

Regarding human-animal conflict in West Bengal-Laid

DR. JAYANTA KUMAR ROY (JALPAIGURI): I would like to bring to the attention of the Government that the North Bengal region has witnessed rampant 'human animal' conflict which ultimately leads to severe crop damage. The districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar have 488 elephants which is less than 2% of our national elephant population but the region has witnessed 12% of all human deaths due to human-elephant conflict. With an average of 50 deaths per year, environmentalists claim that the Dooars is currently experiencing one of Asia's highest rates of human elephant conflict.

The problem of human animal conflict is flaring up as most of the elephant corridors pass through human habitus areas or agricultural fields. According to the report of Wildlife Trust of India in 2020 about 34 percent of the elephant range in North Bengal was under forest cover, 22 per cent under tea gardens, 17 percent under agriculture and 27 percent under human habitation and development activities. The issue is made worse as Nepal built an 18-kilometer electrified solar fence. This led to further increased human elephant conflict on the Indian side where extensive rice cultivation takes place. This increasing flux of man animal conflict poses enormous challenges for the farmers of North Bengal and every year the region faces colossal crop damages.

Therefore, I would like to request the Hon?ble Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to look into the matter and announce a special package to provide compensation to the farmers of North Bengal due to crop damage and the Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change to take appropriate preventive measures.