

Tigers' hope in Ranthambore

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young climate leaders

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: At the age of 16, Prannay Kohli is an environment warrior in his own right.

A class 10 student of The Shri Ram School, Aravali, Kohli has been fighting for the cause of tiger conservation since he was in class 2.

Visits to Ranthambore where tiger poaching is rampant, dissuading the locals — the Mogiya tribe — from tiger poaching which was their main source of income and working towards their rehabilitation have earned him the Karam Veer Chakra, an award instituted by the Indian Confederation of NGOs (iCONGO).

With encouragement from his eco club teacher, he visited Ranthambore and worked in close association with Kids for Tigers, an organisation for tiger conservation.

“We spoke to the locals about the disastrous effects of poaching. But they asked us what else

CUB WARRIOR Prannay has been part of the cause since he was in class 2; has worked to rehabilitate a poachers' tribe



■ Prannay Kohli (16) started a signature campaign on tiger crisis in 2007 and sent it to the chief minister. Following this Kids For Tiger was sent funds by the chief minister for conservation projects. SANJEEV VERMA / HT PHOTO

could they do to earn livelihood,” he said.

The question forced them think of alternative ways of income for them. Since the locals were familiar with the terrain, they were encouraged to become forest guides.

“Our school has open days twice a year when we set up stalls of handicrafts made by the Mogiya tribal women and collect funds,” he said. “This also helped create awareness about the dwindling number of tigers among my friends in school.”

In Ranthambore, he also participated in street plays educating the locals about the tiger crisis and also taught their kids.

When he gets back to Delhi, he shows the videos of the work he has done with the Mogiya tribe in his school to acquaint his friends with their problems.

“We also shot videos of poachers who are caught where they explained how the forest guards had no weapons except a stick to defend themselves against the poachers,” said Kohli.

This shocking revelation, he said, led the government to take notice of the situation and provide the guards with guns.

In 2007, he started a signature campaign about the tiger crisis which was later sent to the chief minister following which Kids for Tiger was given funds by the chief minister.

“If there are no tigers, people would exploit the forests and rivers and the ecological cycle will get disturbed,” said Kohli, explaining the reason behind his tireless efforts towards saving the tigers.

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TOMORROW

Ambika Ghuge, a student of Miranda House, is the founder president of an entrepreneurship cell at her college. She has taken up the challenge of calculating the Carbon footprint of her Institute.