

(c) whether there is any difference of opinion between States of Kerala and Karnataka on the project;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there are any other options other than the overhead road proposed in this situation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not concurred with the said proposal.

(c) and (d) The Government of Karnataka has opposed any construction or opening up of the road during night hours, which passes through the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

(e) and (f) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has suggested strengthening of the alternative route passing through Thithimati-Gonikoppa-Kutta.

Protection of lions in Gir Sanctuary

2788. SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many lions died at Gir Sanctuary in Gujarat recently;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the deaths of lions at Gir Sanctuary in Gujarat is a very serious issue; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by government to save lions in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) Yes, it is a fact that many lions have died recently in Gujarat.

(b) State Government has reported that 24 lions have died between 12/9/18 to 1/10/2018 due to natural causes (infighting, respiratory and hepatic failure etc.)

(c) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India has taken several measures for the protection of Asiatic Lion. Asiatic Lion has been identified as one of the 21 Critically Endangered species for focused conservation

program under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitat'. Measures adopted to protect the Asiatic Lion also includes:

- i. Listing the species in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby, according them highest degree of legal protection from hunting and poaching.
- ii. State Government of Gujarat has taken legal, administrative and financial provisions for protection of Asiatic Lion in Gujarat. The legal provision includes declaring additional lion habitat area as Sanctuary. Administrative provisions include creating a new administrative division for wildlife Management. The financial provision includes providing new scheme and additional financial support.
- iii. To insure and intensify protection and conservation to lion habitat outside protected areas, new division has been declared.
- iv. The Government of Gujarat has sanctioned new scheme- Project Lion which focuses on Eco-development activities and declared ₹ 231.00 crore over period of 5 year for long term lion conservation, with main focus on reducing Man-Animal conflict, veterinary and animal health. It comprises of new rescue centre, rescue teams, Rapid response team, strengthening of existing protection and surveillance infrastructure, transport/ communication infrastructures etc.
- v. As a precautionary measure, State Government of Gujarat vaccinated 63,000 cattle in adjoining 107 villages and also vaccinated 500 dogs from 20 adjoining villages.
- vi. Government of Gujarat has introduced 3 years package of wildlife health care and veterinary support team, including manpower and equipment.
- vii. Government of Gujarat also Appointed 'Vanya Prani Mitra' (Wildlife Friends) in villages around Gir area, constituted 10 additional rescue teams and 33 new Rapid Response Teams.
- viii. Strengthened the wireless network in and around Gir area for fast communication.
- ix. Intensive night patrolling and checking Nakas on entry points for keeping track of movements of vehicles and people.