

MEDIA RELEASE

Reliance Foundation announces Vantara - a comprehensive Animal Rescue, Care, Conservation and Rehabilitation programme, the first of its kind in India

Conceived by Shri Anant Ambani, Vantara aims to be a leading contributor to global conservation effort

Jamnagar, 26th February 2024: Reliance Industries and Reliance Foundation today announced the launch of their Vantara (Star of the Forest) programme, an umbrella initiative to focus on rescue, treatment, care and rehabilitation of injured, abused and threatened animals, both in India and abroad. Spread over 3000 acres within the Green Belt of Reliance's Jamnagar Refinery Complex in Gujarat, Vantara aims to be one of the leading contributors to conservation efforts globally. By working with leading experts in animal care and welfare, Vantara has converted a sprawling 3000-acre space into a jungle-like environment that mimics the natural, enriching, lush and verdant habitat for the rescued species to thrive in.

The Vantara initiative, the first of its kind in India, has been conceptualised and birthed under the passionate leadership of **Shri Anant Ambani**, Director on the boards of RIL and Reliance Foundation. Shri Ambani is also spearheading Reliance's ambitious renewable energy business in Jamnagar, and, in that capacity, is responsible for leading Reliance's journey to become a Net Carbon Zero company by 2035.

Vantara is focused on creating best-in-class animal conservation and care practices including state-of-the-art healthcare, hospitals, research and academic centres. Within its programmes, Vantara also focuses on integrating advanced research and collaboration with reputed international universities and organisations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF).

Over the last few years, the programme has rescued more than 200 elephants, and thousands of other animals, reptiles and birds from unsafe situations. It has undertaken initiatives in key species including rhino, leopard and crocodile rehabilitation.

Of late, Vantara has also taken part in foreign rescue missions in countries like Mexico, Venezuela etc. It recently brought in several big animals answering a call from Central American zoo authorities. All such rescue and rehabilitation missions are undertaken under strict legal and regulatory frameworks in India and internationally.

Speaking at the occasion, Shri Anant Ambani said, "What started as a passion for me at a very young age has become a mission now with Vantara and our brilliant and committed team. We are focused at protecting critically endangered species native to India. We also want to restore vital habitats and address urgent threats to species and establish Vantara as a leading-edge conservation programme. We are delighted that our efforts have been recognised in India and internationally. Some of India's and the world's top zoological and



medical experts have joined our mission and we have been blessed to receive active collaborations and guidance of government bodies, research and educational institutions. Vantara aims to partner with the Zoo Authority of India and other relevant government organisations in improving all the 150-plus zoos in India in terms of training, capacity building and animal care infrastructure. We hope Vantara becomes a beacon of hope globally and can showcase how a forward-thinking institution can help the global biodiversity conservation initiatives.”

Explaining the philosophy that inspired him to establish Vantara, Shri Ambani says: “Vantara is a combination of the age-old ethical value of compassion with the excellence of modern scientific and technological professionalism. I see Jeev Seva (animal care) as a seva towards the almighty as well as humanity.”

Vantara has a centre for elephants and facilities for several other large and small species including lions and tigers, crocodiles, leopards, etc.

Elephant Centre

The Centre for Elephants at Vantara is spread over a large part of the 3000 acre premises with state-of-the-art shelters, scientifically designed day and night enclosures, hydrotherapy pools, water bodies & a large elephant jacuzzi for treating arthritis in Elephants. It is home to over 200 Elephants who are cared for round-the-clock by a specialized and trained staff of over 500 people including vets, biologists, pathologists, nutritionists and naturalists.

The Centre has a 25,000 square feet Elephant hospital, one of the largest in the world, fully equipped with portable x-ray machines, laser machines for diverse treatments, a fully equipped pharmacy, a pathology for all diagnostic tests, an imported elephant restraining device for diagnosis, hydraulic pulleys and cranes, hydraulic surgical table and a hyperbaric oxygen chamber for the Elephants. The hospital carries out cataract and endoscopic guided surgeries (with a first of its kind specially designed endoscopy equipment) and is capable of executing any surgery necessary.

The Centre has a special kitchen of over 14000 square feet dedicated to preparing a curated diet for each elephant keeping in mind their most necessary physical needs including their oral health.

The Centre also applies ayurveda techniques to care for the elephants, from application of hot oil massages to *multani mitti*, ayurveda practitioners also work round the clock for the Elephants.

Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre

For other wild animals that have been deployed in circuses or congested zoos, a Rescue and Rehabilitation centre of over 650 acres within the 3000 acre premises has been created where animals from distressed and dangerous environments from India and all over the world are rescued and housed in state-of-the-art large enclosures and shelters.

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With a staff strength of about 2100+, the rescue and rehabilitation Centre has rescued about 200 leopards from all over India which have suffered injuries in road accidents or man-wild conflicts. It has rescued over 1000 crocodiles from a severely overcrowded and congested facility in Tamil Nadu. It has rescued animals from hunting lodges in Africa, animals under threat of euthanasia in Slovakia, severely distressed animals from facilities in Mexico.

The Centre has a 1 Lakh square foot hospital & medical research centre. The hospital and research centre possess the most advanced technology with an ICU, MRI, CT scan, X-ray, ultrasound, endoscopy, dental scalar, lithotripsy, dialysis, OR1 technology that enables live videoconferences for surgeries and blood plasma separator.

Over 2000+ animals across 43 species are under the care of the Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre.

For about 7 endangered species of Indian as well as foreign animals the Centre has started conservation breeding programs with the objective of having a viable reserve population to repopulate the populations of endangered species in their native habitats to save them from extinction.

Today, the Vantara ecosystem has provided a new lease of life and hope to over 200 Elephants, over 300 large felines such as leopards, tigers, lions, jaguars etc., over 300 herbivores such as deer and over 1200 reptiles such as crocodiles, snakes and turtles.

Compliance in Rescue and Exchange

All the rescued animals have been brought to Vantara after obtaining prior approval of the Chief Wildlife Wardens of the respective states and the Central Zoo Authority as per provisions laid under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and the recognition Zoo rules, 2009. All animal exchange programmes are done on approval / permission from Central Zoo Authority. Vantara has also answered to exchange requests from other institutions in India and overseas. Such animals were brought in after obtaining necessary permissions from Central Zoo Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

National and International Collaborations

The Vantara programme has gained tremendously by working together with international organisations like Venezuelan National Foundation of Zoos and by associating with reputed organisations worldwide like the Smithsonian and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. In India, it collaborates with the National Zoological Park, Assam State Zoo, Nagaland Zoological Park, Sardar Patel Zoological Park etc.

Education and Awareness

In order to increase awareness of conservation issues among people particularly the youth and children, the Vantara initiative envisages close collaboration with educational institutions

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including knowledge and resource exchange. It also envisages creation of a display area for some of the animals in modern and futuristic, climate controlled enclosures setting new standards in compassion and care.

Green Areas

Firmly believing that rescue and conservation of animals must go hand-in-hand with greening initiatives, the Vantara programme also envisages a continuing greening of the Reliance Refinery areas and has already greened thousands of acres of Land.

About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 72 million people across India, in over 55,400 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org

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