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**Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change/ पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय**  
**(Project Tiger & Elephant Division / व्याघ्र एवं हाथी परियोजना प्रभाग)**  
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Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi-110003

**Dated: 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2024**

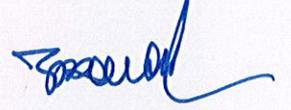
**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Project Elephant Steering Committee Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 at Raipur, Chhattisgarh -reg.**

The undersigned is enclosing herewith the approved proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Project Elephant Steering Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 at Courtyard Raipur, Chhattisgarh under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, EFCC.

2. This issue with the approval of Hon'ble Minister, EFCC and Chairman, Steering Committee of Project Elephant.

Encls: as above.



**(Dr. Rajendra Kumar)**  
Scientist 'C' (Project Elephant)  
Email: kumar.rajendra@gov.in

**Distribution:**

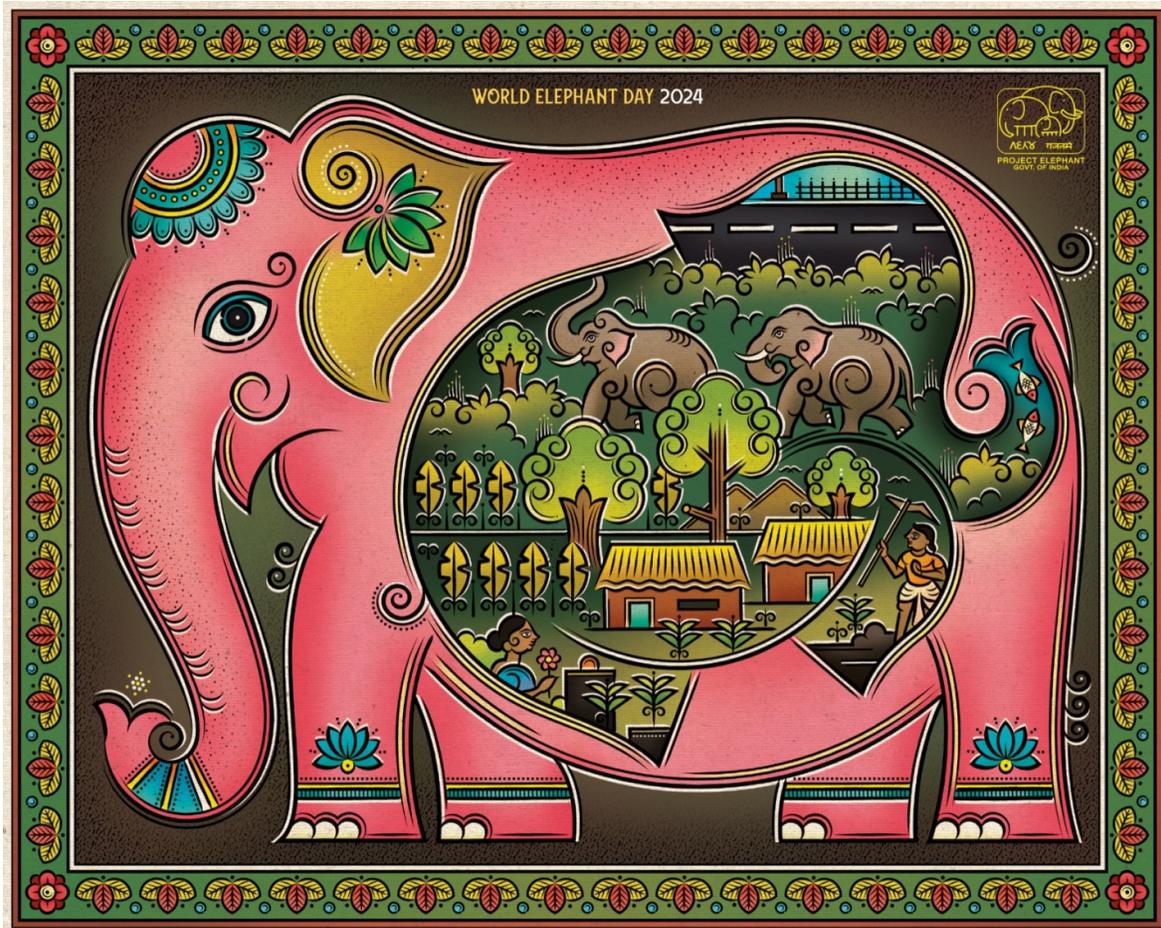
- All members of the Steering Committee of Project Elephant.

**Copy to:**

- PS to Hon'ble Minister, EFCC.
- PS to Hon'ble Minister of State, EFCC.
- PPS to Secretary, MoEF&CC.
- PPS to DGF&SS, MoEF&CC.
- PPS to ADGF (PT&E) and MS, NTCA, MoEF&CC.
- PPS to ADGF (Wildlife), MoEF&CC.
- PPS to AS&FA, MoEF&CC.
- PS to IGF (PT&E) & Director (Project Elephant), MoEF&CC.

**Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Project Elephant Steering Committee Meeting**

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2024**



**Project Elephant**  
**Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**  
**Government of India**

## Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Project Elephant Steering Committee Meeting

12<sup>th</sup> August 2024  
Raipur, Chhattisgarh

The 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee of the Project Elephant was held on August 12 2024 at Raipur, Chhattisgarh under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Government of India, **Shri. Bhupender Yadav**.

The list of participants is at **Annexure-1**.

**I. World Elephant Day Celebration:** Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting, between 18:00 and 19:00 hours, the world elephant day was celebrated in the esteemed presence of the Hon'ble Minister, EF&CC, Government of India, **Shri. Bhupender Yadav**; Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, **Shri. Vishnu Deo Sai**, Hon'ble Minister, Environment and Forests, Govt. of Chhattisgarh, **Shri. Kedar Kashyap**, Hon'ble MP, Raipur **Shri. Brijmohan Agarwal**, along with the senior officials from the MoEFCC, Chhattisgarh Forest Department; senior officials from the other State Forest Departments of the Elephant Range States and experts in the field of elephant research and conservation. During the event, the following documents were released:

- i. Framework for preparation of the “Elephant Conservation Plan” for the Elephant Reserves.
- ii. Recommended operating procedure for “Capture and Translocation of Elephants in Distress and Conflicts”
- iii. Management effectiveness evaluation for the Elephant Reserves of India – Pilot study and revision of criteria and indicators

During the World Elephant Day, in recognition of their exemplary contributions towards elephant conservation and management, the prestigious Gaj Gaurav awards were presented to: (1) the late Shri Bubul Gogoi, mahout, Assam FD, (2) Shri. Dinabandhu Barman and team comprising Shri. Joharlal Oraon, Shri. Faridul Haque, Shri. Ramesh Mahali, Shri. Harimohan Oraon and Shri. Raj Munda of West Bengal FD, (3) Shri. Anaya Kumar Samal, Odisha FD; and (4) Smt. Sangamitra Manta of Odisha FD.

**II. 20<sup>th</sup> Project Elephant Steering Committee:** The Chairman of the Steering Committee of Project Elephant welcomed all the participants of the meeting. Shri Ramesh Pandey, IGF (Project Tiger & Elephant) & Director, Project Elephant, made a brief presentation updating the committee about the progress made so far and also discussed the items wise agenda as following:

(Copy of the presentation is in **Annexure-2**)

### **Agenda-1: Confirmation and action taken on the decisions made during the 19<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee**

- i. **Circulation of the all-India Elephant Corridor Report (2023) to the State CWLWs:** The Ministry has circulated the final report on Elephant Corridors of India with all the Chief Wildlife Wardens on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023.

- ii. **WII to expedite the process of collating details on mitigation measures being implemented in 110 identified stretches and update the dashboard:** Joint survey reports for “*Suggested Measures to Mitigate Asian Elephant-Train Collision on Vulnerable Railway Stretches*” for 68 stretches out of 110 in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal has been finalized (report released this day). Joint site-inspection to be completed soon in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Uttar Pradesh.
- iii. **WII would expedite the completion of the process of all India elephant population estimation and finalize the report by December 2023:** The progress and updates of the work done under the all India elephant population estimation are being reviewed by the Ministry on a regular basis. In compliance, WII submitted a report without including the elephant population of northeast region. During a review meeting, it was decided that the final report including the elephant population of northeast would be submitted by the end of June 2025. Further, it was decided that the same method as followed in the other three regions would also be followed in northeast region to ensure uniformity. The matter is being reviewed regularly.
- iv. **Pilot MEE for the 4 Elephant Reserves:** Pilot MEE for the four elephant reserves was completed. The report has been finalized and released on 12/08/2024. As per the pilot report, the Nilgiri ER in Tamil Nadu scored the highest, followed by the Shivalik ER in Uttarakhand, Mayurbhanj ER in Odisha and Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong ER in Assam.
- v. **The ex-gratia amount would be increased from the existing Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh in case of human deaths due to wildlife:** IFD has concurred with the increase of the ex-gratia amount from the existing Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh in cases of human death due to wildlife. The letter has been issued to all State Forest Departments on January 25, 2024.
- vi. **States to take preventive measures and book the offenses under Wild Life (Protection), Act, 1972 for deliberate killing of wildlife due to electrocution:** The letter from the Ministry has been sent to all the States and UTs emphasizing on the urgent necessity in minimizing elephant deaths due to electrocution and other unnatural reasons. Later, during the discussions, the Chairperson, CZA presented on aspects of unnatural elephant deaths caused by deliberate causes.
- vii. **The meeting of the Elephant Range States of Southern India to granulate the components of the Regional Action Plan for Comprehensive Understanding and Management of Human Elephant Conflict in Southern India:** A detailed proposal for the meeting, along with a workshop for the elephant custodians, has been made ready. In consultation with the CWLW of the southern states, the workshop dates would be finalized. Similar to the southern region, Dr Vibhuti Prasad Lahkar, member steering committee/Aranyak has requested a regional workshop in the northeast region too.
- viii. **PT&E along with NTCA would present a plan to Hon’ble Minister, EF&CC regarding the provisions of fellowship and internship program for veterinary/wildlife students:** This agenda would require deliberation, and the inputs of scientific

institutions and veterinary colleges and Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India would be particularly critical.

- ix. **The meetings of the sub-committees of the Project Elephant namely the Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) and Captive Elephant Healthcare and Welfare Committee (CEHWC) were conducted before the Steering Committee:** The CPEMC meeting was conducted on July 19, 2024 and the CEHWC meeting was conducted on August 7, 2024. Many important points were discussed during both the meetings.
- x. **Update on the Annual Plan of Operations (APO) for FY 2024-25 under PT&E Scheme:** The first Installment of the funds has been released to 13 States i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal. The APO is under process for nine States i.e., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

**Agenda-2: Issues flagged by the Steering Committee members and permanent invitees**

- i. **Shri. Manoj Ram Phookum** highlighted that human-elephant conflict is escalating and that in Assam, the loss of forests is a major driver behind the escalation. He mentioned that close to 2,69,000 hectares of forests were lost in the last 20 years. Responding to this, the CWLW, Assam Shri. Sandeep Kumar mentioned that, as per Forest Survey of India report, no major changes in forest cover can be inferred and that tree cover and forest cover in Assam had actually increased during the last decade. He further mentioned that in Assam, the plantation success rate is over 90%.
- ii. **Dr. K.K. Sarma** mentioned that the Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus (EEHV) has been increasing alarmingly in the country, causing sporadic elephant deaths. The disease has emerged as a major concern facing the conservation of elephants in the wild and the welfare of elephants in captivity. He mentioned that EEHV was first discovered in USA two decades ago and about 10 years ago, the same was reported in India. There is a CZA guideline on EEHV management, which was drafted by Dr. Sarma himself, and additionally, there is also renewed knowledge gained during the last few years, especially during the Thailand workshop. He mentioned that elephants in herds are not affected much by EEHV, while elephants maintained in isolated conditions are becoming highly susceptible. Dr. Sarma emphasized taking a policy approach that involves forming an EEHV task force with a mandate of providing a clear road map to deal such incidences.
- iii. **Dr. Bibhuti Lahkar** mentioned that similar to the southern region, there is a necessity to come up with a comprehensive regional action plan for the northeast region. A coordination meeting is necessary to kick-start discussions. The chief wildlife wardens of Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya seconded Dr. Lahkar's suggestions and emphasized initiating a regional workshop in northeastern landscape.
- iv. **CWLW, West Bengal Shri. Debal Ray** mentioned that West Bengal is one of the most seriously HEC-affected states in India, and close to 100 people die annually. He further mentioned that some of the critical corridors in the north WB have to be urgently restored. Among them, seven corridors, including those in the Buxa-Jaldapara complex, need urgent attention. Shri. Debal Ray mentioned that some of the tea gardens are ready to provide their lands for a cost, and this opportunity should be earnestly utilized to procure corridors.

**Agenda-3: Status update on the “Framework for Elephant Conservation Plan” and way ahead**

IGF (PT&E) mentioned that other than Kerala, there is no management plan for managing the Elephant Reserves in the rest of the country. There has been a perpetual need for a guiding document for managing Elephant Reserves since they encompass a variety of land-uses under different jurisdictions. The task of preparing a comprehensive framework for Elephant Conservation Plan (ECP) was entrusted to WII. It took over a year to come up with a comprehensive framework through extensive consultations with a range of experts. In developing the framework for ECP, Dr. Sanjay Srivastava and Shri. P.C. Tyagi (former PCCFs from Tamil Nadu cadre) made substantial contributions. The framework for the ECP was released earlier during the Elephant Day celebrations. A shorter version (summary) of the ECP is also made available for quick reference. Further, it was proposed that a Model ECP may be prepared by the support of Project Elephant and Elephant Cell.

**Agenda-4: An update on the progress of All India Synchronized Elephant Estimation and finalization of results by WII**

A review meeting was also conducted on April 3, 2024, wherein it was decided that the final report, including the elephant population of northeast will be submitted to this Ministry by the end of June 2025. Letters have been issued to Manipur and Nagaland to expedite sampling. Capacity building workshops are also planned for September 2024 in the northeast region so as to expedite sample collection. The progress and updates of the work done under the all India elephant population estimation is being reviewed by the Ministry on a regular basis.

**Agenda-5: Mitigation measures to avoid elephant deaths due to train collision**

IGF (PT&E) mentioned that elephant deaths due to rail collisions remain a serious concern and a major challenge facing management. The problem is that there are several states and major strides to be made to address the concern remains a long-term priority. The PE and WII took the lead and identified 110 critical stretches across the country where mitigation measures are immediately pertinent. Dr. Bilal Habib from WII and Project Elephant coordinated field surveys, which were completed in 68 stretches occurring in 10 different states. Currently, about 120 critical Railway stretches have been identified. The surveys have been completed in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal and state-specific reports have been prepared. The Chairman of the Steering Committee released the state-specific reports during the meeting.

**Agenda-6: State-wise enforcement measures adopted/ being implemented to minimize the cases of elephant deaths due to train hits, electrocution, and poisoning**

IGF (PT&E) presented statistics on unnatural elephant deaths in the country attributed to electrocution, train collisions, poaching, and poisoning. The incidences of poaching have substantially reduced, while poisoning continues to be sporadic. However, the incidences of train-related elephant deaths have increased substantially over time. Further, electrocution of elephants has emerged as the major source of human-induced elephant mortality. IGF (PT&E) mentioned that the issue would be further deliberated during the impending presentation by WCCB, by Shri. Sanjay Shukla, Additional Director, WCCB & Member Secretary, CZA.

**Agenda-7: Regional Action Plan and Workshops**

IGF (PT&E) mentioned that progress updates regarding the Regional Action Plan for comprehensive understanding and management of human-elephant conflict in Southern

India would be discussed in a technical session in the proposed workshop at Coimbatore during September 2024. The exact dates of the workshop would be decided after discussing with the CWLW. He further mentioned that 5 states in the east-central region met in Kolkata to foster interstate coordination in managing HEC in the region. However, the MoU drafted to materialize coordination remains pending finalization. IGF (PT&E) further informed that due to overwhelming demand from the northeast region for a comprehensive regional action plan, efforts would be taken to conduct a regional meeting in the region to take up the task further.

**Agenda-8: Unnatural elephant deaths: A report by WCCB**

**Shri. Sanjay Shukla**, Additional Director, WCCB & Member Secretary, CZA mentioned that electrocution, deaths due to linear infrastructure, and poaching are the major threats to elephants. He provided details on the ivory seizures made during the last four years, wherein 29 seizures were from West Bengal, 24 were from Tamil Nadu, 20 were from Odisha and 17 seizures were from Jharkhand. He summarized that deliberate killing of elephants for their body parts is less common in India, although there is a big global market with perpetual demand for “blood pearls”, ivory, and the skin of elephants. The ivory poaching targets adult male elephants, while elephants in all age groups are targeted for other body parts.

Shri. Sanjay Shukla further mentioned that electrocution is a major challenge and mentioned that in a major case involving the deaths of five elephants due to a sagging power line in Jharkhand, WCCB conducted a detailed field inquiry and provided a report. Based on the report, cases have been registered against officials of Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited and Hindustan Copper Limited.

**Shri. Sandeep Kumar, CWLW, Assam** mentioned that in Numaligarh refinery, Assam an elephant was electrocuted, and the refinery officials did not inform the Forest Department and buried the carcass. He said that managers concerned were immediately arrested.

**Dr. Bhiputi Lahkar, Aaranyak** mentioned that sagging lines continue to be a major challenge in Assam and the rest of northeast India, particularly during monsoons. He further mentioned that the Ministry can come up with a specification and materials to be used so that the users can make judicious choices.

**Agenda-9: Points for deliberation and update**

- i. **Need for the establishment of rescue centers for the care and husbandry of weak, sick, and injured elephants:** The State CWLWs of the elephant range states emphasized the need to have rescue centers given that a large number of elephants come into captivity every year for unavoidable reasons. Timely support from CZA would be essential to establish and operate elephant rescue centers.
- ii. **Transfer/Transport of captive elephants:** Procedures to be followed as per the Transfer/Transport of Elephant Rules, 2024 under WLPA-1972: IGF (PT&E) mentioned the new set of rules under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 that need to be followed during elephant transportation and transfers. CWLW, Tripura mentioned that there are ambiguities in the rules that need to be discussed and sorted out.
- iii. **DNA sampling and captive elephants and the progress of the project being run by WII-Elephant Cell:** Under the new elephant transfer/transportation rules of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, getting the genetic identification of the captive elephants is now mandatory. IGF (PT&E) mentioned that close to 1000 elephant samples have been received at WII and that there is a concern about getting biological samples of captive elephants from the states. He emphasized CWLWs’

intervention to accelerate sample collection in the respective states.

- iv. **RoP on capture and translocation of elephants in distress and conflicts.** Considering the vital importance training of field personnel on aspects related to elephant capture and transportation, the Project Elephant constituted a Technical Committee that drafted the Recommended Operating Procedure (RoP) to guide the safe field execution of chemical restraint, relocation, and translocation of wild elephants. The RoP has been finalized and duly released earlier in the day.

The Chairman of the meeting succinctly summarized the discussion points and insisted that the states should work collectively and that the meetings are useful only if individual responsibility is taken. Hon'ble MEFCC, Shri. Bhupender Yadav released the following documents:

- i. Railway mitigation report for 10 states
- ii. Trumpet Volume IV - Issue 02, August 2024
- iii. WWF-WII-PE HEC mitigation manual in Kannada, Odia, and Tamil
- iv. Elephant Reserves of India: Land Use and Land Cover – Version-2

Following this, the Chairman of the Steering Committee suggested that the other members may give their specific points, which are summarized below:

1. **CWLW, Assam Shri. Sandeep Kumar** mentioned that the northeastern states have shared boundaries and that HEC is not state-specific but landscape-specific. Thus, a regional perspective plan involving all the northeastern states is critical, he suggested.
2. **CWLW, Meghalaya Shri. S.M. Sahai** mentioned that Meghalaya should be compulsorily involved in the regional plan as Assam and Meghalaya share landscapes where elephants move frequently. Areas such as Goalpara and Jaintia Hills are particularly sensitive.
3. **CWLW, Tripura Shri. R.K. Samal** mentioned that there is a need for large-scale fencing in the state given the sudden escalation of HEC in many areas. He further mentioned that the central assistance from PE to Tripura is less and that without funds, managing HEC is becoming a major challenge.
4. **Dr. K.K. Sarma** mentioned that a medical certificate for transporting elephants should be issued just before the actual transportation. He suggested conducting medical tests even twice — once while processing papers and again when the animal is getting transported.
5. **CWLW, Uttarakhand Dr. Samir Sinha** mentioned that in the event of an outbreak of infectious diseases, it often takes months to get samples tested by IVRI. He insisted that local institutions in the state, such as the G.B. Pant University or other institutions in identified states should be empowered to do the same.
6. **CWLW, Uttar Pradesh Shri. Sanjay Srivastava** mentioned that corridor management in the face of major landscape modifications in areas outside the forest is emerging as a major challenge. He insisted that in UP, dialogues with managing transnational corridors with Nepal assume critical importance. Dr. Samir Sinha too reiterated that Uttarakhand also has transnational corridors along the Indo-Nepal border area.

7. **CWLW, Madhya Pradesh Shri. S.R. Sen** mentioned that the elephant population within Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve causes minimal conflict in the surrounding areas. He insisted that corridors between Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh that are used sporadically by individual elephants and small groups should be properly identified to address HEC in the area.
8. **CWLW, Bihar Shri. Prabhat Kumar Gupta** pointed out major concerns in the rules under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 related to the transfer of elephants particularly with respect to the provision empowering the transfer of elephants by the current private custodians to other states and not surrendering them to the state. He further mentioned that there are 72 captive elephants in the state and that after the new rules came into force, there is high demand for transfers. The CWLW mentioned that there are no resident wild elephants in Bihar and that elephants from Koshi Tapu Sanctuary in Nepal come into India periodically.
9. **Shri. Sanjay Shukla, AD-WCCB & MS-CZA** mentioned that if the National Reference Centre for Wildlife planned in Junagadh, Gujarat, is established, then concerns with respect to the testing of samples and others field concerns would be taken care. Under the National Reference Centre for Wildlife, many facilities can be working to take care of region-specific concerns. In the meantime, based on elephant population size, region-specific institutions where samples can be processed can be identified.
10. **CWLW, Chhattisgarh Shri. Sudhir Kumar Agrawal** mentioned that HEC is severe in the state and that electrocution is sporadic. Since elephants range extensively in human-dominated areas of the state, managing electrocution is becoming particularly difficult.
11. **CCF (Wildlife), Odisha Dr. Manoj V. Nair representing the CWLW** mentioned that the sagging wires have almost been completely rectified in the State, and yet, electrocution remains a challenge due to illegal hooking. Such illegal hooking primarily targets wild pigs, but elephants often fall victim. He suggested taking policy decisions to deal with wild pig conflicts. He further mentioned that Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) conducts routine EEHV tests and that it often takes just a day to process the samples.
12. **CCF (Wildlife), Andhra Pradesh Shri. Srikantanatha Reddy representing the CWLW, Andhra Pradesh** mentioned that there are no specific HEC issues in the state. Over 60 elephants occur in southern Andhra Pradesh and conflict is a concern there.
13. **CCF (Wildlife), Karnataka Shri. Vasanth Reddy representing the CWLW, Karnataka** mentioned that HEC is a major challenge in the state, which harbors the largest elephant population in the country. An international conference is currently being held at Bangalore. The PE funding for the state is presently less. DGF&SS mentioned that the major learnings from the conference should be shared with MoEFCC for the benefit of all the elephant range states
14. **DCF Shri. Aviroop Sinha representing the CWLW, Jharkhand** mentioned that the corridors identified in the state and included in the all-India corridor report of the Government of India (2023) were based on conflict data. Rather, it is pertinent to use movement data to map the corridors in the state so that it is more relevant. In Jharkhand high-resolution real-time data on elephant movement is currently collected, which can be used to map the actual corridors.

15. **Field Director, Nagzira-Navegaon Tiger Reserve Shri. Jayaramgowda** representing CWLW, Maharashtra mentioned that there were about 28 elephants in Gadchiroli district. Elephants are relatively new in Maharashtra. The Vidharba region of the state is a region of high concern with respect to electrocution as numerous tigers were killed in the past. Already, two cases of elephant electrocution have been reported in the area.
16. **Dr. Lalit Sharma representing the Director, ZSI** mentioned that high- resolution spatial data such as LISS-4 with 5m resolution can be used to depict land-use and land-cover in the elephant reserves. Parameters such as fragmentation within the ER can be analysed using high-resolution layers.
17. **Shri. B.S. Bonal, Steering Committee member** mentioned that Elephant Reserves need proper ground-truthing before implementing MEE. Every reserve should identify a nodal officer, he emphasized.
18. **Dr. Dipankar Ghose, Steering Committee member**, said that it is pertinent to obtain feedback from the State Forest Departments on the HEC management manual, which is now available in 7 languages. He further mentioned that there are 48 districts in India, which are affected by HEC, and it is pertinent to reach out to the panchayats in these districts. He further mentioned that SSB and BSF can be sensitized/trained to monitor the trade of elephant and other wildlife across borders.
19. **Dr. Sandeep Tiwari, Steering Committee member** seconded CWLW, WB and mentioned that non-profitable tea plantations can be acquired to facilitate elephant movement. Similar opportunities exist in Kerala and Karnataka too. He further mentioned that monitoring and managing isolated elephant populations is a priority as these populations cause heightened conflict.
20. **Dr. Bibhuti Lahkar, Steering Committee member** emphasized developing SoPs for barriers to regulate their use. He also emphasized reaching out to communities and engaging them in active HEC management.
21. **Shri. P.C. Tyagi, Steering Committee member** mentioned that since MEE- ER criteria have been finalized, it is pertinent to start active MEE for the Elephant Reserves across India. He also suggested developing criteria for monitoring habitat quality with support from WII in the elephant areas, as the habitat is rapidly deteriorating in many important sites. He opined that the barriers are widespread and that huge investments are being made. Given this, the efficacy of barriers should be thoroughly assessed. Mahout training center in Tamil Nadu (in Valparai and Mudumalai) are a good model that can be replicated in other regions.
22. **Dr. Sanjay Srivastava, Special Invitee, Steering Committee** mentioned that ECP should be prepared for all ERs on a priority basis. He insisted that the preparation of the ECP would address many issues facing the reserve. The model plan for Nilgiris should be first be prepared to demonstrate how ECPs could be prepared.
23. **DGF&SS, MoEF&CC** inquired if a separate cadre of wildlife veterinarians should be trained. Dr. K.K. Sarma responded that the veterinary council of India decides on the curriculum and wildlife is part of the new courses. He further mentioned that there is no cadre of wildlife veterinarians in India and the need of the hour is to maintain all-India wildlife cadre based on those with experience to retain the talent. Dr. Samir Sinha mentioned that numerous veterinarians intensively trained by WII are performing very well across Uttarakhand in dealing with wildlife-related issues. He mentioned that the Uttarakhand model of identifying veterinarians and intensively training them at WII would be worth replicating in other states. Shri. Prabhat Kumar

Gupta mentioned that 17 posts of veterinarians were created in Bihar and that training imparted at WII was hugely beneficial. The CWLWs of many states opined that specialized elephant veterinarians are urgently required and that they should be trained in WII.

24. **Director, WII** mentioned that funding for diploma training is a major challenge and that the states are not sending officers for training.

**Decisions Taken:**

1. Regional workshops would be conducted in the southern region and northeast region. The dates would be finalized based on the discussions with the CWLWs.
2. A survey of sensitive railway stretches would be completed, and a comprehensive, consolidated report would be finalized.
3. The CWLWs would coordinate with PE/WII and expedite collection of genetic samples of the captive elephants for completing the genetic database at the earliest.
4. Synchronized elephant population estimation process to be expedited in the northeast region and the final report of the all-India population estimation to be submitted by WII to the Ministry by June 2025.
5. Project Elephant may issue an advisory to the States regarding issuing fitness certificate for elephants during transfer/transportation. The advisory is intended to specify the time frame within which the elephants earmarked for transportation should be medically examined for issuing fitness certificate. Further the genetic profile of the transporting elephants should also be ensured by the CWLWs.
6. Karnataka Forest Department may submit a report to the Ministry on the best practices and key lessons learned during the International Elephant Conference conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024 in Bengaluru.
7. Uttarakhand Forest Department may share with the Ministry the pictorial manual on elephant mahout training available with the State.
8. A Model ECP may be prepared by the support of Project Elephant and Elephant Cell, WII.

**The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.**

**List of participants**

1. Shri. Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India.
2. Shri. Jitendra Kumar, DGF & SS, MoEF&CC.
3. Shri. Sushil Kumar Awasthi, ADG (Wildlife), MoEF&CC
4. Shri. Subash Chandra, CEO, National CAMPA, MoEF&CC
5. Shri. Pravir Pandey, Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor, MoEF&CC
6. Shri. Ramesh Kumar Pandey, IGF (PT&E) and Director, Project Elephant, MoEF&CC
7. Dr. Sanjay Kumar Shukla, AD-WCCB & MS-CZA, MoEF&CC
8. Shri. Virendra R. Tiwari, Director, Wildlife Institute of India
9. Shri. Sandeep Kumar, PCCF&CWLW, Assam
10. Shri. Sudhir Kumar Agrawal, PCCF&CWLW, Chhattisgarh
11. Dr. Samir Sinha, PCCF & CWLW, Uttarakhand
12. Shri S.R. Sen, PCCF&CWLW, Madhya Pradesh
13. Shri S.M. Sahai, PCCF&CWLW, Meghalaya
14. Shri Sanjay Srivastava, PCCF&CWLW Uttar Pradesh
15. Shri. Ngilyang Tam, PCCF&CWLW, Arunachal Pradesh
16. Shri. Prabhat Kumar Gupta, PCCF&CWLW, Bihar
17. Shri. Srinivas R. Reddy, PCCF&CWLW, Tamil Nadu
18. Shri. Debal Ray, PCCF&CWLW, West Bengal
19. Shri. C.P. Gupta, Additional Secretary, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways, New Delhi
20. Dr. Manoj V. Nair, CCF (Wildlife), Odisha
21. Shri. Srikantanatha Reddy, CCF (Wildlife), Andhra Pradesh
22. Shri. Vasanth Reddy, CCF (Wildlife), Karnataka
23. Shri. Jayaramgowda, Field Director, Nagriza and Navegaon Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra
24. Shri. Aviroop Sinha, DFO, Jharkhand
25. Dr.K. K. Sarma, Senior Veterinarian, Assam and Member, Steering Committee.
26. Shri. Manoj Ram Phookun, Assam and Member, Steering Committee.
27. Shri. B.S. Bonal, IFS (retired), Assam and Member, Steering Committee.
28. Shri. P.C. Tyagi, IFS (retired), Tamil Nadu and Member, Steering Committee
29. Dr. Sanjay K. Srivastava, IFS (retired), Tamil Nadu and Special Invitee
30. Dr. Sandeep Kumar Tiwari, WTI, New Delhi and Member, Steering Committee.
31. Dr. Dipankar Ghose, WWF, New Delhi and Member, Steering Committee.
32. Dr. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Aaranyak, Guwahati and Member, Steering Committee.
33. Dr. Lalit Kumar Sharma, Scientist D, ZSI representative of Director, ZSI
34. Dr. Aruna Sharma, Deputy Commissioner, Animal Husbandry, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Invitee
35. Dr. Parag Nigam, Scientist, G, Elephant Cell, WII
36. Dr. Bilal Habib, Scientist F, Elephant Cell, WII.
37. Dr. Dheeraj Mittal, AIG (PT&E), MoEF&CC, Government of India.
38. Dr. Rajendra Kumar, Scientist C, PE Division, MoEF&CC.
39. Dr. N. Lakshminarayanan, Project Scientist, Elephant Cell, WII.
40. Shri. Udhaya Raj, GIS Specialist, WII

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