

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4324
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2019

Sariska Tiger Reserve

4324. SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA:

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

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to improve the condition of Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar district and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether any concrete steps have been taken to improve the status of tigers which die in the absence of any safety measures and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether wild animals move into the surrounding settlement/habitations due to lack of strict demarcation of forest limits which causes loss of life and property including destruction of the standing crops of the farmers for which no due compensation is paid to them by the Forest department;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the measures taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (e) the number of settlements in Rajasthan that are situated near the said reserve which have been shifted to other places along with the number of such settlements proposed to be relocated?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) & (b) The Government of India, under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger has taken several milestone initiatives to strengthen tiger conservation in the country which *inter alia* covers the Sariska Tiger Reserve, which is at **Annexure-I**.
- (c) & (d) The Government of India, through the National Tiger Conservation Authority has a three pronged strategy to manage human-tiger negative interactions, which is elucidated at **Annexure-II**.
- (e) As on November 30, 2019, out of a total of 973 families in core/critical tiger habitat of the Sariska Tiger Reserve, 671 families have been relocated while action has been initiated to relocate a further 85 families.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) & (b) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4324 ON SARISKA TIGER RESERVE DUE FOR REPLY ON 13.12.2019

The Government of India, under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger has taken several milestone initiatives to strengthen tiger conservation in the country, and the same are as under:-

Legal steps

1. Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 in 2006 to provide enabling provisions for constituting the National Tiger Conservation Authority under section 38 IV B and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau under section 38 IV C.
2. Enhancement of punishment for offence in relation to the core area of a tiger reserve or where the offence relates to hunting in the tiger reserves or altering the boundaries of tiger reserves, etc.
3. Comprehensive guidelines under section 38O 1 (c) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 issued for Project Tiger and Tourism in Tiger Reserves on 15th October, 2012.

Administrative steps

4. Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) with effect from the 4th September, 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, inter alia, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.
5. Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) with effect from the 6th June, 2007 to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.
6. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to tiger reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel or home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication and wireless facilities.
7. In-principle approval has been accorded by the National Tiger Conservation Authority for creation of new tiger reserves, and the sites are: Sunabeda (Odisha) and Guru Ghasidas (Chhattisgarh). The State Governments have been advised to send proposals for declaring the following areas as tiger reserves: (i) Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary (Goa), (ii) Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel / Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuaries / Varushanadu Valley (Tamil Nadu), (iii) Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh), (iv) Cauveri-MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary (Karnataka) and (v) Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary (Uttarakhand).
8. Rajaji National Park (Uttarakhand), Orang National Park (Assam) & Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh) have been notified as 48th, 49th & 50th Tiger Reserves.
9. The revised Project Tiger guidelines have been issued to State Governments for strengthening tiger conservation, which apart from ongoing activities, inter alia, include financial support to States for enhanced village relocation or rehabilitation package for people living in core or critical tiger habitats (from Rs. 1 lakh per family to Rs. 10 lakhs per family), rehabilitation or resettlement of communities involved in traditional hunting, mainstreaming livelihood and wildlife concerns in

forests outside tiger reserves and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy to arrest habitat fragmentation.

10. A scientific methodology for estimating tiger (including co-predators, prey animals and assessment of habitat status) has been evolved and mainstreamed. The findings of this estimation and assessment are bench marks for future tiger conservation strategy.

11. The 18 tiger States have notified the core/critical tiger habitat (40145.30 sq. km.), and the buffer/peripheral area (32603.72 sq.km.) of all the 50 tiger reserves in the country, under section 38V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006.

12. Regional Offices of the National Tiger Conservation Authority are operational at Nagpur, Bengaluru and Guwahati headed by an Inspector General of Forests.

Financial steps

13. Financial and technical help is provided to the State Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, such as “Project Tiger” and “Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats” for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the State Governments for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

14. India has a bilateral understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

15. A protocol has been signed in September, 2011 with Bangladesh for conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderban.

16. A sub-group on tiger and leopard conservation has been constituted for cooperation with the Russian Federation. Indo-Russia bilateral took place in September 2018 at Moscow, wherein a tripartite MOU between the National Tiger Conservation Authority, Wildlife Institute of India and A.N. Severstov Institute of Ecology & Evaluation was agreed upon and signed on 4.12.2018.

17. India is the founder member of the Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

18. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with direction to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

19. Based on India’s strong intervention during the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at Geneva from 23-27 July, 2012, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Secretariat has issued a notification No. 2012/054 dated the 3rd September, 2012 to Parties to fully implement Decision 14.69 and report to the Secretariat by 25 September, 2012 (Progress made on restricting captive breeding operations of tigers etc.).

During the 18th CoP held at Geneva in August 2019, based on an intervention from India, a slew of decisions were adopted to intervene in territories which had facilities for keeping big cats as a reinforcement of decision 14.69.

20. The 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference (3 AMC) was organized in New Delhi from 12-14 April 2016. Inspired by the statement of Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, during this conference that “conservation of tigers is not a choice, it is an imperative”, to achieve the concrete results of ensuring the conservation of tigers in the wild and their habitats by 2022, the representatives of the Governments of the Tiger Range Countries resolved to:

- **Accelerate implementation** of the Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP)/National Tiger Recovery Programme (NTRP) and agreed actions from the above-mentioned declarations, review and update priority and differentiated action plans, and track progress through mutual and systematic reporting and evaluation.
- **Align development and tiger conservation** in a mutually complementary manner by re-orienting development strategies to mainstream the concerns of tiger conservation, such as by integrating tiger and wildlife safeguards in infrastructure at the landscape level, developing partnerships with business groups, and strong engagement with local stakeholders.
- **Leverage funding and technical support** from international organisations, bilateral and multilateral financial institutions, foundations, civil society organisations, private sector, and climate funds, in addition to TRC governments.
- Recognise and enhance the importance of tiger habitats by promoting them as **providing ecosystem services, as engines of economic growth and helping to address climate change.**
- **Emphasize recovery of tiger populations in areas with low tiger densities** and restoration in areas from which they have been extirpated by using successful programs of tiger reintroduction and rehabilitation of their habitats and prey.
- **Strengthen co-operation at the highest levels of government** to combat wildlife crime, address the demand for tiger products, and increase formal and informal transboundary coordination.
- **Enhance knowledge sharing and capacity development for all stakeholders and increase the use of technology**, including smart tools, monitoring protocols, and information systems, to improve management effectiveness.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS STEPS

21. **Creation of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF):-**The Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) has been made operational in the States of Karnataka (Bandipur), Maharashtra (Pench, Tadoba-Andhari, Nawegaon-Nagzira, Melghat), Rajasthan (Ranthambhore) and Odisha (Similipal), out of 13 initially selected tiger reserves, with 60% central assistance under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger, Kaziranga (Assam) with 90% central assistance.

22. In collaboration with TRAFFIC-INDIA, an **online tiger mortality data base** is operational and Generic Guidelines for preparation of reserve specific Security Plan have been prepared which form a basis for antipoaching strategies in the overarching Tiger Conservation Plan.

23. Implementing a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with tiger States, linked to fund flows for effective implementation of tiger conservation initiatives.

24. Steps taken for modernizing the infrastructure and field protection, besides launching ‘Monitoring system for Tigers’ Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STriPES)’ for effective

field patrolling and monitoring. The M-STrIPES application has been made android based with three distinct modules, viz. patrol, ecological and conflict.

25. Initiatives taken for improving the field delivery through capacity building of field officials, apart from providing incentives.

26. As a part of active management to rebuild Sariska and Panna Tiger Reserves where tigers have become locally extinct, reintroduction of tigers and tigresses have been done. The successful reintroduction of wild tigers in Panna is a unique exercise and one of a kind in the world. The reintroduced tigresses are breeding.

27. **All India Tiger, Co-predators and Prey Estimation, 2018:-** The fourth round of country level tiger status assessment completed in 2018, with findings indicating an increase with a tiger population estimate of 2967 (lower and upper limits being 2603 and 3346 respectively), as compared to the last country level estimation of 2014, with an estimate of 2226 (lower and upper limits being 1945-2491 tigers), 2010 estimation with an estimation of 1706 (lower and upper limits being 1507-1896) and 2006 estimation, with an estimate of 1411 (lower and upper limits being 1165 and 1657). At present, India has around 75% of tiger population and its source areas amongst the 13 tiger range countries in the world, owing to its long history of conserving the species through Project Tiger (2.21% of country's geographical area spread out in 50 tiger reserves in 18 States).

28. **Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE):** A report on Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of Tiger Reserves was released in July, 2019, containing the fourth round of independent assessment based on refined criteria done in 2018 for 50 tiger reserves. Out of 50 tiger reserves, 21 were rated as 'very good', 17 as 'good' and 12 as 'fair'.

29. Providing special assistance for mitigation of human-tiger conflicts in problematic areas.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

30. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for dealing with tiger deaths has been issued, based on advisories of Project Tiger / National Tiger Conservation Authority, with inputs from Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, State officials and experts, fine tuned to meet the present challenges.

31. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for dealing with straying tigers in human dominated landscape has been issued.

32. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for disposing tiger/leopard carcass/body parts has been issued.

33. A Standard Operating Procedure has been issued to deal with orphaned / abandoned tiger cubs and old / injured tigers in the wild.

34. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' has been issued to deal with tiger depredation on livestock.

35. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for Interstate Co-ordination amongst tiger reserves that share boundary was issued by the NTCA.

36. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' has been issued for active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at landscape level.

37. Phase-IV tiger reserve level, continuous monitoring of tigers using camera traps and building up data on photo captures of individual tigers, has been institutionalized.

38. A national repository of camera trap photo IDs of individual tigers has been created.
39. Field level workshops for capacity building of field officers to deal with straying tigers.
40. On completion of pilot e-surveillance project in Corbett Tiger Reserve (Uttarakhand), central assistance (100%) has been provided for installing 24X7 e-surveillance at Kaziranga Tiger Reserve (Assam) and fringes of Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh).
41. **Economic Valuation of sixteen tiger reserves** done in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Forest Management to assess value of the ecosystem services they provide and their potential role in climate change mitigation.
42. Trial of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle for monitoring done in the Panna Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and now getting extended to 13 other tiger reserves too. Frontline staff has been capacity built and first set of equipment handed over at the Panna Tiger Reserve.
43. Assessment of Status, Density and Change in Forest Cover in and around tiger reserves of the Shivalik Gangetic Plain Landscape done in collaboration with the Forest Survey of India.
44. A joint report of Bangladesh has been brought out on the assessment of tiger status in the Sundarbans.
45. National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau have established an online tiger / wildlife crime tracking / reporting system in tiger reserves.
46. Based on International standards, security audit framework of the NTCA has been validated for implementing across all tiger reserves. 25 tiger reserves have been assessed for their security protocols through this framework.
47. To assess status of tiger bearing areas outside tiger reserves, the CA|TS (Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards) framework is being used, which helps identify inadequacies in management interventions in such areas so that gaps can be addressed through appropriate strategies. 2 of the 4 global sites accredited with CA|TS certification are in India, namely the Ramnagar and Lansdowne Forests Divisions in Uttarakhand.
48. Initiative has been taken to come out with a sub-continental level tiger estimation report along with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.
49. To assess occupancy of tigers in high altitude landscapes, a collaborative project with the Global Tiger Forum has been initiated.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (c) & (d) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4324 ON SARISKA TIGER RESERVE DUE FOR REPLY ON 13.12.2019

The Government of India, through the National Tiger Conservation Authority has a three pronged strategy to manage human-tiger negative interactions:

- (i) **Material and logistical support:** Funding support through the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger, is provided to tiger reserves for acquiring capacity in terms of infrastructure and material, to deal with tigers dispersing out of source areas. These are solicited by tiger reserves through an Annual Plan of Operation (APO) every year which stems out from an overarching Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP), mandated under Section 38 V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. *Inter alia*, activities such as payment of ex-gratia and compensation, periodic awareness campaigns to sensitize, guide and advise the general populace on man-animal conflict, dissemination of information through various forms of media, procurement of immobilization equipment, drugs, training and capacity building of forest staff to deal with conflict events are generally solicited.
- (ii) **Restricting habitat interventions:** Based on the carrying capacity of tigers in a tiger reserve, habitat interventions are restricted through an overarching TCP. In case tiger numbers are at carrying capacity levels, it is advised that habitat interventions should be limited so that there is no excessive spill over of wildlife including tigers thereby minimizing man-animal conflict. Further, in buffer areas around tiger reserves, habitat interventions are restricted such that they are sub-optimal vis-à-vis the core/critical tiger habitat areas, judicious enough to facilitate dispersal to other rich habitat areas only.
- (iii) **Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs):** The National Tiger Conservation Authority has issued following three SOPs to deal with man-animal conflict which are available in public domain:
 - i. To deal with emergency arising due to straying of tigers in human dominated landscapes
 - ii. To deal with tiger depredation on livestock
 - iii. For active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at the landscape level.

The three SOPs *inter alia* include the issue of managing dispersing tigers, managing livestock kills so as to reduce conflict as well as relocating tigers from source areas to areas where density of tiger is low, so that conflict in rich source areas does not occur.
