

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 978
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.12.2024

Death of Tigers in Ranthambore National Park

978 SHRI GADDIGOUDA PARVATAGOUDA CHANDANAGOUDA:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken cognizance of the missing tigers/deaths of tigers in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether any probe is ordered to investigate the issue, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to protect tigers and details of the current status of the tigers reported dead or missing from the said National Park along with the details of the steps taken/ proposed to be taken to address the situation;
- (d) the details of factors identified as contributing to this unprecedented number of deaths and decrease in the number of tigers;
- (e) the details of the specific measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Forest Department to mitigate overcrowding and territorial conflicts among tigers in Ranthambore National Park; and
- (f) whether the Government has set up an inquiry committee to address the potential lapses by park officials, if so, the details thereof along with the changes recommended in terms of monitoring protocols, field operations, or conservation strategies to prevent further tiger deaths, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (a) & (b) As per communication received from State of Rajasthan, a committee was constituted by the Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan. The Government is aware of the order of the State constituting a committee to inquire into missing tigers of Ranthambhore.
- (c) The Government of India has taken several initiatives for tiger conservation in the country which are at **Annexure-I**. As per the 5th cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation, 2022 conducted by the Central Government, the tiger estimation for the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve is 57 ± 0.13 . Four (04) tiger deaths of the said tiger reserve have been reported during the current year. Ten (10) tigers out of the said missing tigers have already been traced by the State as per the report received from the State.

- (d) Ecologically productive areas like the Ranthambhore tiger reserve are characterised by a high turnover of tigers (large number of births and deaths) owing to several intrinsic and natural causes relating to their land tenure dynamics (internecine combats, infanticide movement to new areas etc.) and biological carrying capacity of the habitat for population viability.
- (e) & (f) The Government of India had advised the State of Rajasthan to adopt the landscape approach to conservation keeping in view the ecology of metapopulations, based on which the latter notified the Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve and Dholpur-Karuali Tiger Reserve respectively to the west and east of the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve respectively. Further, action has been initiated in-coordination with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) to ascertain the possibility of wildlife crime or other reasons of unnatural deaths.

Annexure-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (c) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 978 ON DEATH OF TIGERS IN RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK DUE FOR REPLY ON 02.12.2024

Several milestone initiatives have been taken by the Government of India for protection of tigers

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. 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, namely the National Tiger Conservation Authority (Normative Standards for Tourism activities and Project Tiger) Guidelines, 2012.

3. 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.

4. Since the year 2014 (till 25.11.2024), following tiger reserves have been notified :

| | |
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| 1 | Sathyamangalam (Tamil Nadu) |
| 2 | Mukandra Hills (Rajasthan) |
| 3 | Nawegaon-Nagzira (Maharashtra) |
| 4 | Amrabad (Telangana) |
| 5 | Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 6 | Bor (Maharashtra) |
| 7 | Rajaji (Uttarakhand) |
| 8 | Orang (Assam) |
| 9 | Kamlang (Arunachal Pradesh) |
| 10 | Srivilliputhur Megamalai (Tamil Nadu) |
| 11 | Ramgarh Vishdhari (Rajasthan) |
| 12 | Ranipur (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 13 | Veerangana Durgavati (Madhya Pradesh) |
| 14 | Dholpur-Karuali (Rajasthan) |
| 15 | Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla (Chhattisgarh) |

5. Approval of National Tiger Conservation Authority has been accorded to Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary, MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhav National Park, Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary and Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary for notification as Tiger Reserve.

6. The State of Uttar Pradesh has been advised by the NTCA for declaring Sohagi Barwa Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve.

7. 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. India is the only country to have completed 5 cycles of the All India Tiger Estimation using this methodology.

8. As per the 5th cycle of All India Tiger Estimation, the country has a tiger estimate of 3682 with a range of 3167-3925 which is 70% of the global tiger population.

9. The 18 tiger States have notified the core/critical tiger habitat (45562.24 sq. km.), and the buffer/peripheral area (38051.97 sq.km.) of all the 56 tiger reserves in the country, under section 38V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006.

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

11. 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.

12. A protocol has been signed in September, 2011 with Bangladesh for conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderban. The bilateral meeting on Transboundary Conservation of Tigers in Sundarban Landscape of India and Bangladesh was held at Kolkata on 14th February 2023.

13. A sub-group on tiger and leopard conservation has been constituted for cooperation with the Russian Federation. A tripartite MOU between the National Tiger Conservation Authority, Wildlife Institute of India and A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology & Evaluation was signed on 4.12.2018 for cooperation in scientific research on tigers.

14. India is the founder member of the Global Tiger Forum (an intergovernmental organization) of Tiger Range Countries for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

15. A MoU signed with Myanmar for combating timber trafficking and promoting wildlife conservation:- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for Cooperation on Combating Timber Trafficking, and Conservation of Tigers and other Wildlife has been signed on 27th February, 2020.

16. 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.

17. 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.

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

19. 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.

20. As a part of active management to rebuild Sariska and Panna Tiger Reserves where tigers had become locally extinct, reintroduction of tigers have been done. The successful reintroduction of wild tigers in Panna is a unique example and one of a kind in the world as the rewilded and reintroduced tigresses are breeding. Further, under this initiatives, tigers have been re-introduced in the western part of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve (Uttarakhand), Madhav National Park (Madhya Pradesh), Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve and Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve (Rajasthan).

21. To assess occupancy of tigers in high altitude landscapes, a collaborative project with the Global Tiger Forum was implemented.

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

23. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been issued in 9 thematic areas as below with inputs from officials and experts, fine tuned to meet the present challenges in the field:-

- i. for dealing with tiger death.
- ii. to deal with emergency arising due to straying of tigers in human dominated landscape.
- iii. for disposing the tiger/leopard carcass/body.
- iv. to deal with orphaned / abandoned tiger cubs and old / injured tigers in the wild.
- v. to deal with tiger depredation on livestock.
- vi. for Interstate Co-ordination amongst tiger reserves that share boundary.
- vii. for active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at landscape level.
- viii. to deal with stray/feral dogs in tiger reserves.
- ix. to deal with the Tiger re-introduction and supplementation in wild.

24. 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.

25. A national repository of camera trap photo IDs of individual tigers has been created.

26. 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.

27. Initiated a pilot project on monetizing carbon sequestration to benefit Tiger Conservation Foundations and local in collaboration with TERI.

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. To create more inviolate areas and in order to incentivize voluntary village relocation, the package has been increased from Rs. 10 lakhs to Rs. 15 lakhs.

31. To assess status of tiger bearing areas outside tiger reserves, the CA|TS (Conservation Assured|Tiger Standards) framework –an international accreditation. 3 sites accredited with CA|TS certification are in India, namely the Ramnagar, Lansdowne, Forest Divisions in Uttarakhand and 24 South Parganas in West Bengal. CA|TS has now been extended to tiger reserves and 23 sites namely Manas, Kaziranga, Orang, Satpura, Pench (Maharashtra), Kanha, Panna, Valmiki, Dudhwa, Parambikulam, Mudumalai, Bandipur, Anamalai, Sundarbans Bandhavgarh, Pench (MP), Sathyamangalam, Navegaon-Nagzira, Tadoba, Melghat, Periyar, Kali and Pilibhit Tiger Reserves have been accredited with CA|TS.

32. Tiger Conservation Authority Fund has been operationalised, as envisaged in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

33. Successful reintroduction of cheetah :- Cheetah is the only large carnivore that has been extirpated in India over historical times. A project to bring back Cheetah by way of introduction has been launched. As part of the project, consultative bilateral meetings and negotiations were held with Republic of Namibia and Republic of South Africa. The bilateral negotiations culminated with signing of MoUs with Republic of Namibia and Republic of South Africa on 20th July 2022 and 17th January 2023 respectively. The MoUs facilitate biodiversity conservation with specific focus on conservation and restoration of cheetah in their former range areas from which they went extinct.

Following the signing of MoU with Republic of Namibia, a first of batch 8 cheetahs have been successfully translocated from Namibia to Kuno National Park and on 17th September 2022, the cheetahs were released into quarantine enclosure by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. Under the provisions of the MoU signed with South Africa, 12 Cheetahs (7 males, 5 females) were translocated from South Africa to Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India on 18th February 2023.

A dedicated team of forest officials, cheetah experts and veterinarians has been undertaking protection as well as monitoring of cheetahs 24x7 basis. Post introduction of the cheetah in India, 17 Cheetah cubs were born on Indian soil.

Efforts have been initiated to enter into engagements with the Governments of Kenya and Botswana too.

34. Bilateral agreement with Cambodia – The Indian delegation visited Cambodia for assessing the field situation and the capacity building requirements for tiger reintroduction initiative in Cambodia. Subsequently, a MoU with Cambodia regarding “Cooperation in

biodiversity conservation and sustainable wildlife management recovery strategy of tiger and its habitat” has been signed.

35. Forest Fire Audit Protocol for Tiger Reserves – To assess the fire preparedness and manage complete life cycle of forest fires in tiger reserve, the NTCA has come out with Forest Fire Audit Protocol for Tiger Reserves. The protocol will facilitate tiger reserves in assessing their preparedness for combating the forest fire.

36. Scientific co-operation agreement in the field of camera trap data management with Russia: An MoU was signed with the Land of the Leopard National Park (LLNP), for sharing the technical knowhow in the field of camera trap based monitoring. Under the MoU, the NTCA and WII will provide technical assistance to LLNP to use CaTRAT (Camera Trap Data Repository and Analysis Tool). The tool was developed through joint collaborative efforts of NTCA, WII and IIIT.

37. India has also signed an MoU with Guatemala on “Conservation of the Tiger (*Panthera Tigris*) and the Jaguar (*Panthera Onca*)” which envisages to use India’s expertise for conservation of Jaguars.

38. Pre-Summit Meeting of the Tiger Range Countries (TRCs) organized at New Delhi- A pre-summit meeting of Tiger Range Countries was organized by NTCA at New Delhi from 10-12 August, 2022 for finalizing the draft declaration to be adopted at 2nd International Tiger Forum held at Vladivostok, Russia.

39. Water Source Atlas of Tiger Reserves:- For the first time NTCA has come up with the report which is designed in the atlas format to provide spatial maps showing water sources in the tiger reserves. This water source atlas based on the available remotely sensed data analysed in GIS platform, provides a first cut information on the existing water bodies in the tiger reserves.

40. International award to tiger reserves:- The Pilibhit Tiger Reserve in Uttar Pradesh and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu have been conferred with the inaugural Tx2 international award constituted by a consortium of international organization namely GEF, UNDP, IUCN, WWF and GTF. Three more tiger reserves namely; Pench Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh) and Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra) jointly and Satpura Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh) have been awarded with Tx2 award for the year 2022-2023.

41. Project Tiger completed 50 years:- The commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger' event was inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in Mysuru, Karnataka on 9th April 2023. During the event Hon'ble PM also released a commemorative coin on the completion of 50 years of Project Tiger.

42. In order to assess the management effectiveness of tiger reserves, NTCA has been undertaking "Management Effective Evaluation" (MEE) at an interval of 4 years. The 5th cycle of MEE was carried out for 51 tiger reserves in 2022 and the summary report was released during the Commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger event by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in Mysuru, Karnataka on 9th April 2023. Out of 51 tiger reserves, 12 Tiger Reserves have achieved 'Excellent' category, followed by 21 Tiger Reserves in 'Very Good' category, 13 Tiger Reserves in 'Good' category and 5 Tiger Reserves in 'Fair' category.

43. The International Big Cat Alliance was launched during Commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger event by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in Mysuru, Karnataka on 9th April 2023. The focus of the International big cat alliance will be on the conservation of the world's seven major big cats. The same was established on 12.3.2024 after approval of the Cabinet on 29th February, 2024.

44. All India Tiger Estimation 4th Cycle enters into Guinness World Record book:- India's science based tiger monitoring methodology popularly known as "All India Tiger Estimation" has entered into the Guinness World Record as largest camera trap based wild animal monitoring exercise in the world.
