Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **February/March 2022**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

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Read **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–1(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: International Tiger Day

International Tiger Day is celebrated on 29 July every year to raise awareness about the continued decline in the world's tiger population, and to encourage tiger conservation. With the species on the brink of extinction, International Tiger Day was established in 2010 at a summit meeting where governments of tiger-populated countries vowed to act. This year celebrities 'disappeared' on social media by removing their profile photos for a day; they reappeared with a tiger art selfie to help raise awareness of the plight of wild tigers disappearing due to the illegal tiger trade.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, over 95 per cent of tigers have been lost. A recent report says that about 100 years ago there might have been more than 100,000 tigers roaming the planet. Now just 3,900 tigers remain in the wild and they are only found in Asia. The larger subspecies of them, such as the Siberian tiger, usually live in more northern, colder areas while the smaller subspecies live in warmer, southern countries.

The dwindling number of tigers has been caused by various factors. There are certain diseases, some fatal, that spread like epidemics and genetic diversity is declining alarmingly, making tigers increasingly vulnerable. Health management of wildlife, a relatively new area of study, is badly neglected. There is an urgent need to incorporate this knowledge into wildlife conservation.

Meanwhile, as agriculture and cities have expanded, tigers and humans have competed for land and tigers have lost about 93 per cent of their natural habitat. There are now more tigers held in captivity in the United States than there are in the wild in Asia.

For centuries tigers have been hunted as status symbols and souvenirs, and now climate change is also affecting tigers. For example, rising sea levels in mangrove forest on the coast of the Indian Ocean may steal the habitat of Bengal tigers there in coming decades. Being forced to live in smaller areas of habitat has made them more vulnerable to poaching as well. With the shrinking of their habitat, tigers have less to hunt in the wild, which causes them to hunt domestic livestock instead. In turn, they are killed or captured by humans as retaliation.

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Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: Tigers in captivity

This text comes from the website of a conservation organisation.

Largest of all cats, the tiger is one of the most threatened species on Earth. These beautiful cats are threatened by growing human populations, loss of habitat, illegal hunting (of both tigers and their prey species) and expanded trade in tiger parts used as traditional medicines.

At approximately 13,000, the global population of captive tigers is much higher than the estimated 3,900 tigers remaining in the wild and provides a false sense of security. A high proportion of these captive tigers are privately owned and living in people's backyards and apartments, roadside attractions, and private breeding facilities, whilst the number of tigers in brutal tiger farms has escalated rapidly in recent years. We believe the current scale of captive breeding operations within tiger farms is a significant obstacle to the protection and recovery of wild tiger populations, as they undermine and complicate enforcement efforts and help to perpetuate demand for tiger parts and products.

Only a small percentage of the captive tiger population resides in licensed zoos. Many private tiger owners are not properly trained to care for wild animals, making the animals vulnerable. Often, these facilities will allow public contact with the tigers, including exploitation such as photo opportunities and playtime with tiger cubs. Not only is the welfare of these tigers compromised, but public health and safety is at risk during these encounters.

Public encounters with tiger cubs are popular and incredibly lucrative for many tiger facilities, providing a strong incentive to breed captive tigers to maintain a continuous supply of cubs for entertainment. However, these tigers are often inbred, which can cause birth defects and health issues, making them unsuitable for introduction to the wild. Reintroduction efforts could, however, include translocation of individuals from existing wild tiger populations in order to create new viable breeding populations. Given adequate protections, we hope that tiger numbers will continue to increase across their natural range but conservation efforts need to be focused on recovering these wild populations.

We are calling on governments to commit to phasing out tiger farms and instituting clear bans on trade in tigers and their parts and products, from any source.

Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: The wild tigers of Ranthambore

The narrator, Val, is a photographer, author and documentary filmmaker. He has spent over 45 years living, working and campaigning at the tiger reserve in Ranthambore National Park, near the town of Sawai Madhopur (SM). In this extract from his book, Val remembers first travelling to the area by train from his city home as a young man in 1976.

Exiting the deserted station, I woke up the driver of a solitary horse-drawn carriage.

In those days Sawai Madhopur (SM) boasted few motorised vehicles. The town wasn't prosperous. Numerous taxi-jeeps and buses taking chattering tourists into the park were still figments of shiny future ambition. Garish hotel chains were yet to sprout, mushrooming along newly surfaced roads to the park. This was a sleepy town, sprawled untidily around the railway track, the only reason for its existence.

Since then, local painters have decorated the station walls. Now murals of our tigers and other wildlife engage curious passers-by, increasing awareness like a kind of open-air art museum.

Back in 1976, we trotted off to the only guesthouse nearby. A reluctant proprietor prised open a musty room. I spent a sleepless night.

Next morning, I introduced myself to Fateh, the wildlife warden for the park. He looked over his luxuriant moustache disbelievingly at me and my camera. No one came here, he told me, to 'visit'.

Jolting along dirt tracks, we drove out towards the reserve. Slowly the wilderness took over. I scanned the thickening forest for wildlife, unaware my tracking skills would take years to develop.

My first days felt like shedding one layer of skin and growing into another. As you track a tiger, the language of the jungle envelopes you in its folds. You're alert to the tension in every rustling leaf, in every impression on the ground. Animal tracks whisper stories of the night. You're a jungle detective seeking clues of tigers having padded past. In the early years, just a paw-print was cause for celebration. There were still villages everywhere; human disturbance was high.

Until the 1980s, there were few pictures of tigers in the wild. Even then tourism to the area was only just starting, driven by Fateh's determination to make Ranthambore the most important wildlife destination in the world. My pictures of tigers like Noon drew multitudes to the forests of Ranthambore, transforming the local economy. People in the area owed their improving prospects to Noon.

Noon had been a tigress who filled my senses. Fateh teased me – saying I'd fallen in love with a tigress. Whenever I arrived in her presence there was a quick look of recognition. Most of the time it was just her and me with my camera.

Visiting research-scientists warned me to keep detached, not humanise tigers, but Noon grew into a pleasant obsession, deepening my understanding of the secret life of tigers. I don't think I experienced such closeness with a tiger again. Back then I could drive out alone and watch tigers in solitude. There were fewer rules, fewer visitors asking to

join me. Even today, traversing the lakes which were at the heart of her territory, I can summon up images of Noon slicing through their waters or erupting from a grassy bank in incredible pursuits of deer or wild boar – Images that remain etched on my mind.

Sometimes when hunting, Noon would look skywards and follow the direction vultures took. Visitors are still fascinated today by film of her tracking low-flying vultures, trotting from lake to lake until she found the carcass of a deer. Back then, I explain, Ranthambore was full of white-backed vultures, before chemicals used for injecting livestock and ingested by these scavenging birds wiped them out. Nature lost a cleaning service. Noon lost her food-finders.

I last saw Noon in 1990 beside Ranthambore lake. She looked older. Tigers get paler with age. The sun was setting, its last rays framing her in golden light. By this time, she'd successfully raised two litters and delighted the world with our footage of her kills, racing into the shallows of the lakes, causing chaos amongst grazing deer and more often than not bringing one down. The tourist boom followed – thanks to Noon – with no shortage of high-profile visitors keen to promote the cause of wild tigers.

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