GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1493
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.12.2018

Result of All India Tiger Estimation, 2018

1493.   DR. VIKAS MAHATME:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government has completed the All India Tiger Estimation for this year, and if so, by when the results are likely to be released;
(b)   whether any steps have been taken to increase the accuracy of Tiger estimation and to make the data accessible more easily; and
(c)   whether any new steps have been taken to promote and increase Tiger conservation efforts, given that two-third of the world's Tiger population is found in India?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a)   Action has been taken to complete the fourth cycle of the quadrennial All India Tiger Estimation by June, 2019.

(b)   The All India Tiger Estimation has always been accurate. Steps have been taken to improve the precision of this accuracy by employing a 2 sq.km. grid for camera trapping. Relevant data in this context is already accessible on website of the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

(c)   The Government of India under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger undertakes the following activities to support tiger conservation in the country:

1. Stepping up protection: (antipoaching squad/Tiger Protection Force deployment).
2. Deciding inviolate spaces for wildlife and voluntary relocation of villagers from core or critical tiger habitats in Tiger Reserves.
3. Strengthening of infrastructure within Tiger Reserves.
4. Habitat improvement and water development.
5. Addressing man-animal conflict through a three pronged strategy through logistic support, habitat manipulation and standard operating procedures, operationalised through a Tiger Conservation Plan.
6. Fostering co-existence agenda in buffer or fringe areas.
7. Rehabilitation of traditional hunting tribes living around tiger reserves.
8. Assistance for research and field equipments.
9. Supporting staff development and capacity building.
10. Mainstreaming wildlife concerns in tiger bearing forests and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy involving locals to arrest fragmentation of habitats.

11. Safeguards and Retrofitting measures in the interest of wildlife conservation are promoted.
12. Independent monitoring and evaluation of tiger reserves.
13. Establishment and development of new tiger reserves.
14. Provision of Project Allowance to staff of Project Tiger.
15. Fostering Ecotourism in tiger reserves.

Besides, following milestone initiatives have been taken for conservation and protection of tiger and other wild animals:-

1.   Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 in 2006 to provide enabling provisions for constituting the National Tiger Conservation Authority under section 38 IV B and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau under section 38 IV C.

2.   Enhancement of punishment for offence in relation to the core area of a tiger reserve or where the offence relate to hunting in the tiger reserves or altering the boundaries of tiger reserves, etc.

3.   Comprehensive guidelines under section 38O 1 (c) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 issued for Project Tiger and Tourism in Tiger Reserves on 15th October, 2012.

4.   Raising, arming and deploying the Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) in tiger reserves.

5.   In collaboration with TRAFFIC-INDIA, an **online tiger mortality data base** is operational and Generic Guidelines for preparation of reserve specific Security Plan have been prepared which form a basis for antipoaching strategies in the overarching Tiger Conservation Plan.

6.   Based on International standards, security audit framework of the NTCA has been validated for implementing across all tiger reserves. 25 tiger reserves have been assessed for their security protocols through this framework.

7.   Steps taken for modernizing the infrastructure and field protection, besides launching 'Monitoring system for Tigers' Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STrIPES)' for effective field patrolling and monitoring. The M-STrIPES application has been made android based with three distinct modules, viz. patrol, ecological and conflict.

8.   **All India Tiger, Co-predators and Prey Estimation, 2014:-** The third round of country level tiger status assessment completed in 2014, with findings indicating an increase with a tiger population estimate of 2226 (lower and upper limits being 1945 and 2491 respectively), as compared to the last country level estimation of 2010, with an estimate of 1706 (lower and upper limits being 1520-1909 tigers), and 2006 estimation, with an estimate of 1411 (lower and upper limits being 1165 and 1657). At present, India has around 70% of tiger population and its source areas amongst the 13 tiger range countries in the world, owing to its long history of conserving the species through Project Tiger (2.21% of country's geographical area spread out in 50 tiger reserves in 18 States).

9.   **Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)**: A report on Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of Tiger Reserves was released in January, 2015, containing the third round of independent assessment based on refined criteria done in 2013-14 for 43 tiger reserves. Out of 43 tiger reserves, 17 were rated as 'very good', 16 as 'good' and 10 as 'fair'.

10.   Following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been issued in thematic areas of recurring nature:

(a)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for dealing with tiger deaths.
(b)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for dealing with straying tigers in human dominated landscape.
(c)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for disposing tiger/leopard carcass/body parts.
(d)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' to deal with orphaned / abandoned tiger cubs and old / injured tigers in the wild.
(e)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' to deal with tiger depredation on livestock.
(f)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for Interstate Co-ordination amongst tiger reserves that share boundary.
(g)   A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at landscape level.

11.   Phase-IV tiger reserve level, continuous monitoring of tigers using camera traps and building up data on photo captures of individual tigers, has been institutionalized.

12.   A national repository of camera trap photo IDs of individual tigers has been created.

13.   **Economic Valuation of six tiger reserves** done in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Forest Management. Similar exercise is being done for 10 more tiger reserves.

14.   Trial of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle for monitoring done in the Panna Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and now getting extended to 13 other tiger reserves too. Frontline staff has been capacity built and first set of equipment handed over at the Panna Tiger Reserve.

15.   National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau have established an online tiger / wildlife crime tracking / reporting system in tiger reserves.

16.   To assess status of tiger bearing areas outside tiger reserves, the CA|TS (Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards) framework is being used, which helps identify inadequacies in management interventions in such areas so that gaps can be addressed through appropriate strategies.

17.   Initiative has been taken to come out with a sub-continental level tiger estimation report along with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

18.   Action has been taken to assess occupancy of tigers in high altitude landscapes, in project mode with the Global Tiger Forum.

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