

Tiger census begins in Sundarbans on Jan 1

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Tiger census by using camera trapping method in the Sundarbans will begin on January 1, 2023, five years after last tiger census. The Forest Department is expected to publish the census result in June 2024. According to the forest department, the census is being carried out by surveying the rivers and creeks and by looking for footprints of tigers. On December 15, the Forest Department began creeks and rivers surveying in Sundarbans under the 'Sundarbans Tiger Conservation Project', said Dr Abu Naser Mohsin Hossain, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Sundarbans West division, and Project Director (PD) of Tiger Conservation Project, to BSS today. "A total of 665 cameras will be installed in both East and West Sundarbans and each point will also get two cameras for census," he said.

Tigers and other animals' pictures will be captured through the cameras, he said, adding that forest experts will later analyse using advanced technology. According to the latest 2018 survey, there are 114 tigers in the Sundarbans in Bangladesh, which was 106 in 2015, and 404 in 2004 survey. Currently, numbers of tigers may have increased, he said, quoting tourists observations who returned from Sundarbans recently. Md Belayet Hossain, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Sundarbans East division, told BSS that survey and camera trappings will continue for the next three months. Later in November 2023, a similar survey will be conducted alongside capturing photographs. "We will be able to announce the results by June 2024."

According to Forest Department, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change approved a project titled 'Sundarban Tiger Conservation Project' on March 23 this year. The cost of the project was estimated at Tk 35 crore 93 lakh 80 thousand. The project period was set from April this year to March 2025. The project has two parts — tiger census and tiger conservation. The work was supposed to start from October this year. However, due to global economic recession, the project was late in securing funds. Later, in mid-October, the Planning Commission released Tk 3 crore 24 lakh 36 thousand for the tiger census as part of the project. According to Forest Department, currently 3,840 tigers survive in nature in 13 countries of the world.