

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2861
ANSWERED ON:12.12.2011
CONSERVATION OF ASIATIC LIONS
Jardosh Smt. Darshana Vikram

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government of Gujarat has submitted any proposal for financial assistance for any project related to protection and conservation of the Asiatic Lions in the State;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has release any financial assistance in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to protect the said lions?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (d) The State Government of Gujarat has submitted a project proposal titled 'Consolidating Long Term Conservation of Asiatic Lion in Greater Gir Region, Gujarat' for a period of five years amounting to Rs. 262.36 crores for financial assistance. The proposal was forwarded to the Planning Commission for its approval. The Planning Commission approved the project, subject to compliance of the provisions of Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006. Planning Commission did not provide additional funds for supporting the project, and advised the Ministry that it should be supported within the budget allocated for the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats'. Despite paucity of funds under the scheme, the Ministry released financial assistance amounting to Rs. 674.541 lakhs during the financial year 2010-11 to the State Government of Gujarat for undertaking some activities proposed during the first year of the project.

(e) The steps taken to conserve lions in the country include:

1. Threatened species of wildlife are placed in the Schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according them the highest degree of protection. Lion is included in the Schedule - I of the Act.
2. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended from time to time and made more stringent against wildlife related offences.
3. The concept of Greater Gir has been adopted and additional suitable habitats for lion are being developed for the conservation of lion.
4. Besides the Gir National Park and Gir Sanctuary, Girnar, Pania and Mitiyala forests have been notified as sanctuaries to widen the protected area network for lion.
5. The manpower and infrastructure have been strengthened for intensive protection and conservation of lions and their habitats.
6. Habitat improvement measures like afforestation, creation and maintenance of fire lines, construction of water points, check dams, gully plugging etc have been undertaken by the State Government.
7. Modern information and communication technology has been introduced for the better protection of the Gir area.