# From Zoo to Public Health: One Health Surveillance Workshop for Workers of Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park & Wildlife Research Center, Pune

## A National One Health Mission-funded project under the aegis of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

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A workshop to strengthen India's surveillance and preparedness against zoonotic diseases was jointly organized by Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park & Wildlife Research Center, Pune, Bharati Vidyapeeth (DU) Medical College, Pune, ICMR National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV), Pune, National Institute for One Health (NIOH), Nagpur, and other partner institutions.

The workshop focused on raising awareness about zoonotic diseases among zoo workers and included a health check-up camp which was organized at Bharati Vidyapeeth (DU) Medical College, Pune, on November 5, 2026. Funded under National One Health Mission, this initiative is a first of its kind nationwide study entitled, “Establishing a One Health Sentinel Surveillance System in High Human-Animal-Interaction Settings among Selected Zoos in India” under the aegis of the Indian Council of Medical Research.



Welcoming the participants, Dr Mandar Karmarkar, Principal, Bharati Vidyapeeth (DU) Medical College, Pune, underscored the significance of bringing together stakeholders from different institutions for the workshop and strengthening a collaborative approach to One Health surveillance.

Speaking on the genesis and importance of the One Health concept, Dr A.C. Mishra, Director, Interactive Research School for Health Affairs (IRSHA), Bharati Vidyapeeth (DU) and former Director of ICMR-NIV, emphasised that a zoo itself is an ecosystem where human, animal and environmental health come together, making it an important setting for understanding and addressing zoonotic threats.




The study seeks to strengthen proactive disease monitoring, enable early warning of potential zoonotic spillovers, support coordinated outbreak response and generate systematic data on diseases prevalent among zoo animals and identify potential occupational health risks.

Dr Rajkumar Jadhav, Director, Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park & Wildlife Research Center, Pune, highlighted the important role of zoos in wildlife conservation and reaffirmed the Zoo's commitment to supporting the successful implementation of the project.

Emphasising the importance of active participation in surveillance, Dr Rajlakshmi Viswanathan, Scientist E, ICMR-NIV, Pune, thanked the Zoo staff for their participation in the workshop and assured continued support from ICMR-NIV, Pune, for surveillance activities under the project.




The technical sessions covered zoonotic disease risks and the One Health approach. Dr Deepak Y Patil, Scientist D & Principal investigator, NIOH, Nagpur, spoke on “One Health and Zoonoses: Why Zoo Workers Are on the Front Line?” while Dr Satish Gaikwad, Scientist C, NIOH, Nagpur, introduced the One Health Zoo Surveillance Project. Dr Sonali Palkar, Principal Investigator, Bharati Vidyapeeth (DU) Medical College conducted an interactive session on syndromic surveillance and timely self-reporting; and Dr Rajlakshmi Viswanathan, spoke on laboratory investigation in One Health surveillance, highlighting the importance of ethical and responsible sample collection.

This integrated surveillance approach is expected to strengthen India's preparedness for emerging zoonotic and other public health threats through evidence-based disease prevention and timely response, while contributing to wildlife health and biodiversity conservation.

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