

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2154**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.08.2025

**Measures taken to protect marine life and ocean eco systems**

2154 SMT. SAGARIKA GHOSE:

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

- (a) whether any steps are being taken to preserve the protection of marine eco systems particularly in high tourism areas of coasts and beaches, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the manner in which the livelihoods of fishing communities being balanced with the needs of marine protection; and
- (c) the manner in which the sustainable ocean-based tourism is being developed when it comes to ocean eco systems, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) The Government has taken various steps for the conservation of marine ecosystems including in high tourism areas, which includes the following:
  - i. A network of protected areas across the Coastal States and Islands of the country has been created for the conservation of marine species under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
  - ii. Many threatened marine species have been listed in Schedule I and II of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 providing them protection against hunting.
  - iii. The Ministry has amended Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to empower Indian Coast Guards for entry, search, arrest and detention in case of contravention of provisions of the Act.
  - iv. The Ministry has released a National Marine Turtle Action Plan with the aim to conserve marine turtles and their habitats in India. The Ministry has released 'Marine Megafauna Stranding Management Guidelines' in 2021 for management of stranding and entanglement of marine megafauna.
  - v. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019, promulgated under Environment (Protection) Act 1986, has specific focus on conservation and management plans of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs), like Mangroves, Sea grasses, Sand dunes, Corals and Coral reefs, Biologically active mudflats, Turtle nesting grounds, and Horseshoe crabs' habitats.
  - vi. The Ministry provides financial assistance to States/UTs under the Centrally sponsored Scheme 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' for conservation of wildlife including marine fauna and its habitat.

- vii. The Ministry is granting funds under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes to maritime States for the conservation of Corals and Mangroves.
- viii. The Ministry under the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority provides funding support for conservation of Dugongs and their habitats.
- ix. The Ministry is implementing the Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) to promote mangrove conservation through convergence with State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) funds, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), and other state schemes, supplemented by gap funding from the National CAMPA.

(b) India ensures marine protection while supporting fishing communities through a mix of legal safeguards, community involvement, and livelihood support. The Coastal Regulation (CRZ) and Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) Notifications (2019) protect coastal areas through 'No Development Zones' (NDZs), but still allow essential facilities like schools, toilets, roads, and community services. Importantly, traditional fishing activities are supported—fish drying yards, net-mending areas, auction halls, boat-building, and ice plants are allowed in NDZs to protect livelihoods.

Additionally, to protect ecologically critical coastal areas and address the challenges faced by local communities, the CRZ Notification, 2019 recognizes Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCAs) as sensitive regions requiring special protection and management. These include the Sundarbans in West Bengal and other areas notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, such as the Gulf of Khambhat and Kutch (Gujarat), Malvan and Achra-Ratnagiri (Maharashtra), Karwar and Coondapur (Karnataka), Vembanad (Kerala), Gulf of Mannar (Tamil Nadu), Bhitarkanika (Odisha), and Coringa, East Godavari, and Krishna (Andhra Pradesh). These areas are managed with the involvement of coastal communities, including fisherfolk who depend on coastal resources for their sustainable livelihoods.

Fishing communities are also involved in conservation efforts, such as turtle protection, which builds local ownership and balances ecological and economic needs. To reduce pressure on marine resources, the government promotes alternative livelihoods like seaweed farming, eco-tourism, Crab & mussel fattening etc. Artificial reefs are being developed to enhance marine ecosystems by serving as nursery grounds for marine life and also to support traditional fishers—especially hook-and-line fishers—by improving catches near the coast.

(c) As informed by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), the development and promotion of tourist destinations and products, including cruise and coastal tourism, are primarily undertaken by the respective State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism supports and complements these efforts through various schemes and initiatives. The MoT has identified the Coastal Circuit as one of the fifteen thematic circuits under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The scheme has recently been revamped as Swadesh Darshan 2.0, with a renewed focus on developing sustainable and responsible tourism destinations, adopting a tourist- and destination-centric approach. Additionally, the MoT has launched the Travel for LiFE (TFL) program to raise awareness about sustainable tourism and to encourage both tourists and tourism businesses to adopt practices that are environmentally responsible and in harmony with nature.

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