



KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW SUNDAY TIMES		
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MALAYAN TIGERS

# ACT NOW TO SAVE THEM

**M**ALAYSIA is close to losing its prized Malayan tiger. At last count, there were only 250 in the jungles in the peninsula compared with 3,000 in the 1950s. Malayan tigers, or the *Panthera tigris tigris*, are classified as critically endangered and they are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List.

I visited Zoo Negara recently and met with one of the zoo officials. I had asked about the importance of tigers to our ecosystem.

He explained that tigers played a crucial role in the health and diversity of an ecosystem. The presence of tigers is an indicator of the wellbeing of the forest's ecosystem.

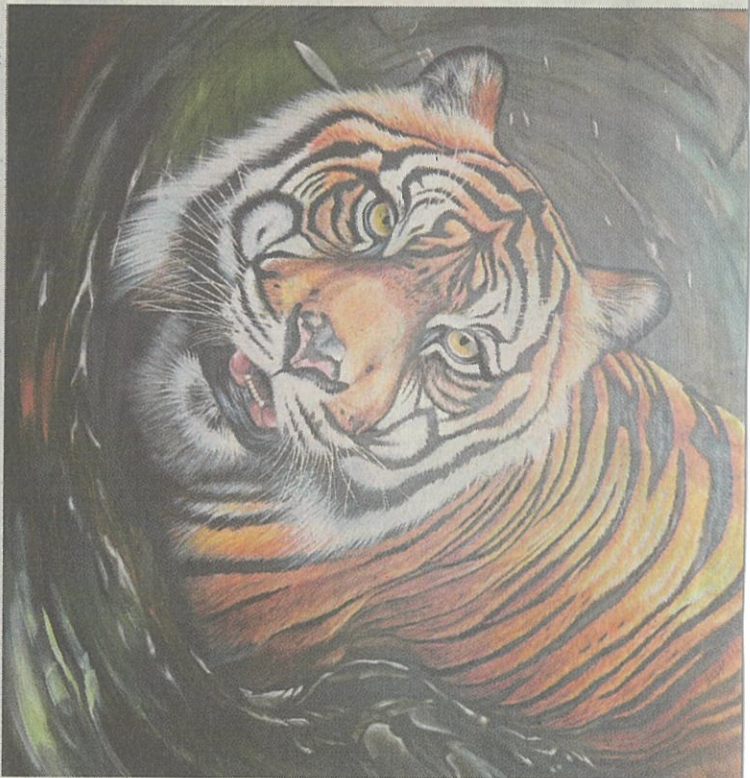
That the Malayan tigers are on the critically endangered list is a major concern. If we don't do

something about it, we may lose them for good. One of the reasons tigers are "disappearing" is because of poaching, an illegal activity that has become a global trade.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr A. Xavier Jayakumar recently said Malaysia must declare war on poachers to protect our tigers. He said the animal was likely to become extinct in the next five to 10 years if no drastic measures were taken.

It's a serious allegation when it is said that foreigners are allowed to "freely poach" in our forests and kill endangered wildlife. If that is truly the case, the government should tighten animal protection laws and impose stricter penalties on poachers and animal traffickers.

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks must step up



An illustration by Suzi Chua, titled 'Malayan Tiger', on display at the 'Giving Our Tigers a Second Chance' art exhibition in Kuala Lumpur last year. FILE PIC

patrols at hunting hotspots. There should be integrated patrols with the armed forces and police.

Non-governmental organisations such as the Malaysian Nature Society and the World Wildlife Fund Malaysia can be roped in.

The public can help by not destroying wildlife habitats and by

putting up signs to warn nature lovers, hikers or road users of a wildlife habitat in a vicinity.

All of us should help the government to guard this precious wildlife. We can ensure their survival if we act now.

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