

287  
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IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA : CUTTACK

(PIL)  
W.P.(C) NO.14706 OF 2022

GITA ROUT ... Petitioner

-VERSUS-

STATE OF ODISHA & OTHERS  
... Opp. Parties

AFFIDAVIT FILED BY P.C.C.F (WILDLIFE)  
IN COMPLIANCE OF ORDER DATED  
25.08.2022

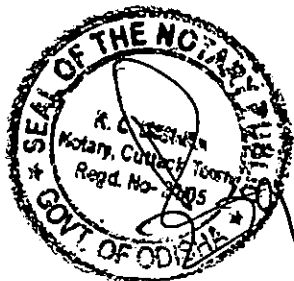
I, Shri Sushil Kumar Popli, aged about 59 years, S/o Late Bhim Sen Popli, working as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, Bhubaneswar do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. That the aforementioned Writ Petition was listed for hearing before this Hon'ble Court on 25.08.2022.

The Court has been pleased to direct as follows:

“ XXX XXX XXX

3. *Conscious that the proceedings do not commit the JTF to any definite time-line and*



*Sushil Kumar Popli*

considering that the other affidavit filed today by the PCCF enclosing the details of the pending cases shows that in a large number of cases charge sheets are yet to be filed, the Advocate General volunteers that the necessary corrective steps would be taken within three months and within the same period, charge sheets would be filed in all those cases which are yet to be filed.

4. The Court finds that while the steps proposed are in the nature of remedial action, there is nothing stated in terms of 'preventive' action. Further, the Court finds that the composition of the JTF is not broad-based to accommodate the views of wildlife experts or civil society groups involved in wildlife conservation or those working with farmers who may have lost their crops and other interested persons engaged in the issue of man-animal conflict. The learned Advocate General volunteers that the JTF will either co-opt wildlife experts and civil society groups or consult them in all its deliberations which will take place at least once every fortnight so that a

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*comprehensive action plan can be drawn up including both the preventive and remedial elements.*

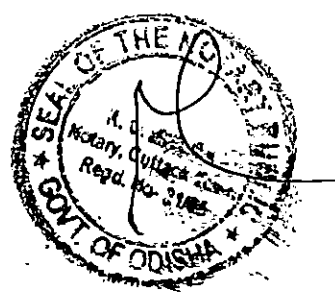
*5. Considering the number of petitions raising these very issues pending before this Court, a direction is issued that counsel in each of the petitions will prepare a short summary of their respective suggestions and provide them to the Advocate General within a week's time to enable him to examine all the suggestions and place it before the JTF for its consideration. Xxx xxx.*

*6. Considering that the PCCF is going to be the Convener of the JTF, a direction is issued to the PCCF to place before this Court along with an affidavit, the comprehensive action plan drawn up by the JTF, before the next date.*

*7. The Court takes the note of the fact that there have been more deaths of elephants since the previous hearing. The Court has been shown a news item that only this morning, two female elephants were*

*Sanjay Kumar Singh*

*JS*



239

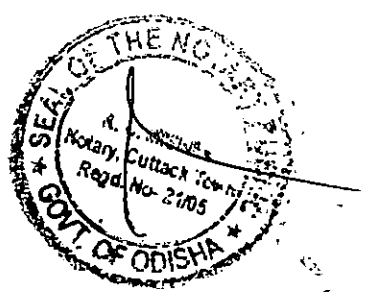
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*electrocuted inside the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Judia under Keonjhar Sadar. The Advocate General further states that the PCCF will file a further affidavit on the next date placing on record the result of the investigation into the said deaths."*

2. That with regards to the directions at Para 3 of the aforementioned Order, it is submitted that the cases are under different stages of investigation (as mentioned under annexure F/1) and final charge sheets shall be filed within the committed time limit of three months.
3. That it is submitted that Government of Odisha in Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department have constituted a joint Task Force (JTF) for the protection of wildlife, including elephants in the State vide Order No. 16368 dated 13.09.2022 under the Chairmanship of Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), office of the PCCF (Wildlife). Pursuant to the directions of the Hon'ble High Court, suggestions were also received from the learned counsels of the petitioners. The present incumbent CCF (Wildlife) is Dr. Manoj V. Nair suggested by Sri Gautam Mishra, learned

*Subodh Kumar*

*48*

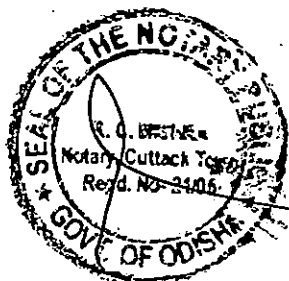


Senior Counsel for the petitioner in WP(C) PIL No. 22421 of 2015 filed by Dwija Dalpati. Further, the said Joint Task Force comprises of both Forest and Police personnel of different ranks and also includes wildlife experts besides Honorary Wildlife Wardens engaged voluntarily in wildlife related matters in districts as co-opted members. The brief background of the co-opted members is furnished as hereunder.

A. Prof. Raman Sukumar, Asian Nature Conservation Foundation, c/o Center for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He is best known for his works on ecology of the Asian Elephants and human-wildlife conflict. He is also a member of the National Board for Wildlife. He has studied and published report on the Elephant Carrying Capacity of Odisha's Forests.

B. Sri Jitasatru Mohanty, IFS (Retd.), Trustee, Save Elephant Foundation Trust, Bhubaneswar. He has vast field experience on wildlife issues during his long service spanning over 30 years before he retired as Conservator of Forests.

*Sunil Kumar Dalpati*



*SD*

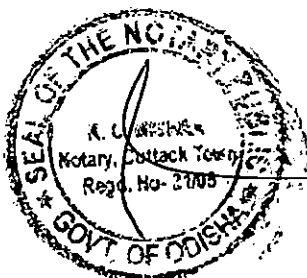
C. Dr. Prajna Panda, National coordinator, Elephant cell, Project Elephant, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India. Presently she is also Programme Manager, IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group, New Delhi.

D. Sri Aditya Chandra Panda, Honorary wildlife Warden, Angul District. This District is one of the most vulnerable districts with man-elephant conflicts causing depredation at many places. Sri Panda is actively associated in creating awareness and also supporting in wildlife matters in the District.

E. Sri Lalit Mohan Sahu, Honorary Wildlife Warden, Deogarh District. This district has many cases of man-animal conflicts including raiding of crops by the elephants. He is actively associated with rescue of wild animals and well acquainted with the issues of man-elephant conflicts.

Copy of the Order No. 16368 dated 13.09.2022 of Government in Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Odisha is annexed herewith and marked as Annexure-H/1.

*Subodh Kumar Sahu*



*SS*

7/24/22

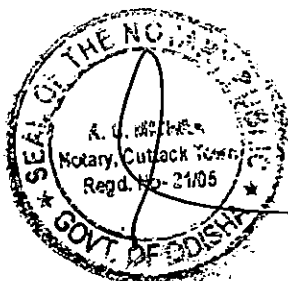
4 That the JTF has conducted its first meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. The memorandum for the meeting along with all the relevant documents has been duly communicated in advance to all the members of the JTF. The said memorandum includes inter alia, the report of the PCCF & Head of Forest Force, Assam on the measures taken in the state of Assam to tackle the problems concerning elephant-human conflict. The said memorandum also included the suggestions received from learned counsels of the petitioners of the cases as humbly mentioned below:

1) Smt Mrinalini Padhi (WP(C) PIL No. 19625 of 2015). The major suggestions include implementation of comprehensive wildlife management plan before permitting mining activities; all elephant corridors to be declared as conservation reserves; and solar fencing, rail fencing etc for reducing the conflict besides provisioning for rapid response teams etc

2) Sri G. P. Mohanty (WP(C) No. 9056 of 2013). His suggestions include identification and restoration of elephant corridors and their habitats; construction of under passes across

*Ambedkar App.*

*SL*



road & railways besides training/ involvement of local youths in protection measures

3) Sri Gautam Mishra (WP(C) PIL No. 22421 of 2015. He has while proposing Sri Manoj Nair, IFS and other officials for wildlife management, suggested for both short term and long term action plan inclusive of improving intelligence network & elephant habitat.

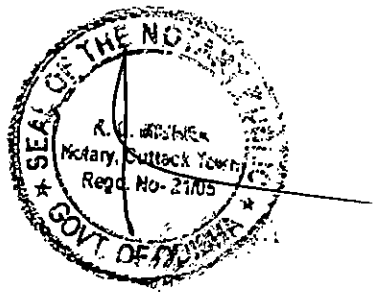
4) Afraaz Suhail (Intervener in WP(C) PIL No. 14706 of 2022. Suggestions made include filling up of vacancies in the Forest Department, inter-departmental co-ordination; alternate farming; technological interventions like use of drones and thermal cameras besides cabling of transmission lines.

*Afraaz Suhail*

The copy of the Memorandum for the meeting containing even the views of Learned Counsels, communicated to the members vide Letter No. 8371 dated 17.09.2022 is annexed herewith as **Annexure I/1.**

5. That the first meeting of the JTF has been held on 20.09.2022 through hybrid mode. The JTF examined the various Orders of Hon'ble Apex

*J.S.*





99/4A

Court and State High Courts as cited in Para 5 of the Order of this Hon'ble High Court besides suggestions given by the learned counsels to the petitioners and also best practices adopted by the State of Assam for mitigation of human-elephant conflict. Further course of action as per the mandate of the JTF including main components of comprehensive action plan to be prepared to tackle issues relating to unnatural deaths of elephants and man-elephant conflict was also deliberated and the detailed road map was agreed upon; the major components of the said road map are furnished hereunder.

1) To compile and maintain an updated database of wildlife crime-related information with the JTF. This shall inter alia include a dossier of habitual offenders and details of wildlife offence cases. The analysis of this data repository will reveal spatial and temporal patterns in wildlife crime and shall help formulate strategies for action in field.

2) Development of a state-wide intelligence network to pro-actively collect actionable information from the field to both pre-empt wildlife crimes and also apprehend the habitual offenders.

*Furnished to Hon'ble*

*SS*



3) To formulate a Comprehensive Action Plan with preventive and remedial measures for checking wildlife crime and reduction in man-animal conflict in the State. This would include among others, the following indicative interventions.

PREVENTIVE

a. Patrolling & protection like Anti-Poaching Squads, Elephant Trackers, development of Intelligence Network & Infrastructure development (Protection Camps, Watch Towers, Vehicles).

b. Habitat development through meadows development, plantation of fodder plants preferred by elephants for food, bamboo planting, seed balls etc besides construction & maintenance of Water bodies, Water Harvesting Structures.

c. Man-animal Conflict Mitigation Measures may include establishing Rapid Response Teams at the level of Circles and measures regarding capacity building of staff to be taken.

d. Intelligence Gathering & Crime Database to include setting up of Crime Cell at the level of Division, Circle and HQ; Crime Dossiers to be compiled, maintained and updated; Surveillance of habitual offenders round the clock.

*Sanjit Kumar Patel*

*LL*



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e. Adoption of alternative crop practice as anti-depredation measure such as unpalatable crops in alternate cropping pattern; provisioning of Harvesters / Steel bins / Community Storage Bins in vulnerable villages.

f. Identification of new Elephant Corridors as per current movement pattern, rationalization of Elephant Corridors and improvement of habitats therein.

g. Application of technology viz GIS-based analysis of elephant movement; App-based monitoring; GPS-enabled vehicles & bikes; Early warning systems through Bulk SMS to the villagers regarding elephant movement; use of drones, trap cameras, Elephant-proof Barriers like Planned strategy for trenches; Solar fences; Bio-fences .

h. Linear Infrastructure Mitigation Measures through Elephant Underpasses / Overpasses across the high ways, Railway crossings & Canals.

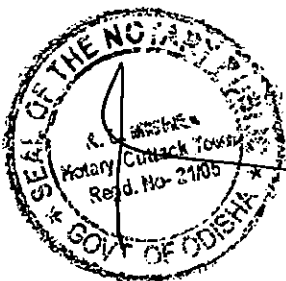
*Prakash Kumar*

REMEDIAL

a. Co-ordination with Police & DISCOMs: Crack down on illegal arms manufacturing units; DISCOMs to book cases of illegal hooking.

b. Vigilance over habitual offenders.

*JS*



c. Prosecution through Fast track courts / exclusive Standing Counsels for wildlife cases trial in every District/Sub-division level.

4) JTF to take up field investigation of few important wildlife cases relating to elephant, tiger, leopard and pangolin.

5) Scrutiny of case records of some important cases and provide handholding for improving the same.

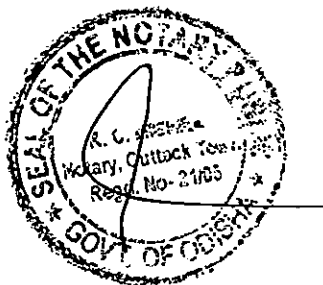
6) Review and monitor progress of important cases and offer advice for effective prosecution of the same so as to improve conviction rates.

7) To conduct capacity building workshops and training programmes to enhance skills of field staff in prevention, investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime and also awareness on mitigating human-wildlife conflict situation.

The JTF further decided that once the police personnel are posted/joined the Force, the next meeting may be convened. However meetings shall be convened on monthly basis and if required at shorter intervals as well.

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The copy of the minutes of the meeting of JTF dated 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2022 is annexed herewith and marked as Annexure-J/1.

6. That with regards to the directions at Para 6 of the aforementioned Order, it is submitted before the Hon'ble Court that the JTF has already initiated the formulation of a comprehensive action plan in compliance of the Order of Hon'ble Court as even humbly stated in Para 5 above. Since detailed deliberations are required on the suggestions given by the learned counsels of all the petitioners and orders of different Courts in related cases as well as effectiveness of the measures taken by other states in tackling similar problems, the comprehensive action plan shall be prepared within December, 2022. It is however humbly submitted that the preventive measures already in place are being rigorously implemented.

7. That the outcome of investigation of the cases of death of two female elephants in Keonjhar due to electrocution is submitted hereunder.

Two middle aged female elephants were found to be electrocuted inside *Krushvi Vigyan Kendra* campus, Judia, Keonjhar on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2022. On

*humbly submitted.*

*JS*



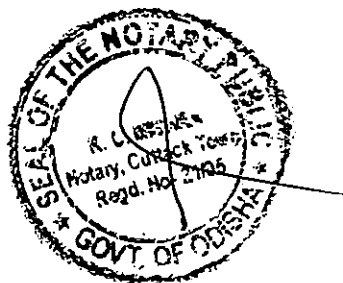
enquiry it was known that the elephants came into contact of a live wire while they pulled the L.T. line covered with creepers. The fuse did not burn/ blow up despite contact with the elephants. As per the officials of TPNODL, clearing around LT lines had been done during June, 2022. But the said lines were found to be again infested with creepers at the time of accident. For negligence in duties, action has been initiated against the concerned forest officials besides DISCOM officials. The status of the case is annexed herewith and marked as Annexure-K/1.

Further it is submitted that apart from the above mentioned case, there have been three more cases of electrocution deaths of elephants in the meantime. The results of investigations of all these cases is annexed herewith and marked as Annexure-L/1.

8. That the Opposite Parties craves leave of this Hon'ble Court to make further submissions and file further affidavits, in the interest of justice and effective adjudication by this Hon'ble Court.

*Subhiksha K. S. S.*

*SL*



9. That the facts stated above are true to the best of my knowledge, belief and based on available records.

Identified by:

Jayadev Bhoi  
Asst. A.G's Office

*[Signature]*  
DEPONENT 22/9/2022  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

Place: Cuttack

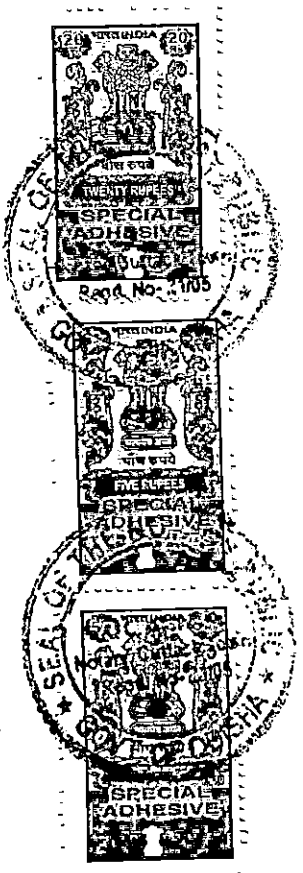
Date: 22/09/2022

Certified that Cartridge papers are not available

*[Signature]*  
ADDL STANDING COUNSEL

Solemnly affirm on in oath by the Deponent  
at Cuttack on 22/9/2022 being indentified  
by *[Signature]*  
Advocate/Adv's Clerk/ASC, AG'S office/Notary  
Personally, that the facts stated above are  
true to the best of his/her knowledge.

*[Signature]*  
RAMA CHANDRA BHISARA NOTARY  
CUTTACK TOWN, Regd. No-21/05



- 16 - 25)

Annexure - H/1

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT**

\*\*\*  
**ORDER**

Bhubaneswar, Dated 13.09.22

No. FE-WL-CASE-0009-2022/ 16368 /FE & CC, Pursuant to the Order dated 08.08.2022 and Order dated 25.08.2022 of the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa passed in W.P.(C) PIL No. 14706 of 2022 (Gita Rout vrs. State of Odisha and Others), Government have been pleased to constitute a "Joint Task Force" for the protection of wildlife including elephants in the State. The constitution of the Joint Task Force (JTF) shall be:-

a)	Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) O/O PCCF (Wildlife)	Chairman
b)	One Deputy Conservator of Forests, two Asst. Conservator of Forests, three Forest Rangers from FE & CC Department	Members
c)	One SP/Addl. SP, two Inspectors of Police, three Sub-Inspectors of Police on deputation	Members
d)	Prof. Raman Sukumar, Asian Nature Conservation Foundation	Co-opted Member (Wildlife Expert)
e)	Sri Jitasatru Mohanty, IFS(Retd.), Save Elephant Foundation Trust	Co-opted Member (Wildlife Expert)
f)	Dr. Prajna Panda, National Coordinator, Elephant Cell, Project Elephant, MoEF & CC	Co-opted Member (Wildlife Expert)
g)	Sri Aditya Chandra Panda, Honorary Wildlife Warden, Angul District	Member (engaged voluntarily on wildlife issues)
h)	Sri Lalit Moha Sahu, Honorary Wildlife Warden, Deogarh District	Member (engaged voluntarily on wildlife issues)

The Joint Task Force may co-opt any further experts/ Civil Society groups/ scientific community in discharge of its duties & responsibilities.

The Terms of reference of the JTF shall be as follows:

- a. To prevent, investigate and prosecute different cases of unnatural deaths of elephants including cases of poaching of tigers, leopards and illegal trade of pangolins.
- b. To monitor the trials of wildlife cases in the courts of law.
- c. To provide handholding to the field officials on prevention, control and investigation of the wildlife related offences.



FE-WL-CASE-0009-2022/01/2022

True Copy Attested

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar



- 17 - 252
- d. To identify the preventive and remedial measures and prepare the Comprehensive Action Plan for checking the wildlife crimes including poaching and man-animal conflict for implementation by the State
- e. To advise on wildlife related issues.

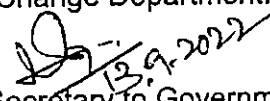
The Joint Task Force shall function under overall supervision of the PCCF, Wildlife and Chief Wildlife Warden in his office at Bhubaneswar.

By Order of the Governor,

  
13/9/22  
Additional Chief Secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 16369 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to the Director, Printing, Stationery & Publication, Odisha, Cuttack for information and necessary action. He is requested to publish the order in the Odisha Gazette and supply 100 copies to Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department.

  
13.9.2022  
Special Secretary to Government.

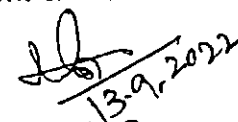
Memo No. 16370 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy submitted to PS to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha for kind information of Hon'ble Chief Minister.

  
13.9.2022  
Special Secretary to Government.

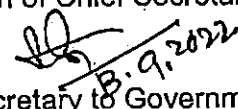
Memo No. 16371 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy submitted to PS to Hon'ble Minister, Forest, Environment & Climate Change for kind information of Hon'ble Minister.

  
13.9.2022  
Special Secretary to Government.

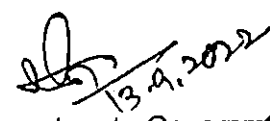
Memo No. 16372 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to OSD to Chief Secretary for kind information of Chief Secretary.

  
13.9.2022  
Special Secretary to Government.

Memo No. 16373 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to PS to Development Commissioner-cum- Additional Chief Secretary, Planning & Convergence Department for kind information of Development Commissioner-cum- Additional Chief Secretary.


  
13.9.2022  
Special Secretary to Government.

True Copy Attested

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

Memo No. 16374 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to Additional Chief Secretary to Govt., Home Department for information and necessary action.


  
13.9.2022

Special Secretary to Government.

Memo No. 16375 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to Director General of Police (DGP), Odisha for information and necessary action.


He is requested to provide required number of police officers of different ranks to act as members of the Task Force.

  
13.9.2022

Special Secretary to Government.

Memo No. 16376 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22


Copy forwarded to the PCCF & HoFF, Odisha for information and necessary action.

  
13.9.2022

Special Secretary to Government.

Memo No. 16377 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to the PCCF (wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha for information and necessary action.

  
13.9.2022

Special Secretary to Government.

Memo No. 16378 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to all members of Joint Task Force for information action and necessary action.

  
13.9.2022

Special Secretary to Government.

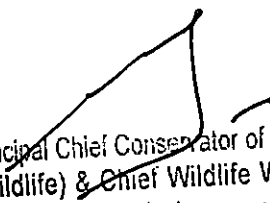
Memo No. 16379 /FE &CC, Dated. 13. 09. 22

Copy forwarded to the Head State Portal, IT Department / NIC, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action/ 20 spare copies to Guard file.

  
13.9.2022

Special Secretary to Government.

True Copy Attested

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests:  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar



19  
25/9  
Annexure-I/i

**STATE WILDLIFE HEADQUARTERS, ODISHA**

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (WILDLIFE) & CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN, ODISHA  
FOREST AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

No. 8371 / 10WL-CC-517/2022 dated 17/09/2022.

To

Prof. Raman Sukumar,  
Asian Nature Conservation Foundation,  
Centre for Ecological Sciences,  
Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore,  
([rsuku@iisc.ac.in](mailto:rsuku@iisc.ac.in))  
Sri Jitasatru Mohanty, IFS (Retd),  
Trustee, Save Elephant Foundation Trust, Bhubaneswar  
Dr. Prajna Panda,  
National Coordinator,  
Elephant Cell, Project Elephant, MoEF&CC,  
& Programme Manager, IUCN, SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group  
([prajna.panda@gov.in](mailto:prajna.panda@gov.in))  
Sri Aditya Chandra Panda,  
D-03, Utkal Royal Residency,  
77, Gautam Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751014  
([Aditya.spiritofthewild@gmail.com](mailto:Aditya.spiritofthewild@gmail.com))  
Sri Lalit Mohan Sahu,  
At/PO-Ballam, Dist-Deogarh-768108

**Sub:- Meeting of the Joint Task Force (JTF) constituted vide order No.16368 dtd.13.09.2022 of Govt. of Odisha in FE&CC Deptt.**

**Ref:- This office letter No.8275 dtd.14.09.2022.**

Sir/Madam,

I  
Apropos to the above, I am directed to inform that, first meeting of the Joint Task Force (JTF) shall be held on 20.09.2022 at 4PM on virtual mode. You are requested to attend the meeting on the scheduled date and time and offer your valuable suggestions for the future course of action of the JTF. The memorandum for the meeting is enclosed herewith for your appraisal. The link for the virtual meeting shall be shared separately.

**Encl:- As above.**

True Copy Attested

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

Yours faithfully,

Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)

- 20 -  
255

## MEMORANDUM

One W.P.(C) PIL No. 14706/2022 Gita Rout vrs State of Odisha) has been filed in High Court of Orissa on 09.06.2022 regarding protection of elephants in the State (copy enclosed). Counter reply was filed on behalf of the State respondents on 16.07.2022 regarding steps taken for prevention of unnatural deaths of elephants (copy enclosed). Hon'ble High Court in Order dated 25.07.2022 directed to file details of the elephant poaching cases of last five years and details of the Wildlife Crime Cell created in the CID, Crime Branch of Odisha Police. In response to the reply filed in compliance to the said Order, Hon'ble High Court in their Order dated 08.08.2022 (copy enclosed) have directed the Director General of police for his views as to how the problem of elephant death should be tackled. In particular, how the investigations can be expedited, the accused arrested, the filing of the charge sheets and the conduct of the trials be expedited. In this regard a High Level Meeting under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary to Government of Odisha was convened on 17.08.2022, along with Senior officers of Police and Forest Department. In the said meeting several decisions *inter alia* constitution of a dedicated Joint Task Force (JTF) to undertake investigations pertaining to different cases of unnatural deaths of elephants in the State were taken. The copy of the minutes of the said meeting is enclosed herewith.

The minutes of the said meeting was filed in the affidavit by the DG of Police. Hon'ble High Court in their Order Dated 25.08.2022 (copy enclosed) have directed to accommodate the views of wildlife experts or civil society groups involved in wildlife conservation or those working with farmers who may have lost their crops and other interested persons engaged in the issue of man-animal conflict so that a comprehensive action plan can be drawn up including both the preventive and remedial elements."

In the said Order, the Hon'ble High court have also directed the JTF to examine the suggestions of the counsel of all the petitions (tagged with the PIL in the hearing) which would also include examining orders of four court cases and the measures taken by the State of Assam in tackling similar problems in that state concerning elephant-human conflict. All the relevant documents are enclosed herewith for appraisal of the members (1. Order dtd. 13.12.2012 of the Supreme Court in T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India concerning Asiatic Wild Buffalo; 2. Judgement of the Karnataka High Court in Suo Moto v. State of Karnataka in WPC

True Copy Attested

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

- 21 - 256

14029 of 2008; 3. Judgement of Madras High court in S. Manoj Immanuel v. Union of India in WP(MD) No. 19771 of 2018; 4. Decisions of the Supreme Court in Hospitality Association of Mudumalai v. In defence of Environment and Animals; 5. Measures taken by State of Assam).

The Hon'ble High Court in the Order Dated 25.08.2022 have further directed that:

"Considering that the PCCF is going to be the convener of the JTF, a direction is issued to the PCCF to place before this Court along with an affidavit, the comprehensive action plan drawn up by the JTF, before the next date."

Pursuant to the Orders of Hon'ble High Court, Government of Odisha in Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department in Order No. 16368 dated 13.09.2022 have constituted Joint Task Force for the protection of wildlife including elephants in the State (copy enclosed). The ToR of the JTF are:

- a. To prevent, investigate and prosecute different cases of unnatural deaths of elephants including cases of poaching of tigers, leopards and illegal trade of pangolins.
- b. To monitor the trials of wildlife cases in the courts of law.
- c. To provide handholding to the field officials on prevention, control and investigation of the wildlife related offences.
- d. To identify the preventive and remedial measures and prepare the Comprehensive Action Plan for checking of the wildlife crimes including poaching and man-animal conflict for implementation by the State.
- e. To advise on wildlife related issues.

This first meeting of the JTF is convened with the above backgrounds. Suggestions are invited from the Members regarding broad points/strategies which will be included in the Comprehensive Action Plan.

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- 22 -

257

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Advocate

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**Fax : (0671) 2368031**  
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**E-mail: mrinalinipadhi@yahoo.com**

**Date:** 02<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2022

To  
The Learned Advocate General,  
Odisha, Cuttack.

Ref: W.P.(C)(PIL) No. 19625 of 2015 (Mrinalini Padhi Vs. State of Odisha and others).

Respected Sir,

I have filed the present PIL to humbly bring to the notice of the Hon'ble High Court that due to the severe devastation of crops and houses caused by wild animals like elephants, wild boars etc. large number of poor people, living in rural areas, are in penury and anxiety for their life and livelihood.

There are several instances of injury and death to humans and crop damage by wild animals. The same has been followed by retaliatory injury and killing of wild animals by the land owners.

In view of the aforesaid circumstances my humble submissions are as follows:

- (1) State Government should implement the comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan before permitting any mining activity in the eco-sensitive zones.
- (2) The traditional elephant corridor should be declared as conservation reserve expeditiously.
- (3) Take adequate steps to prevent wild elephants from entering human settlements and farm lands like:
  - (i) Solar power fence;
  - (ii) Elephant proof walls;
  - (iii) Rail fencing.
- (4) Rapid Response Teams to be constituted with equipments and technical knowhow to drive away the wild animals straying into human settlements.
- (5) "Samities" should be formed in different Panchayats bordering forest areas for mitigating human animal conflict.
- (6) A Multilayer Elephant Alert System (MEAS) for forest and railway officials.

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- 23 -

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- (7) Funds should be kept aside for comprehensive mitigation of Man-animal conflict.
- (8) Sufficient water bodies to be created in the jungles.
- (9) The electric wires should be raised so as to prevent electrocution of elephants.
- (10) The compensation for the loss of crops may be enhanced.
- (11) The compensation due and pending since long with the Government may be disbursed forthwith.
- (12) The claim for compensation would also provide a benchmark to identify the areas which are most vulnerable block-wise (Panchayat wise). Accordingly a "most sensitive area" for man-animal conflict can be mapped for implementation of various measures in the future.

I hope and pray that the State Government will take steps to implement my humble suggestions.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,  
*Mrinalini Padhi*  
(Mrinalini Padhi)

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Odisha, Bhubaneswar

- 24/ - 259

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA: CUTTACK**

**W.P. (C) PIL NO. 22421 OF 2015**

Dwija Dalpati ..... **Petitioner**

**-Versus-**

State of Odisha and others ..... **Respondents**

**SUGGESTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER**

**A. The State Government may come up with a short-term and long-term action plan**

The present batch of writ petitions are relating to the following issues:

- i. Poaching of elephants
- ii. Destruction of crops and subsequent loss to the farmers
- iii. Enforcement of the existing provisions of law
- iv. Preventive measures.

Keeping in mind the aforesaid facts and circumstances it may be proper for the State Government to come up with short-term as well as long-term measures for dealing with the aforesaid issues pertaining to the conflict between humans and elephants.

**B. Maintenance of high-tension electricity lines**

There are reports of several high tension electric lines sagging over a period of time which results in electrocution of the elephants. These lines need to be maintained on a regular basis and this requires close coordination of the Forest Department and the Electricity Department including

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- 25 -  
260

the independent distribution companies. This issue can be clearly avoided if there is proper maintenance of the high-tension electricity lines.

**C. Improving intelligence at the grass root level**

Due to the menace created by the elephants, the local population at the ground level seems to have a better understanding with the antisocial elements compared to the Forest officials due to which the intelligence regarding poaching activities has dried up over the years. Over a period of time collection of intelligence reports about poaching activities has to be substantially improved and the villagers have to be taken into confidence by the Forest department so that poaching can be prevented.

**D. Exemplary Action**

Wherever poaching is detected, exemplary action (like suspension) should be immediately ordered vis-à-vis the concerned forest officials so that the enforcement of the existing laws becomes effective across the State of Odisha.

**E. Immediate release of compensation**

The destruction caused by elephants to farmlands is more or less inevitable in the present scenario. One of the important ways to manage this menace is to immediately release the compensation, as determined, to the affected farmers. A maximum turnaround time of one week should be allowed for release of such compensation. The forest officials should always keep track of the movement of elephants and wherever destruction to farmers is caused they

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can immediately release the funds to the affected persons so that the farmers have no reason to complain.

**F. Improvement of the habitat of the elephants**

The local traditional habitat of elephants should be improved so that they do not venture out of it and destroy the lands/ crops of the farmers.

**G. Identification and construction of under-passes**

Wherever possible underpasses should be constructed on highways for the movement of elephants and particularly on National highways and State highways. Wherever construction of underpasses is not possible, there should be adequate signage.

**H. Identification of the correct personnel for effective management and introducing changes**

No system is effective unless the right people are picked up to man the system. In this context, the following names may be considered by the Government for resolving the present issue involving elephants keeping in mind their prior exposure relating to the aforesaid problem of human-elephant conflict.

- i. Shri Manoj V. Nair, IFS (presently posted at Nandankanan)
- ii. Shri Sanjeev Chadha, IFS
- iii. Shri G. Rajesh, IFS
- iv. Shri Suresh Mishra, IFS (Retd.).

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262

The State Government may consider selecting any of the aforesaid names keeping in mind their suitability and these are mere suggestions.

**I. Strict and immediate action to control encroachment of corridors and mushrooming of infrastructure**

The State Government may be vigilant against illegal encroachment of lands designated as part of elephant corridors, especially encroachments for mining, and construction of resorts and other infrastructural projects. Accordingly, strict and immediate action may be taken against such encroachers.

**J. Policies for change in crop-patterns**

The State Government may come up with and implement appropriate crop-pattern policies to avoid human-elephant conflicts. One of the ways to achieve this could be the prevention of planting commercial crops like bananas, sugarcane, maize, etc. in the forest areas bordering human settlements and elephant corridors and encouraging plantation of non-palatable crops to repel elephants. [This suggestion has been taken from paragraphs 2 and 24 of judgment of Karnataka High Court in *Suo Motu v. State of Karnataka*, W.P.No.14029/2008 (GM-RES).]

**K. Consolidation of the elephant population**

The presence of the elephant population in fragmented areas may result in increased human-elephant conflicts and increased consumption of human and financial resources. Therefore, the State Government may explore the

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possibility of consolidating the scattered elephant population in the state.

**L. Improvements in assistance**

The State Government may consider setting up of toll-free helpline numbers and deployment of designated squads to extend assistance to people in distress on account of human-elephant conflicts. The numbers so created may be widely advertised in the areas prone to human-elephant conflicts. [This suggestion has been taken from paragraph 27 (7.5) of judgment of Karnataka High Court in *Suo Motu v. State of Karnataka*, W.P.No.14029/2008 (GM-RES).]

**M. Expedite prosecution in pending cases**

The prosecution in all pending cases under the relevant statutes for protection of wildlife and environment may kindly be expedited in as much as they relate to elephants and their natural habitat.

**N. Constitute an Empowered Committee/ Group to monitor the issue of human-elephant conflicts**

The State Government may kindly constitute an Empowered Committee/ Group of Members, in terms of order dated 25.08.2022 passed in W.P. (C) No. 22421/ 2015, who may be able to monitor the situation at the ground level and at close intervals. The said Empowered Committee/ Group may directly report to the Court for a short period till visible improvements are seen at the ground level.

Cuttack;

Date:

Advocate for the Petitioner

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- 29 -  
264

To

Dated 05.09.2022

The Advocate General,  
High Court of Orissa,  
Cuttack

W.P. (C) No.9056 of 2013

Balagopal Mishra and another **Vrs.** State and others

Sir,

Kindly refer to the direction issued by the Hon'ble C.J. and Justice C. Dash to the counsel of each case dated 25.08.2022 to prepare suggestions to provide to you to examine them to place before the JTF for its consideration.

The following are my suggestions:

1. Locations or used Elephants corridors and habitats are to be found out first. Such are to be intimated to the nearby local inhabitants, villagers and be notified.
2. Because of deforestation and forest lootings, elephants face problem. So they frequently change the corridors. Such must be restored and be protected.
3. Elephants are not getting food and water. Where no nearby river or spring is available water source be created by digging suitable animal used ponds. Plantation of bamboo, creation of bamboo forests and growth of banyan trees are the first steps to keep the elephants in the area. Food and water for living are

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*h-a*

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- 30 -  
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265

urgently necessary which is fully neglected by Forest Department.

4. Certain projects nearby the elephant corridors and habitats need closure.
5. Non-forest activities like opening of Railways Lines, Roads and operation of mining to stop.
6. Elephants must not cross the Railway tracks, Railway under-way passage can be built, forth with.
7. In forest areas near by elephant corridors and habitats under ground pipe line supply of power is needed. No raised electric line can save elephants,
8. Such methods can be created as created in Chandaka Forest area. Certain local youths maybe provided training to protect forest animals leaving forest due to want of food and water. Gunmen be watched.

Cuttack

Dt-05.09.2022

Yours faithfully,

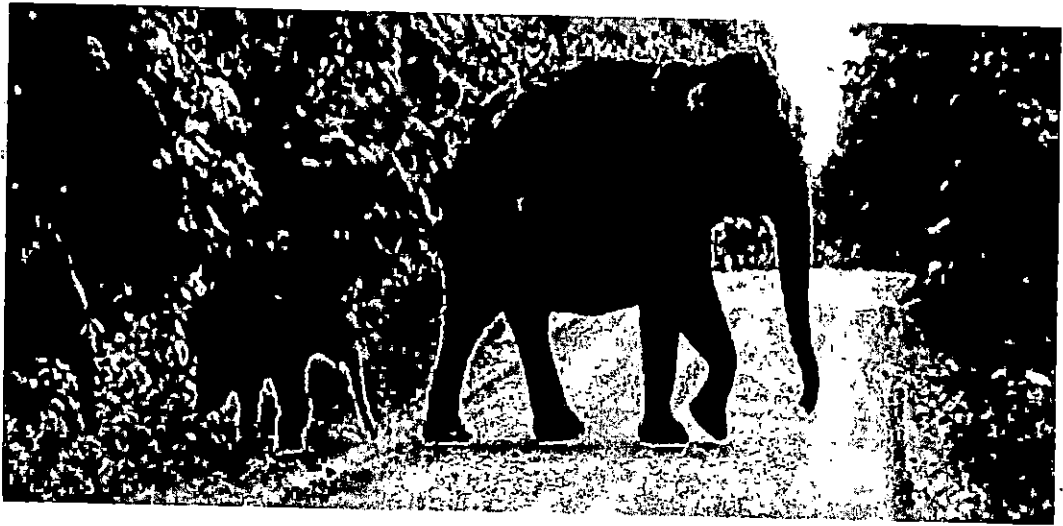
  
(G. P. Mohanty)

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- 31 -  
26/8

## ASSESSMENT OF RECENT ELEPHANT POACHING & PROTECTION INITIATIVES



Suggestion by Afraaz Suhail

Mob- 9040535655

Counsel for Intervener in WP(C) 14706/2022 as per order dated 25/08/2022

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- 32 -  
268

**Contents**

BACKGROUND ..... 3

1. Large number of vacancies and absence of qualified staff ..... 7
2. Coordination Related Issue Between Forest department and other department..... 7
3. Supporting alternate Farming to distract the animals from entering into farm land ..... 11
4. Using of technology for alerting people above elephant movement.... 12
5. Strict action for elephant death cases ..... 13
6. Using technology for tracking poacher and elephant movement..... 14
7. Enforcement of Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code for crowd management ..... 14
8. Proper training needs to be given to staff for enforcement of wildlife protection and handling other legal complicacies..... 15
9. Special wing need to be formed for Wildlife protection and enforcement in every Forest Division..... 16
- 10 Need to improve ground level information system..... 17
- 11 Need to make work friendly environment of Forest Department Staff  
17
12. Reclaim land in mining areas and to be used for elephant movement  
18
- 13 Special attention for critical places ..... 19
- 14 Construction of underpass or overpass for wildlife movement ..... 19
- 15 Collective involvement of local villagers, civil society people and Wildlife enthusiast ..... 20

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## BACKGROUND

Elephants are the largest terrestrial mammals in the world and have distinctly massive bodies, large ears and long trunks. Elephants are mostly organised into intricate social structures with females and calves under the leadership of a matriarch, whereas male elephants often live in isolation or in tiny bachelor groups. Led by a matriarch, elephants are organized into complex social structures of females and calves, whereas male elephants tend to live in solitary confinement or in small groups of singles. A female elephant gives birth to a single calf after the gestation period of around 22 months, which as a matter of fact is the longest gestation period of any mammal. The calves are taken in charge by the whole herd of related females. Females can stay with their maternal herd until the end of their life, whereas males leave the herd when they attain puberty. The social groups of forest elephants differ slightly and may consist solely of an adult female and its offspring. However, they can be grouped into larger groups within forest clearings where resources are more abundant.

Elephants need vast territories to survive and meet their ecological needs, which include food, water and space. On average, an elephant can

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- 24 -  
4  
269

feed for 18 hours and consume hundreds of pounds of plant material every day. Therefore, as they lose their habitat, they often get into conflict with people competing for resources

With the loss of habitat the human tendency, man animal conflict has become rather common.

With increase in number of cases elephant death due to poaching, electrocution, poisoning and disease Hon'ble High Court video vie order dated 25/08/2022 was pleased to issue direction whereby counsel in each of the petitions will prepare a short summary of their respective suggestions and provide them to the Advocate General.

Having met with important stakeholders and visited large areas of elephant reserve, considerable information was collected regarding the elephant deaths, as well as about the current protection initiatives that are underway in the state. The situation in Odisha is chronic and a serious upheaval must take place. After having carried out an accurate assessment of the situation on the ground and bearing in mind that our

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- 35 - 100 270  
5

recommendations should be simple, practical and immediately applicable, the recommendation are made under following heading

- Large number of Vacancies and absence of qualified staff
- Coordination Related Issue Between Forest department and other department
- Supporting alternate Farming to distract the animals from entering into farm land
- Using of technology for alerting people above elephant movement
- Strict action for elephant death cases
- Using technology for tracking poacher and elephant movement
- Enforcement of Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code for crowd management
- Enforcement of Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code for crowd management
- Proper training needs to be given to staff for enforcement of wildlife protection and handling other legal complicacies

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- 86-  
291

- Special wing need to be formed for Wildlife protection and enforcement in every Forest Division
- Need to improve ground level information system
- Need to make work friendly environment of Forest Department Staff
- Reclaim land in mining areas and to be used for elephant movement
- Special attention for critical places
- Construction of underpass or overpass for wildlife movement
- Collective involvement of local villagers, civil society people and Wildlife enthusiast
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- 37 - 11  
272

**1. Large number of vacancies and absence of qualified staff**

The majority of posts in the Forest Department remain vacant and are yet to be filled. As a result, the existing workforce is overburdened. For instance, under the **Regional Chief Conservator of Forest (Angul) 313 posts are vacant**. There have been numerous instances where range offices seemed to operate without any personnel or employees and staff. In certain critical places like Athgarh, Hindol etc. there is virtually no staff. Poachers have always benefited enormously from a lack of personnel. If these vacant positions are not filled immediately, work efficiencies cannot be attained from within the Department. Even after the formation of the Wildlife Crime Cell for restriction of crimes related to Wildlife, there has been no adequate employment of a basic workforce by the Forest Department to render the cell operational and functional full-fledged.

**2. Coordination Related Issue Between Forest department and other department**

Coordination between Forest Department and other stakeholder Department has always been a cause of concern. Due to delay in flow of information and delay in action taking has been major cause

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38-151  
279

elephant related deaths. Detail of suggestion for implementation of coordination related programmes between different departments has been written below

- **Between Forest department and Energy Department**

If the past and present recordings are considered 90% of elephant fatalities are caused by electrocution. Livewire can be in two forms, the first one is done intentionally to kill the animal and the second one is unintentionally one which is mostly connected for personal or other use. The major issue is due to the lack of cabling of wire, the poachers' taking advantage of such lacuna; use these wires for killing of wild animals. The wires used by the poachers for hooking are intentionally fabricated extremely thin, to make it untraceable and invisible. Poachers are so skilful that they use a very fine type of wire to hang which are sometimes very difficult to trace. In some cases, the elephant dies from these illegal hooks, which are mainly used to kill wild boars. With the advancement of technology if cabling/insulation of wire is properly done, then it will be quite difficult for the poachers to illegally hook it and if by chance any

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— 39 —

274

elephant comes in contact with any of these wires, then these wires won't be as dangerous like the present form of wires. The major problem with the wire changing system is that the Forest Department do not have that power as well as the manpower to have such forms of changes. The power lies entirely with the Department of Energy. The lack of co-ordination between the two ministries ultimately affected the lives of the elephants. There should be a proper S.O.P for coordination between the Department of Energy and the Department of Forests and each Forest Office Division should have a delegated officer of the Department of Energy

- **Between Forest Department and Animal Husbandry Department**

The consequences of failure in coordination between Animal Husbandry department and Forest Department have led sharp increase in the mortality rate. Such incident of deaths was first seen in "Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary" in Kalahandi district in 2021. The elephants died due to transmission of infectious diseases from farm animals like cows and goats to elephants. Diseases like 'anthrax', 'foot and mouth' etc. are the most common diseases that spread

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— 10/40 — 1/15

275

from domestic animals to elephants and because of these disease large number of elephants die in state. The simplest approach to curb transmission of such terrible diseases is by vaccinating farm animals. But it has been seen that many domesticated animals haven't been vaccinated as of now. A support from Animal Husbandry department is extremely necessary for it. Both the departments need to share their knowledge, experience and equipment to vaccinate all the farm animals and stop spreading of disease.

• **Between Forest department and Police Department**

The perfect example of failure between both the departments was seen in the "Naraj incident" where one elephant and two people including one reporter died by capsization of boat during a rescue operation in Mahanadi River, Munduli Bridge.. The boat was launched without the prior consent of Forest Department and the Forest Department was completely out of mind and lacked any strategically planning of on how to rescue the animal from such a huge crowd.

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The Suggestions are

- a) For capturing a criminals both the department need to get involved as Forest Department don't have power to arrest a person under Indian Penal Code, Arms Act etc.
- b) For getting information from ground level informers both the department need to coordinate on this as Police department is well experienced on these matters.
- c) For law enforcement and crowd control department need to take the help of Police Department.
- d) Every Divisional Forest officer shall have at least one officer deputed from the Police Department.

**3. Supporting alternate Farming to distract the animals from entering into farm land**

It is quite evident to see that elephants are specially attracted to some crops like paddy, jack fruit etc. To distract the animals from entering into paddy fields alternate plantation methods can be utilised or supported amongst farmers. Plants which are not liked by the elephants can be planted instead of plants which are liked by elephants. Farmers

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- 42 - 297

should be given subsidy and other benefits to plant such trees. Even **Bio fence** method can be used to distract the animals. Bio fencing is also known as **Live Fencing**. Live fences are lines of trees or plants planted on farm or field boundaries that provide protection against wildlife, act as windbreaks, enrich the soil, provide bee forage, provide shade, and control dust. In bio fencing in the first two layers plants are planted which is unfriendly to the wild animals like chilly, lemon etc. and after those plants like paddy is planted. Bio fencing with lemon grass can help to divert elephant as elephant don't like the smell of lemon. It is even more economical than solar fencing and other forms of fencing.

#### **4. Using of technology for alerting people above elephant movement**

If an animal moving near a human habitat technology can be used to alert the people

- For example access to **Integrated Wildlife Management System (IWLMS)** can be used to alert people through SMS or automated calls that there is presence of an elephant in a particular area and they should be cautious about it. Though this programme has been

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43 - 11

278

started but it is yet to be properly implemented specially in Western Odisha district.

- Usage of "Animal Intrusion detection and Repellent System (ANIDER)" can also be beneficial to alert people where mobile connection is poor. This is equipment to alert people through lights and alarm about the presence of elephant.

5. **Strict action for elephant death cases**

To stop a person from committing a crime we need to create fear of law instilled on his mind. The failure in poaching related crime is that, either cases are never registered or whenever it is reported the investigation goes so badly that there is hardly any conviction reported. The poachers have taken great advantages of this weakness. Special training programmes needed to train up staffs with training and framing charge sheet so that the accused don't take this to their advantage and fear of law is instilled on their mind. **Secondly** there should be an **online portal** where all elephant related deaths are updated and the statuses of investigation of those cases are updated

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- 44 - 103 279

on daily basis. This will create a pressure on the staff to improve their efficiency on investigation.

**6. Using technology for tracking poacher and elephant movement**

The technological deficiency of the Forest Department and inability to cope-up with the advanced gadgets used by the poachers is the major defect and cause of inefficiency to prevent poaching activities . **Technology like drones can be used to access difficult terrain where travelling by foot or vehicles is very difficult.** The issue with drones is that it is not circulated so actively in department and every division has 1 or 2 drones available to track such a large forest area. Drones need to be made available in **range level** under a Forest Division. Secondly usage of **thermal camera** is important to track the poachers and animals especially during night time.

**7. Enforcement of Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code for crowd management**

It is usually seen that when an elephant enters into a human habitat or any place close to human dwelling, people in huge crowd gather

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45-111  
280

just to take a glimpse of the majestic animal. This crowd has always been a catalyst in infuriating clashes between man and animal thereby causing conflict. There are numerous instances of crowd taking law in their own hand by using force or other ways harming and injuring the animal which can be extremely fatal to the animals or they tend to do things which can make the animal more aggressive. In this type of situation with the help of Executive Magistrate Section 144 of Cr.P.C needs to be enforced and presence of police personnel is extremely necessary to monitor the crowd. Coordination of both the department is extremely required here. The failure of crowd management was perfectly seen in "Naraj issue".

**8. Proper training needs to be given to staff for enforcement of wildlife protection and handling other legal complicacies**

The major issue with the staffs from Forest Department is that they are not legally well versed. They don't have proper training on how to lodge a complaint or how to file a charge sheet etc. A **coordination/awareness programme** needs to be organised

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46  
18  
281

between legal department of State and Forest Department to teach various strategies and measures, in handling these complicacies.

Secondly staffs need to be properly trained on handling and solving wildlife related crimes ways and measures of proper Implementation of Wildlife Protection Act

**9. Special wing need to be formed for Wildlife protection and enforcement in every Forest Division**

The major issue with the forest Department is that everything else is done other than Wildlife Protection. Programmes like Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MG-NRGS), Green India Mission, Green Mahanadi Mission etc. are enforced by these staffs. When staffs are kept engaged on these works the proper implementation of Wildlife protection and enforcement gets diverted. A special wing needs to be formed whose only job would be Wildlife protection and enforcement.

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— 44 → 21  
17  
280

**10 Need to improve ground level information system**

The major success for every crime controlling system is to have proper hold in information system. It mean whenever a crime happens or is going to happen these people would have proper information about everything. To make this happen you need to have proper informers who can pass information about such incidents.

On this matter the department lacks a lot. There are hardly any informers who can help the department in crime controlling. It immediately needs to establish such a support system where information from ground level can pass and reach to the department immediately.

**11 Need to make work friendly environment of Forest Department Staff**

To let a person work efficiently we need to make a work friendly environment for the employee. In this matter the work environment of Forest Department is not that friendly. It mostly happens when staffs are working in extremely interior part of the jungle, he has to live in an environment which is extremely hostile to him. There is hardly any mobile connection in those parts of jungles which make

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- 48 -  
283

them completely isolated from their family members. This badly affects the psychology of the employee. Programmes need to be made to boost the psychology of the staffs who are working in those hostile environments.

**12. Reclaim land in mining areas and to be used for elephant movement**

With the increase in mining activities large number of paths which was used by elephants for their movement got lost. This increased and worsened man animal conflict as their regular path was lost due to mining activities and they got diverted to places where human habitation was high. After mining is a complete in a particular area, land reclamation is done as per guidelines of Ministry of Mines. Large planation programmes can be done so that elephants are brought back to their natural habitat which they lost due to mining activities especially in areas like Sundergarh, Angul, Bonai, Keonjhar and Jharuguda.

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- 49 - 19  
284

**13 Special attention for critical places**

There are some places which have been regarded as hotspot for wildlife poaching. Special attention needs to be taken for these places like deputing extra staffs for handling these crimes. Secondly in place like 'Narsingpur' in Cuttack district large number of country made guns are made which in the end are used for wildlife poaching. Immediate steps needed to stop supply and manufacture of these guns. Secondly **success and failure stories** of different places needed to be taken into consideration for controlling wildlife related crime.

**14 Construction of underpass or overpass for wildlife movement**

This can be used where elephant movement is frequent and their normal movement can get affected due to construction of rail lines or highways. This may be a tedious process but there has been several success stories where normal movement of vehicles has not been affected and elephant are freely moving without any obstruction.

Success story of Assam can be taken into consideration.

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**15 Collective involvement of local villagers, civil society people and Wildlife enthusiast**

Involvement of these people is extremely important to control wildlife related crimes in state. Suggestions and their involvement on ground can greatly help in controlling poaching. Special programmes need to be established where involvement of these people are taken care of and they are regarded as one of the parties in fight against wildlife related crimes. **Participative tourism** can be established with the help of local villagers where villagers will have source of income from wildlife tourism. In this way villagers who are involved in poaching can have alternate source of income.

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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FOREST AND  
HEAD OF FOREST FORCE, ASSAM :: PANJABARI :: GUWAHATI-37

Email ID: [hoff-assam@gov.in](mailto:hoff-assam@gov.in)

No:FG.26/Man-Animal Conflict/2016

Date: 13/09/2022

To,

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest &  
Chief Wildlife Warden, Odhisa,  
Bhubaneswar, Odhisa.

Sub: The best practices adopted for mitigation of Human Elephant Conflict in Assam and regarding.

Sir,

With reference to the subject cited above, it is to inform you that while Assam takes the pride of holding one of the largest population of elephants in the country (5719 as per 2017 estimation), it is also one of the most affected States in the country in terms of Human Elephant Conflict (a statement showing effects of HEC since 2019-22 is **annexed**). Though the major factors attributable to increasing HEC in the State are degradation of habitat, loss of connectivity (corridors/passages), fast land use changes in the fringe areas of the notified RFs and PAs, linear development particularly construction of railway tracks, roads etc., the mitigation of the conflict becomes more challenging for the reason of elephants of Assam needing to range into neighboring States like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and international border with Bhutan and Bangladesh. However, the Assam Forest Department has been putting all out effort to mitigate HEC in the State. Some of the best practices adopted by the department for mitigation of Human Elephant Conflict in the State are mentioned below for kind information:

1. The Government of Assam vide its notification dated 28.12.2016 has constituted Coordination Committees in all the districts of the State to prevent death of wild animals especially elephants by vehicle hit, train hit, electrocution or poisoning etc. and also to prevent loss of human life and to minimize the damage of crop & property etc., with the Deputy Commissioner/Additional Deputy Commissioner (to be nominated by the DC) of the district as Chairman, the Circle Officer, Revenue Circle of concerned Sub-Division (Civil) as Co-Chairman, Superintendent of Police or his representative, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (in case of sub-division) as Member, Divisional Forest Officer (Territorial), DFO (Wildlife), DFO (Social Forestry) as Member, Block Development Officer, Officer In-Charge of Police Station of the concerned Sub-Division (Civil) as Member, Range Officers & Beat Officers of the respective areas as Member, Village Heads of the locality & adjoining areas as Member, Gaon Panchayat Presidents of the locality & Secretaries of Village Defense Party (VDP) as Member, five representative of local NGOs, five Principals/Head Masters of local schools, Station Master of concerned Railway Stations, Executive Engineer/Assistant Executive Engineer PWD Roads, representative of District Transport Officer, Assistant General Managers of all concerned Electrical Sub-Divisions as Members and Range Officer of the area (to be nominated by the DFO) as Member Secretary with the following principal mandates:-
  - a. The Committee will assist, advise and guide the Civil, Police and Forest Officials in anti elephant depredation measures and also in rescue and rehabilitation of distress animals.
  - b. The Committee will oversee the coordinated approach for effective anti elephant depredation measures to prevent loss of animal life, human life and damage to crop and property.

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- 52 -

- c. Information sharing on real time basis is a vital factor in animal death and damage and therefore the Committee will adopt such information sharing strategies including through effective WhatsApp group for prompt response.
  - d. The Local DFOs of Territorial/Wildlife Division will coordinate the transaction of such Committees for elephant corridors in their respective jurisdiction in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner/Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil). They will also provide the administrative, financial and other recourses as may be required.
  - e. The Committee will report regularly to the Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Assam on regular basis or s frequently as may be required by the Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Assam or the State Government.
2. Mobile Anti Depredation Squads (MADS) & Field Anti Depredation Squads (FADS) are formed in 12 most affected districts of the State.
    - MADS – One unit of MADS consist of 2 armed Frontline staff, 4 Volunteers, 1 Bolero Vehicle with a Driver. Two such units of MADS are provided in every affected district. It is decided to provide warm cloths/raincoat, hunting shoes and a vehicle fitted with GPS for 24x7 tracking, top mounted powerful search light, mega phone etc. The Frontline staff and Volunteers are provided powerful torches and mobile smart phone. It is also decided to pay remuneration to the Volunteers @Rs. 9000/month/person.
    - FADS – FADS are formed with 15 Volunteers (selected from local EDCs/JFMCs) in the most depredation hit areas. The Volunteers are provided warm cloths/raincoat, hunting shoes, powerful torches, search lights, mobile phone, crackers etc. It is decided to pay remuneration to the FADS @Rs. 1000/day/group.
  3. Construction of Hanging Solar Power Fencing – 108 KMs. of Hanging Solar Power Fencing have been erected since 2019-20 in the most depredation hit areas in strategic manner based on field study and experience.
  4. Raising lemon orchards particularly along the southern boundary of Manas National Park, by the fringe communities has proved very effective in preventing elephant depredation.
  5. Raising paddy cultivation in abandoned agriculture field adjoining forest areas as a lure crop with use of single strand solar power fencing by some NGOs, has been found very effective in protecting larger areas of paddy fields against depredation by confining the elephant herds in smaller areas closer to the forests.
  6. It has been proposed to purchase crop (paddy) grown in the agriculture areas which are contiguous to the forest areas in order to compensate the affected farmers instantly and there by minimize seasonal HEC in such areas.
  7. Elephant Corridors: – Loss of connectivity between various notified RFs/PAs is one of the main causes which is attributable to increasing HEC in Assam. The Assam Forest department has identified and re-delineated 12 Elephant Corridors in the current year and the matter is being taken up to secure all the corridors with regards to arresting the land use changes taking place in the corridors.

The Government of Assam vide its Notification has already accepted identification and delineation of 9 Animal Corridors connecting Kaziranga National Park to Karbi-Anglong District along the

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289

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southern boundary of NP across the NH-37 (covering altogether a stretch of above 40 KM. along the NH) vide its notification dated 01.04.2022 and directed the concerned Revenue Department of the State to take follow up action for notification of the structural corridors. 5 out of the above mentioned 12 Elephant Corridors are included in the above notified 9 Animal Corridors of KNP.

The Assam Public Works Department (NH) has submitted a project with an estimated cost of Rs.6000 crore, for construction of Elevated Road for a total length of 35 KM in three stretches on the NH-37, covering the above mentioned 9 Animal Corridors of KNP to provide safe and secure passage for movement of animals from KNP to Karbi-Anglong District and vice versa. The alignment of the proposed Elevated Road has already been approved by the Ministry of RTH, Government of India.

8. Elephant Corridors/Passages across the Railway Track: – 33 Elephant Corridors/Passages on the railway tracks in Assam have been identified and the following best practices are adopted to prevent death of elephant due to train hit.
- a. Joint meetings with the Railway officials are held at regular interval where in issues with regards to preventing accidents on the railway track are discussed and actions taken are reviewed at regular interval.
  - b. Workshop for raising awareness among the loco pilots is held at regular interval.
  - c. Patrolling by the Forest and Railway officials are conducted jointly at the vulnerable stretches of the Railway tracks.
  - d. General caution by the Railway Department is given on the stretches of the Railway track which passes through RF/PA with restriction of speed of the train to 30 KM per hour (maximum). On specific information, the speed of the train is limited to 30 KM per hour even on the stretches of the railway track which does not pass through RF/PA and may have to bring the train to complete halt if required.
  - e. Railway department has to clear jungles on both sides of the railway track to make visibility high on the corridors/passages across the track and display signages.
  - f. Control Room is setup at the Railway Divisional Head Quarters which is manned jointly by Forest and Railway Official 24x7. Besides, WhatsApp group is formed for fast dissemination of information.
9. Elephant Corridors at Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, Guwahati: – There are 6 identified active Elephant Corridors (out of the above mentioned 33 Corridors/Passages) connecting Rani and Garbhanga RFs with Deepor Beel WLS across the Azara-Kamakhya section of railway track under NF Railway, Guwahati. The following actions are taken in view of orders/directions passed by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in O.A. No. 19/2014 :-
- a. Construction of double track in the Azara-Kamakhya section has been stopped until permanent mitigation measures are put in place by the NF Railway. Permanent mitigation measures include construction of Via Duct and guard wall etc. as suggested by WII, Dehradun.
  - b. Electrification of the existing single track in the said section of the railway track shall take place simultaneously with implementation of the temporary mitigation measures as suggested by the WII, Dehradun. The temporary mitigation measures suggested by WII are construction of ramp across the railway track in all the 6 identified corridors to provide safe and secure passages to the elephants while accessing Deepor Beel from Rani and Garbhanga RF and vice versa. The Railway Department shall not energize the electric line until the ramp construction on the railway track within all the 6 corridors as prescribed by WII is completed.
  - c. With the active involvement of Railway Officials and Forest Officials in respect to dissemination of information and quick action by the railway to control the speed (at times

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- 54 - 290

halting the train) of the train, there has been no death of elephants due to train hit in the corridors of said section of railway since 2013.

10. Rescue and rehabilitation of animals: – The Assam Forest Department in association with WTI has established a Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation & Conservation at KNP, Bokakhat in 2002. The department has gained remarkable experience in capturing, translocating and rehabilitating big mammals like rhino, elephant, tiger, leopard etc. over a period of past 20 years. Rescue and controlling of elephants during HEC can be now conducted with great efficiency with the team comprising of experienced Forest Officials, Veterinarians and Experts from the NGOs, as and when required immediately.

11. The Government of Assam vide its Notification dated 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2021, delegated full powers to the PCCF & HoFF to sanction and release exgratia/compensation to the victims of Human Elephant Conflict directly on the basis of field reports, by abolishing ceiling system. As a result, entire exgratia/compensation amount of Rs.11.72 crore, which was pending since 2014-15 to 2020-21 could be released under Establishment & Expenditure head of Government of Assam and paid to the victims within 2020-21.

Moreover, the Government of Assam vide its Notification dated 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2022 has directed the Deputy Commissioners of the districts of Assam to sanction and release exgratia/compensation to the victims of Human Elephant Conflict from the State Disaster Response Fund if fund with the Forest department is not available at that time, in order to release such fund to the victims of HEC within the quickest possible time.


12. Recovery of lost and degraded habitats: – Loss and degradation of habitats in RFs/PAs is another main cause attributable to increasing Human Elephant Conflict in particular in the State. The main reason of such loss of habitats is encroachment within the notified areas. The Government Assam has decided to clear all such encroachment from RFs/PAs with immediate effect and that will be followed by large scale plantation for quick restoration of habitats.

During November, 2021, an area of 1410 Ha. has been cleared off encroachment in Lunding RF which forms a critical part of Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve. 736 households have been shifted out from the RF during eviction. About 200 elephants have come back to the area after the eviction.

13. For the purpose of study of movement and ranging pattern and distribution of elephants in the State, study through Radio Collar method has been undertaken in the North Bank Landscape of the River Brahmaputra and in the South Bank Landscape of the River Brahmaputra. 10 animals are targeted for Radio Collaring in its 1<sup>st</sup> phase. 2 elephants (1 in the North Bank Landscape and another in South Bank Landscape) have already been Radio Collared which have been providing data satisfactorily.

14. Study has also been undertaken through Photo Capture Method through which experimentally in Kaziranga 800 unique elephants have been identified.

Yours faithfully,

  
(M.K. Yadava, IFS)

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest &  
Head of Forest Force, Assam

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**Statement showing effects of HEC since 2019-22.****A. Crop & Property damage due to HEC since 2019-20 to 2021-22.**

Year	Crop Damage(in Bigha)	Number of House
2019-20	6484	1477
2020-21	4876	912
2021-22	4549	887

**B. Human & Elephant Death due to HEC since 2019 to 2021**

Year	Number of Human Death	Number of Elephant Death
2019	75	19
2020	77	20
2021	76	20
2022	38	10

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- 56 -  
292

Annexure - J/1

Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of Joint Task Force (JTF) constituted for protection of wildlife including elephants in the State held on 20.09.2022 at 04.00 PM through Hybrid mode in the O/o Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha.

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The first meeting of the Joint Task Force (JTF), constituted vide Government Order No.16368/FE&CC dtd.13.09.2022 was held on 20.09.2022 at 4.00 PM through hybrid mode under the Chairmanship of Dr. Manoj V. Nair, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests (WL), O/o Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha.

The list of participants present is annexed herewith.

At the outset, the Chairman welcomed all the participants and apprised them regarding the objective of the constitution of the Joint Task Force, its mandate and the Terms of Reference (ToR) as outlined in the Government Order No.16368 dtd.13.09.2022.

The Task Force members were already circulated the pertinent documents outlining the views furnished by the Ld. Counsels of the Petitioners, Gita Rout (W.P.(C) No.14706 of 2022), Balagopal Mishra and another (W.P.(C) No.9056 of 2013) and Dwija Dalpati (W.P.(C) No.22421 of 2015), besides the report of the PCCF & HoFF, Assam with regard to measures taken in that State to tackle the human-elephant conflict.

Further, the orders dated 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2012 of the Supreme Court in T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India (2012) 3 SCC 277 concerning the "Asiatic Wild Buffalo", the judgment of the Karnataka High Court in Suo Motu v. State of Karnataka (W.P.(C) No.14029 of 2008), the judgment of the Madras High Court in S. Manoj Immanuel v. Union of India (W.P.(MD) No.19711 of 2018) and the decision of the Supreme Court in Hospitality Association of Mudumalai v. In defence of Environment and Animals (2010) 10 SCC 589 were also circulated in advance to the Task Force.

After a round of introductions, a detailed discussion ensued based on the memorandum already circulated to the members vide letter No.8371 dtd.17.09.2022 of the State Wildlife Headquarters, Odisha.

Opening the proceedings, Dr. Sukumar stated that while considering the administrative and legal aspects of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) as well as increasing rate of wildlife crime, emphasis also need to be paid on the ecological and biological aspects of the issue as well. The root causes of the HEC need to be addressed such as land-use changes due to developmental activities, proliferation of non-palatable invasive species, pull factors such as increasing green cover and agriculture (rice fields) outside forest areas etc. We also need to

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factor in impacts of climate change, a fact which is often overlooked. Therefore, pragmatic planning needs to be done to address this issue holistically.

Dr. Prajna Panda stated that census figures indicate that the elephant population of Odisha has been largely stable across several decades or marginally increasing. However, it is a matter of concern that there is increase of elephant deaths in Odisha due to unnatural causes. Approximately 77% of the elephant population occur within the three Elephant Reserves and other PAs and are spread across 37 forest divisions. However, it is the central Odisha landscapewherein majority of the unnatural deaths as well as poaching cases do occur. Therefore, it is important that we need to focus on such hotspots of conflict and devise practical time-bound strategies for preventing such deaths with the involvement of all stakeholders.

Shri Jitasatru Mohanty stated that about half of the elephant population in the State is found within the 3 Elephant Reserves of Mayurbhanj, Mahanadi and Sambalpur. We need to declare two more ERs such as Baitarani ER and South Odisha ER and also expand the area of Sambalpur ER. He also explained vividly the passages and corridor areas used by elephants in the state and the bottle necks and issues thereof. He also stated that while there is no magic solution, we need to cater to the expectations of the people where zero casualty of humans and reduction of death of elephants are priority areas. We also need to involve local people in a big way. We need to chalk out short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies. He volunteered to submit a detail report regarding the same shortly.

Shri Lalit Mohan Sahu highlighted several village level interventions that can be taken up to reduce HEC and elephant and human mortality. Among those were creation of village level safe shelters, underground grain bins, creation of plantations of elephant fodder plants such as fruit trees, sugarcane fields, banana etc outside vulnerable villages so that conflict inside villages can be reduced. Further, anthropogenic activities which cause disturbance inside forest areas need to be checked. Further, the explosives used in quarries and mines also create disturbance which drive out wild animals out of their habitats and has to be checked. He highlighted the menace of illegal hooking from electric wires and stated that cabling and making them underground has to be taken up. He also deplored the disturbance caused by stray dogs which chase and hunt deer and other wild animals. DFOs, Range Officers and ground staff need to closely interact with villagers and create awareness among them. Prof.

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Sukumar endorsed the use of underground grain-storage bins citing their efficacy and long use in parts of states like TN and Karnataka.

Shri Aditya Chandra Panda emphasized the importance of disaggregating elephant death causes into natural and unnatural ones and mentioned that among such causes, illegal hooking and electrocution was the most important one. It is also a law and order issue and need to be addressed with due seriousness. He also outlined the importance of arresting habitual poachers. Other means of retaliatory action by farmers such as 'bara-bombs', piercing by long spears, poisoning etc. are emerging threats. He also pointed out that delay in payment in compassionate payment for crop depredation is also an issue and suggested that pre-emptive payment can be done in areas where crop depredation is a chronic issue. CCF Wildlife and DCF Administration immediately clarified that the issue has been addressed by the introduction of Anukampa app. Shri Panda further suggested that timely release of authenticated data on elephant deaths to press be ensured so that rumours and falsehoods are not spread; Capacity building of elephant trackers / squads on the lines of efficient squads deployed in Khuntuni and Athagarh ranges be taken up on priority; Surveillance of regular poachers and apprehending habitual elephant poachers besides provisioning of arms and ammunition to frontline permanent staff.

Prof Sukumar also highlighted the pervasive issue of wild boar depredation and opined that a policy decision needs to be taken regarding their population control since in number of cases, live wire trap laid for their capture has led to death of elephants.

DrPrajna further referred to the importance of cross-border checking of wildlife products; co-operation and co-ordination among enforcement agencies and addressing low conviction rates.

The official members of the Task Force also expressed their views; and the important points flagged by them are as follows:

- Need to improve intelligence gathering
- Care needs to be taken while preparing case records
- Engaging experienced advocates to represent the Dept in wildlife cases
- Improve prosecution and conviction by increasing capacity at all levels.

After threadbare discussion as outlined above, the following broad road map has been drawn up:

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1. To compile and maintain an updated database of wildlife crime-related information with the JTF. This shall inter alia include a Dossier of known criminals and details of wildlife offence cases. The analysis of this data repository will reveal spatial and temporal patterns in wildlife crime and shall help formulate strategies action in field.
2. Development of a state-wide intelligence network to pro-actively collect actionable information from the field to both pre-empt wildlife crimes and also apprehend the habitual offenders.
3. To formulate a Comprehensive Action Plan with preventive and remedial measures for checking wildlife crime and reduction in man-animal conflict in the State. This would include among others, the following indicative interventions

(A) PREVENTIVE

- Patrolling & protection like Anti-Poaching Squads, Elephant Trackers, Development of Intelligence Network & Infrastructure development (Protection Camps, Watch Towers, Vehicles)
- Habitat Development through Meadows development, Fodder trees and plants, Bamboo planting, seed balls etc besides construction & maintenance of Water bodies, Water Harvesting Structures
- Man-animal Conflict Mitigation Measures may include Rapid Response Teams at the level of Circles; Capacity building of staff
- Intelligence Gathering & Crime Database to include setting up of Crime Cell at the level of Division, Circle and HQ; Crime Dossiers to be compiled, maintained and updated; Surveillance of habitual offenders
- Coordination with stakeholder agencies like Monthly co-ordination meetings with Railways, Discoms, Animal Husbandry, NHAI and other relevant Departments [at the level of Range, Division, Circle & HQ]. Exclusive monthly co-ordination meetings with police and judiciary at the level of DFOs
- Regular co-ordination with other enforcement agencies viz STF and WCCB in cases having inter-state ramifications
- Alternative crop & patterns & anti-crop depredation such as New crops & cropping pattern; Unpalatable crops; provisioning of Harvesters / Steel bins / Community Storage Bins in vulnerable villages.

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- People's Participation like engagement of GajSathi and involvement of Hon Wildlife Wardens, PRIs, EDC and VSS members, SHGs etc. Quick disbursal of compassionate amount
- Elephant Corridor (EC) Identification, Rationalisation & Management such as Rationalisation of ECs and improvement of habitats therein
- Application of technology viz GIS-based analysis of elephant movement; App-based monitoring; GPS-enabled vehicles & bikes; Early warning systems such as Bulk sms; Drones, Trap cameras
- Elephant-proof Barriers like Planned strategy for trenches; Solar fences; Bio-fences
- Linear Infrastructure Mitigation Measures through Elephant Underpasses / Overpasses across the high ways; Railway crossings & Canals
- Special drives for migratory elephants in Mayurbhanj and Balasore [Elephants from West Bengal and Jharkhand]. Close co-ordination with local people and the adjoining States
- Health Management inclusive of Preventive vaccination & Sanitisation of water bodies
- Rescue & Rehabilitation like provisioning of WL Ambulances; Veterinarians at selected Circle level; Improved Rescue Centres; Capacity building of mahouts and training of elephants to function as kunkis and management of captive elephants
- Research & Monitoring through Population estimation; Developing tusker profiles & close monitoring including Radio-collaring / GPS collaring of few select animals
- Awareness & Education through Radio messages; Posters; Street plays; Road signs
- Capacity building at all levels

(B) REMEDIAL

- Co-ordination with Police & Discoms: Crack down on illegal arms manufacturing units; Discoms to book cases of illegal hooking
- Vigilance over habitual offenders
- Quick disbursal of compassionate payment to ensure quick payment to avoid retaliatory action and as a confidence-building measure
- Prosecution through Fast track courts / exclusive Standing Counsels for wildlife cases trial in every District/Sub-division level

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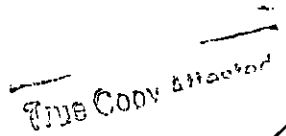
- Health management, treatment, rescue and rehabilitation: Quick treatment [SOP for injured elephants]

A comprehensive action plan will be prepared once the members from the Police Department join the JTF.

4. To take up field investigation of few important wildlife cases relating to elephant, tiger, leopard and pangolin.
5. Scrutiny of case records of some important cases and provide handholding for improving the same.
6. Review and monitor progress of important cases and offer advice for effective prosecution of the same so as to improve conviction rates.
7. To conduct capacity building workshops and training programmes to enhance skills of field staff in prevention, investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime and also awareness on mitigating human-wildlife conflict situation.


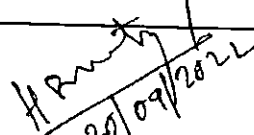
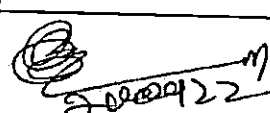
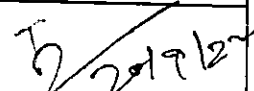
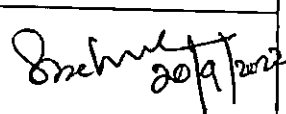

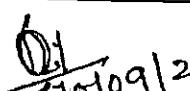
It was further decided that the next meeting may be convened once all the members of Joint Task Force (JTF) are in place [As of now, the police personnel have yet not been posted/ joined the Force]. However, it was agreed that the JTF meetings may be convened on monthly basis and if required at shorter intervals as well. The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair and all members.

  
20.09.22  
Chief Conservator of Forests (WL)  
Chairman, Joint Task Force

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

## Attendance sheet

Participants attended the first meeting of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the conference hall O/o the PCCF (Wildlife) & CWLW, Odisha, Prakruti Bhawan, Bhubaneswar on 20.09.2022 at 4.00PM

Sl No.	Name	Designation	Signature
1	Dr. Manoj V Nair, IFS	CCF (Wildlife) Chairman, JTF	 20.09.22
2	Sri Himanshu Sekhar Mohanty	Dy. CF Member, JTF	 20/09/2022
3	Prof. Raman Sukumar	Scientist, ANCF Co-opted Member (Wildlife Expert)	Joined on virtual mode.
4	Sri Jitasatru Mohanty, IFS (Retd)	Trustee, SEFT Co-opted Member (Wildlife Expert)	Joined on virtual mode.
5	Dr. Prajna Panda	National Coordinator, Elephant Cell Co-opted Member (Wildlife Expert)	Joined on virtual mode.
6	Sri Aditya Chandra Panda	Honorary Wildlife Warden, Angul Member (engaged voluntarily on wildlife issues)	Joined on virtual mode.
7	Sri Lalit Moha Sahu	Honorary Wildlife Warden, Deogarh District Member (engaged voluntarily on wildlife issues)	Joined on virtual mode.
8	Sri Bikash Ranjan Das, IFS	CF (Wildlife) Special invitee	 20/09/22
9	Sri Gurudutta Patnaik, OFS	WLCO Special invitee	 20/9/22
10	Sadhana Behara, OFS	A.C.F., J.T.F.	 20/9/2022
11	Subhashree Dash Range Officer	Range officer JTF	 20.9.22
12	Ramapada Asatinda Mishra ACF	ACF JTF	 20/09/2022

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

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- 63 - 411 -  
29<sup>th</sup>

Annexure-K/1

**Status of investigation of cases of death of elephants due to electrocution in  
Keonjhar**

Two middle aged female elephants were found to be electrocuted inside *Krusha Vigyan Kendra* campus, Judia, Keonjhar on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2022. On enquiry it was known that the elephants came into contact of a live wire while they pulled the L.T. line covered with creepers. The fuse did not burn/ blown up despite touching of trunks of elephants. As per the officials of TPNODL, clearing around LT lines had been done during June, 2022. But the said lines were found to be again infested with creepers at the time of accident.

Departmental Action: One Forester and one Forest Guard have been placed under suspension for their negligence in duty. The CEO, TPNODL, Balasore has been requested to initiate departmental action against SDO (Electrical), Keonjhar-3 Sub-Division, Section Engineer No.-2, Keonjhar and Line Man (Grade-A) No-3 Section, Keonjhar for their negligence.

Criminal Action: The SDO (Electrical), TPNODL, Keonjhar, Section Engineer, No-II, TPNODL, Keonjhar and Line (Man Grade-A), Sec-3, TPNODL, Keonjhar have been found guilty and case has been booked vide OR Case No. 10K of 2022-23 of Keonjhar Range. Notice has been issued to the said persons under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for further investigation.

True Copy Attested

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar

**Status of investigation of cases of death of elephants due to electrocution**

**A. Satkosia Wildlife Division (detected on 26.08.2022)**

The case was detected on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 by the patrolling staff within the village limit of Jagannathpur (Benajhari area) adjoining Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary & Satkosia Tiger Reserve where an adult male elephant was found electrocuted. The carcass was found near the 11 KV transmission line. Bamboo pegs, axe and necked G.I. binding wires were recovered from the spot. It was ascertained that the offenders had done illegal hooking from 11 KV line meant for killing of wild boar. The elephant died accidentally moving into the live wire.

Departmental Action: One Forester and one Forest Guard have been placed under suspension for dereliction in duty.

Criminal Action: Five villagers of Jagannathpur village are suspected to be involved in the illegal hooking out of which one Dinabandhu dehury, S/o Late Lalit Dehury of Jagannathpur, P.S.- Purunakote, District- Angul have been arrested and case vide O. R. No. 1PS of 2022-23 have been booked. He has been forwarded to the Court of SDJM, Angul on 28.08.2022. other four suspected have absconded from the village and search is on to apprehend them.

**B. Dhenkanal Forest Division (detected on 28.08.2022)**

On 28<sup>th</sup> August, the staff of Mahabirod Range found carcass of a female elephant aged about 40 years inside Ghagaramunda KF near Khairamunda village. On enquiry at the spot, burning marks on the ground was noticed and wooden pegs, plastic bags, glass bottle and GI wire were found there. It was ascertained that the offenders had done illegal hooking from 11 KV line meant for killing of wild boar. The elephant died accidentally moving into the live wire.

Departmental Action: Forester, Dadaraghati Section and Forest Guard, Ghagaramunda Beat have been placed under suspension and departmental proceedings has been initiated against them.

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Criminal Action: Seven persons of Ghagaramunda and Khairamunda are suspected to be involved in the illegal hooking out of which Punia Behera, S/o Dasarathi of Ghagaramunda, PS-Parjang and Jaga Birua, S/o Rabi Birua of Khairamunda, PS-Parjang both of District-Dhenkanal have been arrested and case vide O.R. No. 13M of 2022-23 have been booked under the Wildlife (Protection) Act. They have been forwarded to judicial custody. Energy Department has also filed a complaint to the OIC, Mahabirod Police Outpost against the accused person vide SDE No. 8 dated 28.08.2022.

**C. Dhenkanal Forest Division (detected on 03.09.2022)**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2022 the staff of Khajuriakata Section of Hindol Range detected carcass of one female elephant along with carcass of one wild pig inside Baghadharia Village Forest. During spot investigation, burning marks on the ground along with wooden pegs, plastic bags, glass bottle and GI wire were found. It was ascertained that the offenders had done illegal hooking from 11 KV line meant for killing of wild boar. The elephant died accidentally moving into the live wire.

Departmental Action: Departmental proceedings have been initiated against the Forester, Khajurikata Section for negligence in duty.

Criminal Action: three persons of Ostapal and Panchapada villages are suspected to be involved in the illegal hooking out of which Sushanta Pradhan S/o Athani of Panchapada, PS- Rasol, Dist- Angul have been apprehended on 13.09.2022 and case vide OR No. 18H of 2022-23 of Hindol Range have been booked under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

True Copy Attested

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