

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 14
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.01.2026

Reducing human-elephant conflict

*14. DR. SIKANDER KUMAR:

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

- (a) whether any research initiatives are being undertaken to understand elephant behaviour and develop effective conflict mitigation strategies;
- (b) whether Government has made any strategy to ensure collaboration and coordination among States and conservation institutions to achieve conservation goals and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the policies and laws that are in place to protect elephant habitats and corridors and how these are being enforced; and
- (d) the measures being taken to restore degraded habitats and corridors in the Nilgiri Elephant Reserve to reduce human-elephant conflict?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 14 REGARDING 'REDUCING HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT' FOR REPLY ON 29.01.2026.

(a) The Government of India, through the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under Project Elephant, is undertaking several initiatives to understand elephant behaviour and mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC). The Ministry, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India, has completed a comprehensive study to analyze elephant conflict issues and suggest conflict reduction measures for the States of Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand. Further, Phase II of this study will cover Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, focusing on a detailed 23-year HEC incident analysis, which shall provide critical insights into long-term trends and effective mitigation strategies. Other notable initiatives include the development of a genetic database of captive elephants by the Wildlife Institute of India, radio collaring of wild elephants in elephant conflict areas to understand the elephant movement patterns, behaviour for better decision making for conflict mitigation, publication of a manual on best practices for HEC management, Indo-German collaboration for conflict mitigation guidelines piloted in Karnataka, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal and field manual for frontline staff to manage Human Elephant Conflict, advisories on use of social media apps and communication means in human elephant affected areas as alert system, use of trained captive elephants in patrolling, field works and managing human-elephant conflict, and use of advanced technologies such as AI-based monitoring and early warning systems. In addition to above, the State of Tamil Nadu has also undertaken several studies to understand elephant behaviour and mitigate HEC.

(b) The Central Government provides financial and technical support to State Government/Union Territory Administrations under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes 'Project Tiger & Elephant' to protect elephants, their habitat and corridors, and to address issues of man-elephant conflict and welfare of captive elephants. To ensure collaboration among States and conservation institutions, the Government has established mechanisms such as the Project Elephant Steering Committee, which is regularly convened to review progress and to set priorities for conservation of elephants and their habitats.

Further, the Ministry, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), has initiated development of a Regional Action Plan (RAP) adopting a landscape-level, and multi-State approach to address the ecological and socio-economic dimensions of Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC) across the country. All elephant-bearing States are actively engaged in preparing RAPs for the four major elephant-bearing regions. The process for the southern and north-eastern regions has already commenced, with several field visits undertaken by dedicated RAP committees.

A Centre of Excellence on Human-Wildlife Conflict has been established at WII-Southern campus in Coimbatore to support states in mitigating human-wildlife conflicts through research, training, and strategic interventions

(c) & (d) The primary policy and legal framework for elephant conservation is the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which provides the highest protection to Schedule I species and prescribes penalties for habitat destruction, poaching, and related offences. Critical elephant landscapes are notified as Elephant Reserves under Project Elephant to ensure focused and coordinated conservation efforts, with approvals granted by the Ministry's Steering Committee. Currently, 33 Elephant Reserves including Nilgiri Elephant Reserve have been established across 14 major elephant-bearing States.

These reserves overlap with Tiger Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Reserved Forests, which are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, the Indian Forest Act, 1927, and relevant State laws. Infrastructure and development activities within these areas are strictly regulated under applicable Acts, Rules, and Government guidelines to safeguard conservation objectives.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in coordination with the State Forest Departments, has ground-validated 150 elephant corridors across 15 elephant range states in India and advised the State Governments/UT Administrations to take necessary steps to protect and conserve the elephant corridors.

Under Project Elephant, the Government of India has institutionalised Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Elephant Reserves (MEE-ER) to assess the effectiveness of management of elephant habitats, corridors and landscape connectivity. The Nilgiri Elephant Reserve was one of the four pilot ERs where this MEE process was tested, helping identify strengths, weaknesses and priority action areas for habitat and corridor restoration. The MEE highlights the need for integrated landscape approaches that consider habitat protection, connectivity and conflict reduction in management planning. In a first of its kind initiative, work has been initiated on the prepare of Model Elephant Conservation Plan (ECP) for Nilgiri Elephant Reserve.

In addition, the Government of Tamil Nadu has undertaken multiple measures to restore degraded habitats and corridors in the Nilgiri Elephant Reserve and reduce human–elephant conflict. These include removal of invasive alien species from 11,387 Ha of forest areas and restoration of 199 Ha of grasslands to improve biodiversity and fodder availability. An AI-based elephant monitoring and alert system has been implemented in the Coimbatore Forest Division to prevent train-related elephant casualties. Command and Control Centres have been established in high conflict-prone divisions such as Gudalur and Hosur, along with deployment of Rapid Response Teams in Gudalur, Hosur, Tirunelveli, and Dindigul to manage conflict situations effectively. Conflict mitigation measures such as steel wire rope fencing, hanging solar fences, and elephant-proof trenches have been installed in identified conflict prone areas. Additionally, the government of Tamil Nadu has provided corpus fund to ensure prompt compensation to victims of human–wildlife conflict.
