

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1377
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2018

Threat to Gangetic Dolphins

1377. SHRIMATI KOTHAPALLI GEETHA:

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

- (a) whether scientists and wildlife conservationists have raised concerns over the threat posed to Gangetic river dolphins by the National Waterways project, if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the development of the Ganga river for shipping is seen by wildlife conservationists as the single-largest threat to the survival of the species, whose numbers are declining in most parts of their natural habitat, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government has launched the Endangered Species Recovery Plans for four species of global importance to tackle the threat to dolphins and three other species including dolphins and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Some wildlife conservationists have expressed their concerns over the threats posed to Gangetic river dolphins by the National Waterways Project, impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey base on Dolphin population.
- (b) The population of Gangetic river dolphin is impacted due to a number of factors including river degradation, mortality in fishing net, poaching, large scale increase in the river traffic, direct hit by propellers etc. Unplanned developmental works on the waterways may impact the population of these species.
- (c) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India has identified 17 Critically Endangered species for focused conservation program under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat'.

From amongst the above 17 species, conservation and recovery programme for four species viz. the Gangetic River Dolphin, Manipur's Brow antlered deer or Sangai, Dugong and the Great Indian Bustard are also being taken up with financial assistance under CAMPA and in collaboration with the concerned State Governments with active assistance from WII.
