVID-19.

In India, while this transition has been smooth for most private universities, the public ones are still adapting. There have also been debates on the nature of classes and the future of examination and evaluation- whether they could be conducted online or not.

**What is Digital Learning?**

Digital learning is any type of learning that is accompanied by technology or by instructional practice that makes effective use of technology.

**Digital Learning, Online Learning, E-Learning: What's The Difference?**

**Digital Learning**

Digital learning is an umbrella term. It means any type of learning that includes using digital technology. That includes students taking courses online, but it also includes students doing internet research or watching online videos in a classroom and teachers using digital tools like smart boards and tablets.

**Online Learning**

This is another broad term, but slightly narrower than digital learning. It means that the

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**INDIAN RHINO VISION 2020- PROTECTING AND ...**

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population of Greater One-horned Rhinoceros now occurs in India in the three States viz, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Census of Rhinoceros is undertaken at the State-level by the respective State Governments periodically.

**Indian Rhino Vision (IRV) 2020:** With the Collaboration between the Government of Assam, the International Rhino Foundation, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, the Bodoland Territorial Council, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Indian Rhino Vision (IRV) 2020 has been developed which aims to protect and increase the population of the one-horned rhinoceros. IRV 2020 hopes to raise the number of rhinos in Assam to 3,000 by 2020 and spread them over seven of the state's protected areas: Kaziranga, Pobitora, Orang National Park, Manas National Park, Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuary and Dibru Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Indian rhino were once abundant in alluvial plains of India but due to uncontrolled poaching (of horns), degradation and loss of available habitats; rhino populations are threatened. In India, the species occurs in Kaziranga National Park (World Heritage Site), Manas National Park (World Heritage Site), Dudhwa National

Park (re-introduced population), Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Orang National Park, Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary, and Gorumara National Park. International trade in rhino horn has been banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in



Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora). Out of the all conservation measures taken by the government and NGOs, the captive breeding programmes have been proved to be the most successful in Indian rhinos. At present, majority of the Indian rhinos population is concentrated in Assam's Kaziranga National Park. Greater one-horned rhinos are grazers. When not

grazing on land, animals like to immerse themselves in water, where they also graze on aquatic plants.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 2016 implemented a project called RhODIS (Rhino DNA Index system) to create DNA profiles of all rhinos in the country. The Veterinary Genetics Laboratory (VGL), University of Pretoria, South

used to hold the Rhinoceros earlier by augmenting the existing conservation efforts and strengthening them through scientific and administrative measures.

World Rhino Day is celebrated on 22 September every year, initiated by the World Wildlife Fund-South Africa in 2010. This day aims to create awareness on the importance of world's five rhinoceros species which are Black rhino, White rhino, Greater one-horned rhino, Sumatran and Javan. The Greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran are the three species of rhino in Asia, whereas the two African rhino species are black rhino and white rhino. In India, Greater one-horned rhino is found and is included in the Schedule - I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The scientific name of Indian rhino is Rhinoceros unicornis, these animals are mega-herbivores weighing over 1000 kgs. As per the literature, these iconic species have functional role in maintaining forest ecosystem and biodiversity of their landscape. Hence they are also called keystone species. Rhinos by eating grasses indirectly affect smaller herbivores creating cascading effects for other species as well. They also help in phenomenon of seed dispersion through excreta.

The protection and promotion of One-horned Rhino species is of utmost environmental importance.

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Views expressed are personal  
Image Courtesy : Google

Africa has developed this RhODIS for active conservation and management practices on rhino conservation. The project will help in curbing poaching and gathering evidence in wildlife crimes involving rhinos. Wildlife Institute of India (WII) Dehradun is the nodal agency for the project. The RhODIS would help provide concrete evidence, as required for conviction in poaching cases.

The Ministry and the State Forest Departments of Assam, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal with support from other organizations are taking appropriate steps in accordance with the "New Delhi Declaration" which was signed after the 2nd Asian Rhino range States Conservation meeting held on 26th-28th February, 2019 at MoEF&CC, New Delhi wherein representatives from Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nepal attended the meeting besides India. Initiatives have been undertaken by the State Governments such as West Bengal and Bihar are also working for the reintroduction of the Rhinoceros in the areas which used to hold the Rhino populations till a few decades back.

Success was achieved in restocking the rhino population in the World Heritage Site Manas National Park recently through wild to wild translocations. One-horned Rhinoceros is also one of the 21 species identified for Recovery programme for critically endangered species by the Ministry. The Ministry has also launched the "National Conservation Strategy for the Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros" with the goal to repopulate Rhinoceros population in those areas also which

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