

Food crisis cause of gradual decrease of tigers: Ziaur Rahman



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GUWAHATI: At the age of 15, he began his mission of trapping tigers and hunting man-eaters. Now at the age of 65, he is still young at heart in his job: hunting. Till today, he has captured more than 100 tigers in different parts of Assam. He was also invited by Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, and Orissa governments to hunt man-eaters. Known as the second Jim Corbet, this man born in Majbat in Darrang (now Udalguri) district is no other than Ziaur Rahman. Besides a hunter, Rahman is also a conservationist and writer. A hunter and fishing enthusiast in early life, his admiration for tigers and leopards grew, he resolved never to

shoot them unless they turned man-eater or posed a threat to cattle. Between 1957 and 2002, he tracked and killed at least 40 man-eaters. It is estimated that the combined total of men, women and children these 40 animals had killed was in excess of 200. Attending the Guest of the Month programme organized by the Guwahati Press Club here on Saturday, Rahman went down memory lane describing his journey from the first encounter with tiger.

"When I was a kid, a tiger eat our goats in Merabeel village in Majbat. I was very shocked and depressed. I decided to kill that tiger and made a bamboo bow and arrows to hunt that tiger. And then, I spent one night awake to kill that tiger. I attacked the tiger with several arrows," he said. After 20 days, Rahman killed as many as three tigers. In 2002, he captured a leopard with a blanket.

"In 1991, I was invited by the Madhya Pradesh government to hunt two man-eaters which killed and attacked many people, specially women. The tigers targeted the women because, they used to faint in front of the man-eater. The MP government spent more than Rs 20 lakh for killing the tigers, but failed. After 45 days of hid-and seek game, I captured two tigers - Mayadevi and Rupak, and a leopard. The Government awarded me with a cash prize of Rs 10,000," Rahman said.

But what are the secrets of his success? "The technique and bravery," said Rahman, adding: "Whenever, I go out in a mission, I am always followed by a scared person. So he helps me in the jungle because he jumps if he sees a frog also."

Rahman, who was born in 1942, is of the view that food crisis and poachers are reasons behind gradual decrease of tigers in Assam. "I am sure that less than 1,000 tigers are in the country. We are responsible for this. The way we are destroying the forests, food, the time is not far

that this beautiful animal will fast diminish from the nation," he said.

But, during his lifetime, except some cash awards, Rahman did not get any recognition. Lamenting on the subject, he said: "Even my department did not give me leave when I went to hunting."

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