

Tiger-range nations take fresh pledge



A tiger walks past a vehicle carrying tourists, minutes before photographers were assaulted at the Ranthambore National Park in Ranthambore, on Friday AP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After two years of hectic deliberations, 13 tiger-range countries (TRCs) on Saturday finalised an ambitious global programme for restoring the population of wild tigers, whose count now stands less than 3,000 across the world. The programme was finalised at a two-day workshop — Consensus for Conservation — which was attended by representatives from TRCs such as Nepal, Bangladesh and Burma.

The Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP) will be endorsed by TRC leaders at the tiger summit in St Petersburg, Russia next month — a first of its kind where the countries will define priority actions to be taken to deal with the crisis of extinction facing the big cat.

Addressing the workshop, Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said, "I welcome the consultative knowledge-based process undertaken by

GTI through World Bank president Zoellick's initiative which has brought all TRCs on a single platform of knowledge based action." "India is happy to share its expertise and work with the bank on further enhancing the capacity of Indian wildlife institutions working with global leaders on this agenda," he added.

India has around 60 per cent of the world's tiger population at 1,411. According to Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), the GTRP has a high probability of success because all 13 TRCs are working in concert, with a high level of political commitment to implement a comprehensive programme, which will be supported and closely monitored by the global conservation community. Organised by Environment Ministry, the workshop was also attended by representatives from tiger range countries such as Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.