

# ST-10 WS CM-10 Saving the tiger

Poverty and preservation do not seem to go together. That is one reason of increasing deforestation, of degradation of environment, and, above all, of vanishing animal species. Yet, the nation's flora and fauna is a precious asset, to be preserved at all costs. The tiger, the king of the jungle, is facing the threat of extinction from what was till recently its natural home. Only 1,411 tigers are left in India. And these are under a great threat from the growing menace of land-grabbers, miners, illegal poachers, and, worse, official apathy and neglect. Forest guards invariably are mixed up with poachers. Often the poor tribals prey on the big cats for their survival. Conservation efforts are only half-hearted, with the States diverting sanctioned funds or deploying them in wasteful ways. Of late, concerted attempts to educate the people about the vital role of the tiger in maintaining an ecological balance have been undertaken. These should be intensified. Public awareness is a huge factor in the preservation of the fast vanishing species. Besides, the sanctity of jungles ought to be preserved so that the king of jungle can survive the rampaging march of an ever growing number of humans.