

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 477
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2023

Demarcation of Buffer Zones

477. SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN:
ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE:
SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:
SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government has observed that State Forest Department is not adequately staffed and equipped to deal with man animal conflicts and if so, whether sufficient number of forest service officers are posted as wildlife wardens in the country and if so, the details regarding the same for the State of Kerala across various divisions along with the details of steps taken to equip State Forest Departments by the Centre;
- (b) whether the Union Government initiated action on the order of Supreme Court regarding sensitive zone surrounding the protected forest and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has created any committee to study the scientific manner of demarcating buffer zones and if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by the Government as recommended by the committee;
- (d) whether the Government will pass a law to ensure that the Supreme Court verdict on creating Buffer Zones is not applicable to inhabited areas and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has conducted any study by any agencies to ascertain the crisis faced by the residents in these buffer zone areas that were incorrectly included in the preliminary mapping and are likely to face eviction and if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the Government of Kerala has given any representation to amend the requirement of Buffer Zones as per the Supreme Court verdict and exempt Kerala from the Buffer zone order and if so, the details of actions taken thereon; and
- (g) whether the Government plans to change the boundaries of existing National parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the country within the reserve forest limits and if so, the details of steps taken in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) Management of forests and wildlife, including man-animal conflict, posting of forest service officers is primarily the responsibility of the respective States/Union Territories.

Ministry provides financial and technical support to the States/Union Territories under the Central Sponsored Schemes - 'Development of Wildlife Habitat', 'Project Elephant' and 'Project Tiger' for conservation and protection of wildlife.

- (b) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has filed an application for modification/ clarification of the order dated 03.06.2022 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court regarding Eco-sensitive Zones around National Parks and sanctuaries and the matter is sub-judice.
- (c) The Central Government has constituted an Expert Committee for examination of proposals related to Eco-sensitive Zones around National Parks and Sanctuaries comprising official and non-official members which submits its recommendations to the Central Government after such proposals, as received from the State Governments, have been examined within the Ministry and the proposals have undergone stakeholder consultations as per prescribed procedure.
- (d) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- (e) No, Sir.
- (f) Yes, Sir. As per the procedure laid down for notification of ESZ, the draft proposals related to finalization of ESZ received from the State Governments are examined in the Ministry before publication. The final notification is published after examining the claims and objections received after the draft notification.
- (g) State/Union Territories are empowered to alter the boundaries of National Parks and sanctuaries on recommendations of National Board for Wild Life as per the provisions contained in Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
