

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1801
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.12.2022

Elephant deaths on railway tracks

1801. DR.PRASHANTA NANDA:

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

- (a) the number of elephant deaths on railway tracks during the last five years, State/year-wise;
- (b) whether measures to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks are not working properly on the ground;
- (c) whether the Supreme Court has issued any direction to the Union Government to minimise the elephant deaths due to train accidents; and
- (d) if so, the details and the outcome achieved as a result thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a)&(b) As per the information received from States, the number of elephant deaths due to railway accidents during the last five years are given in Annexure. The measures to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks are working positively as per the information received.
- (c)&(d) The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its order dated 2.9.2014 in Writ Petition W.P. (C) No. 107 of 2013 Shakti Prasad Nayak Vs. Union of India & Ors., issued the following directions:
 - (i) Necessary steps should be taken by the Railways all over the country to reduce the speed limit of running trains that are passing through dense forests. In case a speed limit is not followed/ appropriate action should be taken against the erring drivers and officials concerned.
 - (ii) Railways to take steps to discontinue the movement of goods trains at night between Siliguri and Alipurduar.
 - (iii) Divert fast moving and night trains through Siliguri -Falakata route.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change in coordination with Ministry of Railways has taken number of measures to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks. The preventive measures undertaken include the following:

- (i) Inter-ministerial meeting convened regularly with the Ministry of Railways to holistically address the issue of rail-induced elephant mortality.
- (ii) A permanent Co-ordination Committee has been constituted between Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for preventing elephant death in train accident.
- (iii) A general advisory has been issued jointly by Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment and Forests on 30th March, 2010 to the General Managers of NF, East Cost and Southern Railways with a request to implement the suggested measures.
- (iv) The Ministry had constituted a committee to review the deaths of elephants due to train hit in the Tamil Nadu and Kerala in compliance of Hon'ble NGT direction dated 8th July, 2021. The Committee submitted its report to the Ministry in September 2021 suggesting recommendations to be taken up by Railways, State Forest Departments (SFDs) of Tamil Nadu and Kerala to prevent death of elephants due to train hits. The report submitted by the committee has been circulated to the SFDs, Railways and other concerned stakeholders to take appropriate measures to prevent death of elephants due to train hits.
- (v) Imposition of permanent and temporary speed restrictions in identified elephant corridors and habitats.
- (vi) A pilot project on "Intelligent elephant movement detection and alert system" to detect movement of elephants approaching railway tracks through seismic sensors has been initiated in Rajaji Tiger Reserve.
- (vii) The Wildlife Institute of India in consultation with the Ministry of Environment Forest, and Climate Change, National Highway Authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority and World Bank Group has published a document namely 'Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure' to assist project agencies in designing linear infrastructure, including railways lines, in a manner that reduces human-animal conflicts.
- (viii) Construction of underpasses and ramps for the movement of elephants at identified locations.
- (ix) Provision of fencing at selected locations.
- (x) Provision of signage to warn loco pilots about identified elephant corridors.
- (xi) Sensitization of train crew and Station Masters to avoid train collisions with elephants.
- (xii) Need based clearance of vegetation on the sides of track within railway land.
- (xiii) Deputing Forest Department staff in Railway control offices to liaison with Railway and engagement of elephant trackers by Forest Department for timely action by alerting Station Masters and Loco Pilots.
- (xiv) Coordination meetings between State Forest Department and Railway department.

Due to concerted efforts taken by the Central and State Governments, the elephant deaths by train accidents has shown positive results in the recent years.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) & (b) OF THE RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1801 RAISED BY DR. PRASHANTA NANDA REGARDING 'ELEPHANT DEATHS ON RAILWAY TRACKS' DUE FOR REPLY ON 22.12.2022.

Elephant Casualties in Train Accidents from 2017-18 to 2021-22

S.No.	State	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Assam	10	2	2	5	8
2	West Bengal	2	6	5	0	0
3	Tamil Nadu	0	0	0	1	3
4	Jharkhand	0	0	1	1	0
5	Kerala	0	1	3	0	0
6	Odisha	2	7	1	4	3
7	Tripura	0	NR	0	0	0
8	Uttarakhand	5	1	2	NR	NR
9	Uttar Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
10	Karnataka	1	2	0	1	1
	Total	20	19	14	12	15

* NR- Information not received from State.