

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 989**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2022

**Area of Sunderbans damaged by cyclones**

989. SHRI JAWHAR SIRCAR:

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

- (a) the total area of Sunderbans in the State of West Bengal and how much of it is Covered by forests, human habitation and water;
- (b) the percentage of each area that has been damaged by cyclones and other climatic factors during the last five years according to the State and Central Government;
- (c) the response of Central Government and funding for each of these damaged zones; and
- (d) action taken by Central Government to plant mangroves and assist in protecting the livelihood of Sunderbans dwellers and conserve forests?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) The Indian Sundarbans region is spread over two districts namely South 24 Pargana and North 24 Pargana of the State of West Bengal. As per the India State of Forest Report 2021, the total forest cover in South 24 Pargana and North 24 Pargana districts is 3513.69 sq. km which is about 25% of the geographical area of these two districts. As per the census 2011, the population of North 24 Pargana and South 24 Pargana is 1,00,09,781 and 81,61,961 respectively.

(b) Non-resilient housing and supporting infrastructure are prone to cyclone impacts due to strong winds and storm surges. Improved Early Warning Systems and associated improvement in emergency response by local authorities of coastal States/Union Territories of India have contributed to drastically minimizing the loss of human life. As per the information provided by the India Meteorological Department, no death was reported due to very severe cyclonic Storm Yaas (23-28 May 2021) in West Bengal. Whereas 13 and 93 persons lost their lives in very severe cyclonic storm Bulbul (5-11 November 2019) and super cyclonic storm Amphan (16-21 May 2020) respectively, besides damage to crop and infrastructure in Sundarbans.

State Governments undertake relief measures in the wake of natural disasters from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in accordance with extant norms. Additional assistance is provided from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) as per the established

procedure. The assistance approved under SDRF/NDRF norms is provided in the form of relief.

(c) As per the information received from the State Government of West Bengal, an expenditure of Rs. 682.03 crore has been incurred during last six years including current financial year for restoration of flood management infrastructure in Sunderbans under the SDRF, State Development Scheme (SDS) and Centrally assisted Flood Management Programme (FMP). Further, based on the request of the State Government of West Bengal, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released Rs 149.44 lakhs under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' including repair works required due to cyclone Amphan during 2020-21, as given below:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<b>Amount Released (₹ in Lakh)</b>
1.	West Sunderbans Wildlife Sanctuary	61.05
2.	Lothian Island Wildlife Sanctuary	58.60
3.	Haliday Island Wildlife Sanctuary	29.79
	<b>Total</b>	<b>149.44</b>

(d) Sustainable development of Sunderbans is primarily the responsibility of the State Government through its Sunderbans Development Board and other relevant departments and organizations. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is providing financial assistance to the Government of West Bengal under various schemes for protection and conservation of the mangrove ecosystem of Sunderbans and its myriad forms of wildlife including the flagship species, the Royal Bengal Tiger. The Ministry also piloted the World Bank assisted Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project in identified coastal stretches of West Bengal, Gujarat and Odisha with the purpose of protecting and conserving coastal and marine environment and sustainable development. Further, the regulatory measures are implemented through Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972; the Indian Forest Act, 1927; the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; and rules under these Acts, as amended from time to time.

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