Prince William: 5-year accident cover for 10,000 rangers in India

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News

Britain's Prince William announced, in a video message on 'X', a five-year accident insurance programme for 10,000 wildlife rangers working on temporary contracts in India (ANI, 20 Nov 2026; Kensington Palace post on X, 19 Nov). It will protect rangers and their families if an accident occurs on duty; the programme starts in December. Seven States are covered: Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Keralam and Rajasthan. It is delivered through United for Wildlife, founded by William, with ValuEarth Conservation, WWF-India, the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA). The announcement came after William and Catherine, Princess of Wales, ended a three-day India visit centred on the sixth Earthshot Prize ceremony in Mumbai. He said that 'tens of thousands of rangers work on temporary contracts with no guaranteed accident cover'. He noted that India has most of the world's wild tigers, over half of its Asian elephants and most of its one-horned rhinos, and credited rangers with nearly doubling the tiger population. The cover amount and the insurer have not been disclosed.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Announced by	Prince William (UK)
Beneficiaries	10,000 temporary wildlife rangers and families

Point	Details
Duration	Five years; from December 2026
States	MP, Karnataka, Assam, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Keralam, Rajasthan
Delivered by	United for Wildlife + ValuEarth, WWF-India, WTI, IBCA
Context	Earthshot Prize 2026, Mumbai – three-day India visit
Not disclosed	Cover amount, insurer

Background

- Legal background: the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 was enacted by Parliament under Article 252 after several States passed resolutions, as wildlife was then a State subject. Since the 42nd Amendment (1976), wildlife protection is in the Concurrent List. The Act underpins national parks, sanctuaries, the hunting ban and the fight against wildlife crime.
- International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA): launched by PM Narendra Modi at Mysuru on 9 April 2023, at the event marking 50 years of Project Tiger. It aims to conserve seven big cats – tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma; it is headquartered in India.
- Forest martyrs: in 1730 at Khejarli village near Jodhpur, Rajasthan, when men of Maharaja Abhay Singh of Marwar came to fell khejri trees, Amrita Devi Bishnoi hugged a tree and was killed; hundreds of Bishnois followed her in sacrifice. In their memory, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has observed 11 September as 'National Forest Martyrs Day' since 2013 – forest staff killed on duty are also remembered that day.
- Rhinos: William noted that the global one-horned rhino population has passed 4,000. The largest population lives in Assam's Kaziranga National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site, 1985); Assam's Pobitora sanctuary has the highest density. The species is classed 'Vulnerable' by the IUCN.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu is not among the seven States in this programme. But it has a long history in ranger training – in 1912 the Madras Presidency opened the 'Madras Forest School' at Coimbatore (later Madras Forest College; from 1955 the Southern Forest Rangers College), which trained more than 4,000 forest rangers between 1912 and 1988. The same campus now houses the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

Britain's Prince William announced, in a video message on 'X', a five-year accident insurance programme for 10,000 wildlife rangers working on temporary contracts in India (ANI, 20 Nov 2026; Kensington Palace post on X, 19 Nov).

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Announced by: Prince William (UK); Beneficiaries: 10,000 temporary wildlife rangers and families; Duration: Five years; from December 2026; States: MP, Karnataka, Assam, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Keralam, Rajasthan.

What is the background to this news?

Legal background: the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 was enacted by Parliament under Article 252 after several States passed resolutions, as wildlife was then a State subject.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), a partner in this cover, was launched in April 2023 in which city?

A) Bhopal

B) Mysuru

C) New Delhi

D) Dehradun

Answer: B – Explanation: Mysuru, 9.4.2023 – launched by the PM at the 50 years of Project Tiger event. It covers seven big cats including tiger, lion, cheetah.

2. Following resolutions by States, Parliament enacted the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 under which Article?

A) Article 249

B) Article 253

C) Article 250

D) Article 252

Answer: D – Explanation: Article 252 – Parliament may legislate on a State subject when two or more States request it. Article 253 is for international treaties.

3. The 1730 Khejarli sacrifice, recalled on National Forest Martyrs Day (11 Sept), took place in which present-day State?

A) Gujarat

B) Haryana

C) Rajasthan

D) Madhya Pradesh

Answer: C – Explanation: Rajasthan, near Jodhpur – Bishnois led by Amrita Devi Bishnoi gave their lives to save khejri trees.

4. Where did the Madras Presidency open the 'Madras Forest School' in 1912 to train forest rangers?

A) Udhagamandalam

B) Dehradun

C) Coimbatore

D) Vellore

Answer: C – Explanation: Coimbatore – later the Southern Forest Rangers College (1955); the campus now has the Central Academy for State Forest Service.

5. Which national park holds the world's largest population of the greater one-horned rhinoceros?

A) Kaziranga

B) Jaldapara

C) Manas

D) Pobitora

Answer: A – Explanation: Kaziranga (Assam) – UNESCO site, 1985. Pobitora has the highest density; Jaldapara is in West Bengal.

Sources: ANI via The Tribune, 20 Nov 2026 – tribuneindia.com/news/world/prince-william-announces-five-year-accident-insurance-programme-for-10000-wildlife-rangers-in-india; Kensington Palace post on X, 19 Nov 2026; United for Wildlife / The Royal Foundation release; PIB (PMO) – pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1915055 (IBCA); Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 – indiacode.nic.in; Deccan Herald – deccanherald.com/india/kazirangas-latest-census-pegs-rhino-population-at-2613-up-by-200-from-2018-1095819.html (Kaziranga 2022 census); MoEFCC (National Forest Martyrs Day); Directorate of Forest Education – dfe.gov.in/history-of-academy-coimbatore. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.