

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3875
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.04.2023

Buffer zone around wildlife sanctuaries, National Parks and Reserve Forests

3875. DR. SONAL MANSINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Central Government has approached the Supreme Court for relaxation on the verdict of 1 kilometre mandatory buffer zone around wildlife sanctuaries, National Parks and Reserve Forests;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the steps taken to ensure preservation and protection of the flora and fauna of our ecosystem;
- (d) the reasons for not implementing the Gadgil Committee report;
- (e) the steps taken for eviction of unauthorized encroachments in reserve forest land across the country; and
- (f) the details of the area of land encroached upon in reserve forest across the country, State-wise?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The matter is pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court.
- (c) A number of steps have been taken by the Government to ensure preservation and protection of the flora and fauna in our country. Some of the important steps are as follows:
 - i. Financial assistance is provided to States under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for activities like creation and maintenance of water holes for wild animals in Protected Areas, soil and moisture conservation measures, establishment of anti-poaching camps, strengthening wildlife veterinary care, eradication of weeds, creation and maintenance of fire lines, awareness generation.
 - ii. Financial assistance is provided to States for the recovery programme of critically endangered species for saving critically endangered species and habitats under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats'. A total of 22 critically endangered species have been identified under this programme.
 - iii. Rare and endangered species of animals found in India have been

- listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby providing them highest degree of protection.
- iv. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for punishment for violation of its provisions. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence
 - v. Wild Life Crime Control Bureau has been set up to gather intelligence about poaching and unlawful trade in wild animals and animal articles and to achieve inter-state and trans-boundary coordination in enforcement of wildlife laws.
 - vi. The Ministry has formulated the 3rd 'National Wildlife Action Plan' for a period of 2017 to 2031 to save wild animals in the country. The Plan focuses on landscape approach in conservation of all wildlife irrespective of where they occur. It also gives special emphasis to recovery of threatened species of wildlife while conserving their habitats which includes terrestrial, inland aquatic, coastal and marine ecosystems.
 - vii. In order to further strengthen conservation of wildlife, Eco-Sensitive Zones are notified around National Parks and Sanctuaries under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Besides, areas which require special attention for their conservation are notified by the Ministry as Ecologically Sensitive Areas.

- (d) A High Level Working Group was constituted by the Ministry on 17.08.2012, under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, inter alia, to examine the report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, or Gadgil Committee, in a holistic and multidisciplinary fashion keeping in view the comments received from the State Governments, Central Ministries and other stakeholders

On the basis of the Report of the High Level Committee on Western Ghats, the Ministry brought out a draft Notification on 10.03.2014 whereby it proposed to notify some areas of Western Ghats to be declared as Ecologically Sensitive Areas requiring protection and conservation. A high level committee has been formed to address this issue.

- (e) and (f) Protection and management of forests is primarily the responsibility of States Governments. Action to remove encroachment is taken by the State Governments under the provisions of various acts such as the Indian Forest Act, 1927; Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, rules made under these Acts and State Specific Acts and Rules. The details of forest area under encroachment are given in Annexure.

Annexure

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (e) and (f) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3875 due for reply on 06.04.2023 regarding buffer zone around wildlife sanctuaries, National Parks and Reserve Forests

Details of forest area under encroachment State-wise

S. No.	Name of the State/UTs	Area under Encroachment (in ha)
1	Andhra Pradesh	25211.11
2	Assam	377532.63
3	Arunachal Pradesh	53450.43
4	Bihar	74.01
5	Chhattisgarh	7645.84
6	Gujarat	25.24
7	Goa	Nil
8	Haryana	1316.44
9	Himachal Pradesh	6252.00
10	Jharkhand	304.57
11	Jammu & Kashmir	16512.39
12	Karnataka	407.09
13	Kerala	5024.54
14	Madhya Pradesh	54173.28
15	Maharashtra	228.81
16	Manipur	2213.82
17	Meghalaya	9816.31
18	Mizoram	10852.80
19	Nagaland	25.89
20	Odisha	33154.19
21	Punjab	9008.08
22	Rajasthan	13939.99
23	Sikkim	2817.21
24	Tripura	3621.80
25	Tamil Nadu	15010.71
26	Telangana	2004.48
27	Uttar Pradesh	27325.17
28	Uttarakhand	10649.11
29	West Bengal	10214.80
30	A & N Islands	3851.24
31	Chandigarh	14.00
32	D&N Haveli	0.08
33	Daman & Diu	87.83
34	Lakshadweep	Nil
35	Delhi	384.38
36	Puducherry	Nil
37	Ladakh	01.00
