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FRIDAY, 17TH MARCH 2023 AT 3:00 PM

SRINIVAS SEMINAR ROOM, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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HOW THE TIGER BECAME INDIAN: FAUNAL NATIONALISM, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY 1969–2019

Abstract:

In 1972 the tiger became India's national animal, displacing the lion after a short three-year period when the latter held the title. Project Tiger was launched in 1973 to protect the new national animal, becoming the single largest wildlife conservation scheme in the world. Evoking ideas of natural heritage, Project Tiger marked a shift in the ways dominant groups in government and society at large saw nature and nation. It ended one set of conflicts (such as licensed shikar) but set the stage for new levels of stress around residence and usufruct rights in tiger reserves. Today, India has the world's largest number of tigers and tiger reserves. However, continuing controversies about counting and modes of securing tiger habitats raise questions that go far beyond how the tiger became or stays Indian. How far does the nation secure Nature? Is preservation also destructive, and if so of what?

The Speaker:

Mahesh Rangarajan is Professor of History and Environmental Studies at Ashoka University. He has held visiting positions at Jadavpur, Cornell, and the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru. He has been a professor at Delhi University and served as Vice Chancellor of Krea University. He was also the Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. He is the author of *Fencing the Forest* (1996), *India's Wildlife History* (2001) and *Nature and Nation* (2015). His coedited works include *Shifting Ground* (2014) and *At Nature's Edge* (2018) and the first three volumes of the collected works of C. Rajagopalachari (2013–2017).