

Increase in population of lions and elephants

*120. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the population of major species like lions and elephants in the country has increased, if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) the steps being taken to protect and provide sufficient forest cover so that they do not enter into the human habitats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir. As per the latest information available in the Ministry, the population of major species like lions, tigers, elephants and rhinos has increased in the country. The estimated population of lions has increased from 359±10 in 2005 to 411 in 2010. The population of tiger has increased from 1411 in 2006 to 1706 in 2010. The population of elephants has increased from 27657-27682 to 29391-30711 in 2012 and the population of rhino has increased from 1817 in 1998-99 to 2414 in 2009.

(b) The important steps taken by the Government to protect and provide sufficient forest cover so that wild animals do not enter into the human habitats include:

- (i) A total of 670 Protected Areas, *viz.*, National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves have been created under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to provide higher protection to wild fauna and flora covering important wildlife habitats. These areas generally have high importance from bio-diversity point of view and are some of the best habitats for wildlife. They are spread over about 1,61,228 sq km and cover about 20.6 percent of total forest area and about 4.9 percent of total area of the country.
- (ii) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation through the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- (iii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides stringent punishment for offences under the Act. The Act also provides for forfeiture of equipment, vehicle or weapon used in committing wildlife offence(s).

- (iv.) In order to provide specific focus on the conservation of tiger and elephant, Project Tiger and Project Elephant are functional in the respective Range States. Under this strategy, 44 Tiger Reserves and 28 Elephant Reserves have been set up.
- (v.) Financial assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for improvement of forest and wildlife areas like the national parks and sanctuaries to augment food and water availability in forests which can reduce migration of animals from forests to the habitations.
- (vi.) Financial assistance is also provided for construction of barriers like boundary walls and solar-powered electric fences around the sensitive areas to prevent migration of wild animals including elephants from forests to habitation.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Loss due to agitations

776. SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the action that has been taken by the Central Government in consultation with the State Governments for prior disposal of grievances of local residents where new projects are being set up to avoid public agitation such as the one that took place at Kudankulam Nuclear Plant which although is already erected and ready to start, but due to local agitations the project is delayed, resulting in huge economical loss to the nation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): Yes, Sir.

Consultation during Land Acquisition process

After 'in principle' approval of a site by the Government, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) finalises the requirement of land to be acquired after careful consideration of the plant requirements, land use and land holdings in consultation with State authorities and a formal application for issue of Notification