

# VASUNDHARA RAJE

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## Public participation is important for conservation of forests: CM Vasundhara Raje

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Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has said that the State Government was making efforts for conservation of forest areas in Rajasthan. But, these efforts need continuous support and participation of general public, environmentalists and tourists in particular.

Smt Raje was speaking on the occasion of a book launch on Rajasthan's wildlife 'Jawai - Land of the Leopard' at Bikaner House in New Delhi on Thursday. This book, authored by Smt Anjali Singh and Shri Jaisal Singh, depicts uniqueness and beauty of the State's forests and wildlife to aim at promoting tourism in Rajasthan.

The Chief Minister said that tourism not only contributes to government revenues, but can also help in better environmental management and planning, awareness building, protection and preservation. However, conservation benefits also, to a large extent, depend on the choices we, as tourists, make in destinations we pick out, the travel options we choose, the activities we participate in and the way we spend the money. She said that public-private partnership is equally important for forest conservation and promotion of tourism.

Smt Raje said that Rajasthan is among India's foremost tourism destinations. Along with forts, palaces and heritage, nature tourism is one of the prime attractions. While understandably, tigers are popular (thereby, making Ranthambhore and Sariska favoured places to visit), the Aravallis and the desert also offer a magnificent collection of landscapes, terrain and wildlife. The CM said that if there were Bustards in the Desert, Tal Chappar offers 40 species of Raptors -- the highest anywhere in the world. If the Chambal promises a glimpse of the Gharial, the Aravallis were likely to allow a sighting of the Sloth Bear.

Smt Raje said that with two National Parks and 23 Sanctuaries, 3.5% of Rajasthan is under the Protected Area Network. These protected areas, other than performing conservation and ecological services, also bring in tourists and in the process the local economy gets support. Direct and indirect livelihoods are created.

Union Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs (Independent Charge) Shri Vijay Goyal, Former Minister Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, Dr Karan Singh, Embassadors of Several Countries, Former CM of Delhi Smt Sheela Dixit, Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Mehriishi, Rajasthan Additional Chief Secretary Forest Nihal Chand Goyal, Rajasthan Tourism Secretary Smt. Roli Singh, Members of Chief Minister Advisory Council Smt. Malvika Singh and Smt Meera Mehriishi, Member of Rajasthan State Wildlife Board Shri Valmik Thapar, Shri Tejvir Singh, Smt. Sanjana Kapoor, Shri Anshoo Jan and other dignitaries were also present at the event.