

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1160
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.08.2024

Man-elephant conflict and conservation of tigers in Manas National Park, Assam

1160. SHRI RWNGWRA NARZARY:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry has taken projects for resolution of man-elephant conflicts in Assam which occur frequently in the elephant habitats' zone, including Bodoland area;
- (b) if so, the measures taken by Government for zero man-elephant conflict;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether measures were undertaken to promote conservation of tigers in the Manas National Park, Assam under the Project Tiger during the years 2021, 2022 and 2023; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof, year-wise, if not, the reason therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) to (c) The Ministry has not taken any project for resolution of the man-elephant conflict in Assam. The management of wildlife including mitigation and management of human-elephant conflict (HEC) is primarily the responsibility of State Governments/UT Administrations. As per the information provided by the State of Assam, the following measures for prevention of human-elephant conflict in the State, including the Bodoland area, have been taken;
 - (i) Installation of solar electric fencing to prevent elephants from entering villages.
 - (ii) Construction of watch towers at strategic locations to monitor the movement of elephants.
 - (iii) Control rooms have been established at divisional level to disseminate vital information to all stakeholders on the movement of elephants.
 - (iv) Rapid Response Teams in areas prone to human-elephant conflict have been deployed.

- (v) Signages at vulnerable locations/elephant corridors have been placed.
- (vi) Awareness programs among the local communities to educate and sensitize them about wildlife conservation and required safety measures.
- (vii) Timely disposal of claims for ex-gratia, compensation for human death, injury, crop damage, house damage, and livestock are done as per government norms.

In addition, Ministry has taken the following measures to help in mitigation of human-elephant conflict:-

- (i) The Ministry is providing financial and technical assistance to States/UTs under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Project Tiger & Elephant for protection of elephants, their habitat and corridors, to address issues of man-elephant conflict and welfare of captive elephants in the country.
- (ii) Other various Centrally Sponsored Schemes including Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat being implemented by this Ministry contribute to the improvement in the natural habitat of elephants by augmenting water sources, planting of fodder trees, regeneration of bamboo etc. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 and the Rules made there under also provide for use of the Fund for development of wildlife habitats, including for elephants, establishment of animal rescue centres, etc. which also contribute to reduction in HEC.
- (iii) An advisory on dealing with human-wildlife conflict has been issued by the Ministry in February, 2021. The advisory recommends coordinated inter-departmental action, identification of conflict hot spots, adherence to Standard Operating Procedures, establishment of rapid response teams, formation of State and District level committees to review the quantum of ex-gratia relief, issuing guidance/instructions for expedited payments, and provision of adequate funds for suitable portion of ex-gratia relief to be paid within 24 hours to the affected persons in the case of death and injury to persons.
- (iv) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also issued Guidelines to States/UTs on 3rd June, 2022 on managing Human Wildlife conflicts including damage to crops. It includes promotion of crops in forest fringe areas which are unpalatable to wild animals, agro forestry models which include cash crops like chillies, lemon grass, khus grass etc. suitably mixed with tree/shrub species. It also includes preparation and implementation of comprehensive long-term plan for alternate cropping by the state Agriculture/Horticulture Department under different schemes in vulnerable areas.
- (v) The Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in consultation with the Ministry of Environment Forest, and Climate Change, National Highway Authority,

National Tiger Conservation Authority and World Bank Group has published a document namely 'Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure' (2016) to assist project agencies in designing linear infrastructure, including railways lines, in a manner that reduces human-animal conflicts.

- (vi) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in coordination with the State Forest Departments, have ground-validated 150 elephant corridors across 15 elephant range states (i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal) in India and informed the State Governments/UT Administrations to take necessary steps to protect and conserve the elephant corridors.
- (vii) Critical elephant habitats are notified as 'Elephant Reserve' for focus and synergy in elephant conservation and to reduce conflict. The notification is carried out with the approval of Steering Committee formed in the Ministry. So far 33 Elephant Reserves have been established in 14 major elephant States.
- (viii) A field manual for frontline staff to manage Human Elephant Conflict was released during the 16th meeting of the Steering Committee on 29th April, 2022.
- (ix) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides regulatory functions for dealing with human wildlife conflict situations.
- (x) A general advisory has been issued jointly by Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment and Forests on 30th March, 2010 to the General Managers of North Frontier (NF), East Cost and Southern Railways with a request to implement the suggested measures.
- (xi) Advisory on implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of power transmission lines and other power infrastructure on elephant and other wildlife issued by Ministry of Power to all DISCOMs and TRANSCO has been circulated to all States/UTS on 16th September, 2022.
- (xii) Ministry also released a Guidelines for Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation-Taking a Harmonious Coexistence Approach (2023) for addressing human-elephant conflicts.
- (xiii) To reduce man-elephant conflict and to avoid retaliatory killing of elephants. Compensation is provided to local communities for loss of their property and life caused by wild elephants. The Ministry has notified enhancement of ex-gratia rates related to wildlife depredation vide letter No. WL-21/4/2023 WL dated 22nd December, 2023, which includes increase in ex-gratia from ₹5lakh to ₹10 lakh in case of death by wild animals.
- (xiv) A permanent Co-ordination Committee has been constituted between Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for preventing elephant death in train accident.

- (xv) Inter-ministerial meeting convened regularly with the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Power to holistically address the issue of accidental death of elephant due to train hit and electrocution.
- (xvi) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Mainstreaming Management of The Elephant Reserves” was conducted on 13 -15th March, 2023 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
- (xvii) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Minimizing the Impact of the Railway on Elephants and Other Wildlife” for the officials of Indian Railways was conducted on 23-25th November, 2023 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
- (xviii) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Mainstreaming Management of The Elephant Reserves was conducted on 28- 29th November, 2023 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
- (xix) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Exploring solution for minimizing electrocution risk and promoting wildlife safety across power infrastructure in India” was conducted on 11- 13th January, 2024 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

(d)&(e) Funding assistance in Tiger Reserves are extended under ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-IDWH) for protection, habitat management, eco-development, awareness and infrastructure creation, voluntary village relocation, which helps in conserving the species in the area. The details of fund released to the Manas Tiger Reserve, Assam during last three years, is as under:-

(₹ in lakhs)					
Sl. No.	Tiger Reserve	State	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1	Manas	Assam	417.85	778.54	599.88
