

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 186
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 03.02.2022

Increase in deaths of tigers

186. SMT. GEETA ALIAS CHANDRAPRABHA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that there has been an increase in the number of deaths of tigers in the year 2021, the details thereof;
- (b) the reasons for deaths of tigers in the year 2021; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government for the conservation of tigers?

ANSWER

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

- (a) As reported by States, there are 127 tiger deaths in the year 2021 as compared to 106 deaths in 2020.
- (b) The average life span of the tigers in the wild is generally 10-12 years and in natural ecosystem factors like old age, diseases, internecine fights, electrocution, snaring, drowning, road, rail hits etc. and a very high infant mortality observed in big cats including tigers accounts for majority of tiger deaths.
- (c) Due to efforts of the Government of India through the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the tiger has been brought back from the brink of extinction to an assured path of recovery, which is evident in findings of the quadrennial All India Tiger Estimation conducted in 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018. These results have shown a healthy annual growth rate of tigers at 6%, which offsets natural losses and keeps tigers at the habitats carrying capacity level, in the Indian context. The Government of India, through the National Tiger Conservation Authority, has advocated a three pronged strategy to manage human-tiger negative interactions as follows:-
 - (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 human-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.

Also as per Tiger Conservation Plans need based and site-specific management interventions are done for improving quality of wildlife habitat for which funding is provided under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger.
