

India refuses to let WB play big brother in Project Tiger

Tells Bank It Doesn't Need Money, Expertise From Other Countries

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Nitin Sethi (TNN)

New Delhi: In a snub to the World Bank (WB), the government has informed the latter that it won't allow the lending institution to play big brother and manage and monitor its efforts to conserve the Indian tiger under the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), a recently floated project that is highly favoured by bank president Robert B Zoellick.

The GTI has organised a summit of heads of state of countries having tiger population in Russia in November. But India will only be sending a ministerial-level delegation to the meeting. The Prime Minister would not be attending the summit, where the WB along with some foreign conservation NGOs are expected to hold fort.

WB has been keen to get India on board, as it would be



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odd to sell a global project to save the tigers when the country with the largest population of the big cat in the wild is unwilling to be a part of it. Earlier, the bank had lobbied hard that India borrow money from it to conserve and protect tigers. But the government has recently made it clear that it neither required money nor expertise from other countries.

However, not intending to

outright reject a proposal from the multilateral funding agency it decided to participate in the GTI to enhance global cooperation on issues that did not involve direct conservation work in the tiger reserves.

The Indian government has informed the GTI that conservation of tiger is a sovereign issue, and it would not accept that the WB dictate terms to it. Having learnt its

Ranthambore tiger crosses over to MP

Pugmarks of a tiger from Rajasthan's Ranthambore were spotted near Madhya Pradesh's Kuno-Palpur sanctuary, chosen for Project Cheetah. The three-year-old male tiger, officially called T-38, crossed over to MP's Sheopur district on Sunday after spending a fortnight in the Shev Ki Chambal area along Chambal.

lesson earlier when a WB-funded project on Tiger led to displacement and agitation by tribals and increased corruption in some tiger reserves, the government has told the GTI that its interference would only lead to alienation among the local population. Though most conservationists had backed the government, some high profile 'tiger-wallahs' were keen to get WB involved in it.