

15 -ാം കേരള നിയമസഭ

13 -ാം സമ്മേളനം

നക്ഷത്ര ചിഹ്നം ഇല്ലാത്ത ചോദ്യം നം. 2875

10-03-2025 - ൽ മറുപടിയ്ക്ക്

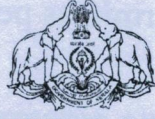
വന്യജീവി ആക്രമണങ്ങളെ ഫലപ്രദമായി നേരിടുന്നതിന് നിയമഭേദഗതി

ചോദ്യം		ഉത്തരം	
ശ്രീ. ടി. സിദ്ദിഖ്		ശ്രീ. എ. കെ. ശശീന്ദ്രൻ (വനം-വന്യജീവി വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രി)	
(എ)	<p>വന്യജീവി ആക്രമണങ്ങളെ ഫലപ്രദമായി നേരിടുന്നതിന് കേന്ദ്ര നിയമത്തിലെയും മാർഗ്ഗരേഖകളിലെയും വ്യവസ്ഥകൾ തടസ്സം സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നതിനാൽ നിയമഭേദഗതി ആവശ്യമാണെന്ന് ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിച്ച് ഈ സർക്കാരിന്റെ കാലയളവിൽ കേന്ദ്രസർക്കാരിന് കത്ത് നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ടോ; എങ്കിൽ എത്ര തവണ നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്; പ്രസ്തുത കത്തുകളുടെയും കേന്ദ്രസർക്കാരിൽ നിന്ന് ലഭിച്ച മറുപടികളുടെയും പകർപ്പ് ലഭ്യമാക്കുമോ?</p>	(എ)	<p>കേന്ദ്ര വന്യജീവി സംരക്ഷണ നിയമം ഭേദഗതി ചെയ്യണമെന്നും അതിൻ കീഴിൽ കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാർ പുറപ്പെടുവിച്ച എല്ലാ കർശന നിയന്ത്രണങ്ങളും നടപടിക്രമങ്ങളും ലഘൂകരിക്കണമെന്നും കേരള നിയമസഭ പ്രമേയം വഴി കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിനോട് അഭ്യർത്ഥിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.</p> <p>ജനവാസ മേഖലയിൽ പൊതുജനങ്ങളുടെ ജീവനും സ്വത്തിനും ഭീഷണിയായി ഇറങ്ങുന്ന വന്യമൃഗങ്ങളെ പ്രതിരോധിക്കുന്നതിന് നിലവിലുള്ള കേന്ദ്ര നിയമമായ 1972-ലെ വന്യജീവി (സംരക്ഷണം) നിയമം അനുയോജ്യമായ രീതിയിൽ ഭേദഗതി ചെയ്യണമെന്ന് കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിനോട് അഭ്യർത്ഥിക്കുന്ന പ്രമേയം 14.02.2024-ന് നിയമസഭ ഏകകണ്ഠേന പാസ്സാക്കിയിരുന്നതും പ്രസ്തുത പ്രമേയം കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിലേക്ക് 27.02.2024-ലെ ഡി2/150/2023-വനം നമ്പർ കത്ത് മുഖേന സമർപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നതുമാണ്. പ്രസ്തുത കത്തിന്റെ പകർപ്പ് അനുബന്ധം -1 ആയി ചേർക്കുന്നു.</p> <p>വനം വകുപ്പിലെ വിഷയങ്ങളുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് വനം , റവന്യൂ , വകുപ്പുമന്ത്രിമാർ കേന്ദ്ര വനം പരിസ്ഥിതി മന്ത്രിയുമായി 07.02.2024 -ന് കൂടിക്കാഴ്ച നടത്തിയ വേളയിൽ സമർപ്പിച്ച മെമോറാണ്ടം ഓഫ് റിക്വസ്റ്റിൽ കേന്ദ്ര വന്യജീവി (സംരക്ഷണം) നിയമം കാലോചിതമായി പരിഷ്കരിക്കണമെന്ന വിഷയവും ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയിരുന്നു.</p> <p>1972 ലെ വന്യജീവി (സംരക്ഷണം) നിയമത്തിൽ കാലികമായ ഭേദഗതി വരുത്തണമെന്നുള്ള ആവശ്യം സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിനോട് നിരന്തരം അഭ്യർത്ഥിച്ചു വരുന്നുണ്ട്. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരും വനം വകുപ്പിനും നിയമപരമായി സാധ്യമായ എല്ലാ നടപടികളും</p>

ഉപേക്ഷയില്ലാതെ തന്നെ കൈക്കൊണ്ടു വരുന്നതാണ്. 2024 നവംബറിൽ കേരള വനം വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രിയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നിയമസഭാ സാമാജികരും വനം വകുപ്പ് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥരുമടങ്ങുന്ന സംഘം കേന്ദ്ര വനം-പരിസ്ഥിതി വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രിയെ സന്ദർശിച്ചു. വേളയിൽ അടിയന്തര പരിഗണനയ്ക്കായി സമർപ്പിച്ച “മെമ്മോറണ്ടം ഓഫ് റിക്വസ്റ്റ്” ലും ടി വിഷയം അനുഭാവപൂർവ്വം പരിഗണിക്കുവാൻ കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിനോട് 06/01/2025 ലെ D2/242/2024-വനം നമ്പർ കത്ത് പ്രകാരം സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ അഭ്യർത്ഥിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. പ്രസ്തുത കത്തിന്റെ പകർപ്പ് അനുബന്ധം -2 ആയി ചേർക്കുന്നു.

പ്രസ്തുത കത്തുകൾക്ക് കേന്ദ്രസർക്കാരിൽനിന്ന് മറുപടി ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെങ്കിലും രാജ്യസഭാംഗം ശ്രീ. എ.എ. റഹീം 06/02/2025 നു രാജ്യസഭയിൽ ഉന്നയിച്ച നാടൻ കരങ്ങുകളെ വന്യജീവി (സംരക്ഷണം) നിയമത്തിന്റെ ഷെഡ്യൂൾ 1 ൽ നിന്നും ഷെഡ്യൂൾ 2 ലേക്ക് മാറ്റുന്നത് സംബന്ധിച്ചും കാട്ടുപന്നികളെ ക്ഷുദ്രജീവികളായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്നത് സംബന്ധിച്ചുമുള്ള ചോദ്യത്തിന് മറുപടിയായി ഈ രണ്ടു വിഷയങ്ങളും നിലവിൽ കേന്ദ്രസർക്കാരിന്റെ പരിഗണനയിലില്ല എന്ന് കേന്ദ്ര വനം, പരിസ്ഥിതി, കാലാവസ്ഥാ വ്യതിയാന വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രി അറിയിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി.

സെക്ഷൻ ഓഫീസർ



GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Forest & Wildlife(D) Department

No.D2/150/2023-FWLD

27-02-2024,Thiruvananthapuram

From

The Additional Chief Secretary to Government

To

The Secretary to Government of India,
Ministry of Environment & Forest (Wildlife Division)
Paryavaran Bhavan, C.G.O Complex,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110 003.

Sir,

Sub: Forest & Wildlife Department - Resolution passed by the
Legislative Assembly of Kerala regarding Human-Wildlife
Conflict - reg

Ref: Memorandum of Requests submitted to Hon. Union Minister for
Environment, Forests & Climate Change on 07.02.2024, from
State Government.

As you aware, Human-Wildlife Conflicts are alarmingly
increased in the State of Kerala due to many reasons. State Government
has been taking necessary measures to sustain such issues and to
prevent it for ever.

However, there are some constraints in the existing legal
framework for taking timely actions when necessitated, thereby,
delaying the field level implementation for sustaining the emergency
arised due to the presence of Schedule-1 animals in the inhabited areas
causing threat to Human life. Another issue, is with respect to the
presence of Wildpigs (*Sus scrofa*) in the most of the districts of Kerala,
whose number is increasing uncontrollably. Efforts being taken to
sustain this menace, are not yielding significant results.

On 14.02.2024, the Legislative Assembly of Kerala have

unanimously passed a resolution in this regard, where Government of India is requested to make amendments in the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and to declare Wild pig as vermin as per section 62 of the Act.

In view of the above circumstances, a copy of the said resolution is forwarded herewith for kind consideration.

Yours Faithfully,


K R PYOTHILAL
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY

Fifteenth Kerala Legislative Assembly

Tenth Session

Resolution unanimously passed by the Assembly on 14th February, 2024

WHEREAS, the invading of wild animals in human habitats in various parts of Kerala, has caused an increase in human-wild life conflict posing threat to property and agriculture and thereby led to a situation that resulted in the loss of several human lives ;

AND WHEREAS, the exponential breeding outside the forest areas, of wild pig, various species of monkeys and other animals which are wild animals under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 results in severe wild animal attacks ;

AND WHEREAS, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, rules, procedures, advisories and guidelines containing stringent provisions preventing destruction and control of these kind of aggressive wild animals entering human habitats, continue to remain in force without being timely amended;

AND WHEREAS, the Central Government are repeatedly declining permission to exterminate the dangerous animals , including wild pig ,breeding exponentially outside forest areas , as per section 62 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act,1972;

AND WHEREAS, the Government are committed to maintain an environment ensuring fearless and peaceful living to the public in human habitats;

NOW, THEREFORE, this Assembly unanimously requests the Central Government,-

1. to amend the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 including sub-section (2) of section 5 delegating all the powers of the Chief Wild Warden conferred under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 11 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to the Chief Conservators of Forest so as to enable them to take immediate action;

2. to simplify the procedures in the provisos and explanation to clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 11 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and in the rules, procedures, advisories and guidelines issued under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and to create an environment for preventing wild animal attack by making timely amendment to the said Central Law, incorporating requisite feasible provisions;

3. to declare wild pig as vermin under section 62 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972;

4. to take action for the birth control of wild animals for preventing excessive increase in their number.

Thiruvananthapuram,
14.02.2024

Shaji C Baby,
Secretary-in-charge.

**GOVERNMENT OF KERALA**

Forest & Wildlife(D) Department

No.D2/242/2024-FWLD

06-01-2025,Thiruvananthapuram

From

The Additional Chief Secretary to Government

To

The Secretary to Government of India,
Ministry of Environment & Forest (Wildlife Division)
Paryavaran Bhavan, C.G.O Complex
Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003.

Sir,

Sub: Forest & Wildlife Department - Memorandum of Requests - reg

Ref: 1. Meeting of Hon.Minister (Forest &WL Dept) , Government of Kerala with Hon. Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, held on 28.11.2024
2. Letter No. KFDHQ/8153/2024-CWW/WL11 dated 19.12.2024 from the Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala.

I am directed to invite your attention to the reference cited and to forward herewith a copy of the 'Memorandum of Requests' submitted to Hon. Union Minister, MoEF & CC, by the Hon. Minister (Forest & WL Department), Government of Kerala on 28.11.2024, for information & necessary action.

Yours Faithfully,

Signed by

PRAMOD V R
JOINT SECRETARY
Date: 06-01-2025 13:27:27

Copy to,

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests(Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Thiruvananthapuram (For information).



KERALA FOREST DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM OF REQUESTS

PRESENTED BY

A.K. SASEENDRAN
MINISTER FOR FORESTS & WILDLIFE,
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

To

Shri. BHUPENDER YADAV
HON'BLE MINISTER FOR STATE
ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
ON 28th NOVEMBER, 2024



KERALA FOREST DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM OF REQUESTS

1. Seeking amendment of certain provisions in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. Request for Sanctioning Special Financial Assistance to Implement the Project for Management of Human-Wild Animal Conflict in Kerala.
3. Notification Of Eco-Sensitive Zones.
4. Regularization Of Pre 01.01.1977 Encroachments On Forest Land.
5. Issues related to release of funds under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes.
6. Allotment of Rs.10 crore for payment of compensation to the victims of human wildlife conflict.
7. Financial support for conservation of forests and biodiversity in Sabarimala, Malayattoor and similar such pilgrim centres deep inside forest.

A. Seeking amendment of certain provisions in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

In recent years, human-wildlife conflict in many parts of Kerala have shown an increasing trend and is threatening human life, property and agriculture fields more than in the past years. The issue is tremendously affecting the general character of society itself and has escalated to such an extent that it has become difficult for the public including farmers and students to live peacefully in their own domicile.

The increasing human-wildlife conflict situation is due to several reasons. Regional fluctuations in wildlife population, changes in behavior, movement of wild animals in search of new pastures, grazing of domestic cattle in forest areas, changes in cropping patterns, etc., are some of the reasons. But most importantly, population explosion in the case of wild pigs and various species of monkeys are wreaking havoc in human habitations. The matter has also been listed in the Kerala Development Report, 2021, released by the Kerala State Planning Board. Many projects are being implemented at the Government level to mitigate Human-Wildlife Conflict. Every year, the Department is burdened to pay an average of Rs. 10 crore as compensation.

The provisions of the existing Central Act, i.e., Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 have to be followed while dealing with the issue of wild animals entering the inhabited areas and for their practical implementation, the Standard Operating Procedure issued by the Central Government, Advisory to deal with human-wildlife conflict, guidelines issued by the Tiger Conservation Authority and the Project Elephant scheme etc. should also need to be followed.

The existing legal procedures for taking measures such as tranquilizing wild animals that enter into the inhabited areas outside

the forest boundaries and causing damage to life and property, trapping them in cages, rehabilitating them after being captured and population control are found tedious to follow while taking urgent measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict in many situations. In this case, the State of Kerala is of the opinion that the above procedures need to be revisited and amended appropriately.

Though the State Government have taken steps under Section 11(1) (b) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to eliminate the problematic Wild Pigs which raid crops and foray into human settlements by entrusting the powers to Panchayathi Raj Institutions, the efforts to contain the menace yielded minimal success due to lack of licensed shooters and also the procedural formalities. Therefore, it is necessary to declare Wild Pig (*Sus scrofa*) as vermin at least for a period of one year. A proposal to declare the wild pigs that threaten human life and property as vermin was submitted to the Central government on 19.11.2021, but no favorable decision has been taken and communicated yet.

In certain parts of the State, 'Bonnet macaque' has been perceived as a threat to human property and peaceful existence, due to their involuntary and frequent visits to human habitations. In certain other areas, Bonnet macaque populations have been seen permanently residing amidst human habitations. Before the amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 this species of monkey was included in Schedule II during 2022 whereby the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State could manage by capturing and relocating the individuals/troops of monkeys causing menace in human habitations. After the amendment, this species has been included in Schedule I, thereby depriving the CWW of the power of taking suo motu action. Hence, it is recommended that the species 'Bonnet macaque' may be shifted from Schedule I to Schedule II so that necessary management/mitigation measures can be taken at State level itself in a site specific manner.

Hence the State of Kerala proposes to the Central Government the following:

- a. The Central Government may amend the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, rules thereof, procedures, protocols, guidelines, advisories, etc., in tune with the need of the hour, especially for a state like Kerala, by incorporating practical provisions for ensuring protection to life and property in human-dominated landscapes.
- b. To declare Wild Pig (*Sus scrofa*) as vermin as per the amended Section 62 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 for the State of Kerala for a period of at least 1 year and
- c. The species 'Bonnet macaque' may be shifted from Schedule I to Schedule II so that necessary management/mitigation measures can be taken at State level itself in a site specific manner.

B. Request for Sanctioning Special Financial Assistance to Implement the Project for Management of Human-Wild Animal Conflict in Kerala

The rising Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in Kerala has led to considerable loss of life, property, and agricultural resources, with primary conflict species being elephants, wild pigs, and macaques, as well as carnivores like tigers and leopards. Contributing factors include habitat fragmentation, infestation of invasive species, presence of large-scale monocultures, and a reduced tolerance level among communities residing near forests.

To address this escalating issue, the Kerala Forest Department developed a comprehensive project informed by extensive consultations with stakeholders, including Members of the Legislative Assembly, public representatives, scientists, NGOs, forest officials, and the public. Over 1,600 suggestions were received and analyzed,

resulting in the selection of effective, innovative, and legally feasible measures to mitigate HWC. The proposed project focuses on strategies such as constructing physical barriers, improving habitat quality, providing compensation and insurance, enhancing infrastructure, and encouraging community involvement.

Project Outlay

Particulars	Financial Forecast (Rs in Lakh)
Measures to avoid human-wild animal interface	9020.50
Infrastructure and human resource development	17095.00
Compensation, insurances, and ex-gratia	8375.00
Strengthening people's participation in HWC mitigation	100.00
Habitat quality improvement activities	8252.74
Training, awareness creation, and research	623.00
Maintenance of existing infrastructure	8901.50
Grand Total	62001.24

The total estimated cost for implementing the project is Rs. 620 crore over a period of five-year.

A proposal for this Rs. 620 crore project was initially submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on 07.09.2021 but was not approved. Following this, the State Government submitted a revised recommendation on 01.04.2024, requesting that the project be funded as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a 60:40 cost-sharing arrangement between the Central and State Governments under the budget head "Integrated

Development of Wildlife Habitats." Approval for this proposal is still pending.

C. Notification Of Eco-Sensitive Zones

The proposals for declaration of Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) for the Protected Areas (PAs) of Kerala had been forwarded to MoEF&CC. For certain PAs, revised proposals excluding human inhabited areas are also prepared. Out of the 18 proposals submitted, the ESZ of Mathikettan Shola National Park has been approved and notified. The remaining proposals are under various stages of scrutiny. It is requested the process of publishing draft/final notification of ESZs of the PAs after excluding the human inhabited areas may be expedited.

D. Regularization Of Pre 01.01.1977 Encroachments On Forest Land

Notwithstanding the pressure on land Kerala has been a frontrunner in forest conservation and has pioneered earnest endeavors to protect and maintain a healthy forest and tree cover. Keeping the ecological security of the State in mind, the State has been successfully and diligently protecting 44 rivers and its tributaries, wet lands and paddy lands, biodiversity, fauna and flora of all types including special ecosystems like Mangroves, etc. through both legislation and effective executive action. The State has also scrupulously notified several Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks which are pride of the entire Nation. In order to further advance the cause of forest conservation, private owned forests and ecologically fragile land parcels abutting them have been notified as Reserved Forests through special legislations. Kerala is also the first among the States to promulgate an exclusive Policy for Eco-Restoration of Monoculture Plantations and Degraded Forests to ensure sustainable ecosystem services from the forests.

1. In an earnest effort to achieve ‘equity and welfare of all’ which are fundamentals in the journey towards the goal of ‘ViksitBharath’, the Government of Kerala is working for establishing a ‘Nava Keralam’ (New Kerala) with the vision: ‘Land for all, records for all lands and smart in all services (Ellavarkumbhoomi, ellabhoomikkumrehka, ellasevanangalum smart)’.

(a) Under the ‘Kerala Land Assignment (Regularization of Occupation of Forest Lands prior to 1.1.1977) Special Rules, 1993’, following joint verification by Forest and Revenue Departments, the details for regularization of occupation covering an extent of 2499.5961 Ha of land in various districts namely, Pathanamthitta, Trivandrum, Kollam and Kannur have been uploaded in the PARIVESH portal for necessary process under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Especially in the case of Pathanamthitta District, proposal for diversion of 1970.041 Ha of forest land for regularization of pre 01.01.1977 occupation was recommended and forwarded to IRO Bangalore by the State Government on 02.04.2020. Ever since several queries have been raised by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change for which prompt replies have been furnished by Forest Department/State Government. In its latest correspondence in this regard as per letter No. 8-06/2020-FC dated 08.08.2023 of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has sought for submission of documents that can prove occupation of these areas including remote sensing maps, Government documents etc. apart from the mandated joint verification list which was the conclusive proof of occupation. Citing the above reason, clearance is pending.

The occupants of the land and their successors-in-interest have been waiting for title for more than two generations. The Joint Verification being a solemn exercise jointly carried out by the Revenue and Forest Departments, the Joint Verification lists are authentic and reliable. Additional queries and details over and above the Joint Verification which are being sought is delaying the Central Government’s concurrence. Schools, hospitals, civil supplies and other such civic amenities had not reached these ‘forest areas 50 years

ago'. Hence, the queries for submission of further evidence beyond the Joint Verification (solemnized by statute) sanctified under the special rules (upheld by the Supreme Court) may not therefore be held against according prior concurrence for regularization of occupation. Hence, in the above circumstances, the approvals of cases already uploaded in the PARIVESH portal may be expedited based on the details already uploaded. More than 8500 families will be benefited.

(b) Similarly, such land parcels in various districts where Joint Verification is completed will be uploaded in PARIVESH portal in due course for the Central Government's concurrence. We request that the approvals for the same are also expedited. This will help another 6000 families to get their titles.

(c) We also request that a Nodal Officer in MoEF for the State of Kerala is formally designated so that the above approvals can be mutually followed up and expedited in the interest of these families in thousands. The State would also nominate its officer to liaison with the said Nodal Officer of MoEF.

E. Issues related to release of funds under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes:

(i) Green India Mission

The Green India Mission (GIM) is being implemented in Kerala since FY 2016-17 through the Participatory Forest Management (PFM) institutions. The State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) is designated as the nodal agency for implementing the Green India Mission in the State. Under the Green India Mission, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had approved Rs.3885.27 lakh for FY 2019-20 and released 70% of the Central share of Rs.1631.814 lakhs which was completely utilised for various activities approved by the Ministry. The State share of Rs.1087.88

lakhs were received by the SFDA which has been utilised. The Utilisation Certificates have been submitted to the Ministry promptly.

The State has not received further fund from the Ministry after FY 2019-20. The State had submitted a proposal for Rs.5472 lakhs to the Ministry during FY 2023-24 which was not approved. A proposal for implementing the Green India Mission at cost of Rs. 64.35 crore for the FY 2024-25 has been submitted to Ministry. Ministry is requested to expedite the approval of the proposal so that the various activities envisaged under GIM can be implemented during FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25.

(ii) School Nursery Yojana

In FY 2023-24, 52 schools in Kerala were selected to pilot the School Nursery Yojana, successfully completing the project at a total cost of Rs. 47 lakh. The Ministry disbursed a first installment of Rs. 32.90 lakh, and project completion reports along with Utilization Certificates have been submitted. The remaining amount of Rs. 14.10 lakh is yet to be released. The initiative has been widely appreciated in the State, fostering a strong connection between students and nature. Seedlings raised in the schools were planted as part of the Prime Minister's *EkPedMaaKeNaam* mission, coinciding with World Environment Day celebrations in June 2024. Building on this success, a proposal to expand the School Nursery Yojana program to 151 additional schools at a projected cost of Rs. 137.90 Lakhs has been submitted for Ministry approval, and we seek your favorable consideration to support the continued growth and impact of this environmental education initiative.

(iii) Forest Fire Prevention and Management - FPMS

Kerala has achieved significant success in reducing forest fire incidents through proactive management utilizing state funds and funds under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Forest Fire Prevention and Management. Significant funds were received under these

schemes in previous years which has been substantially reduced during the FY 2024-25. It is noticed that the criteria for fund allocations adopted have resulted in reduced allocations, affecting the State's capacity to maintain these achievements. In recognition of Kerala's progress, an increase in FPMS funding would greatly support continued efforts in fire prevention and ecosystem protection. The table below illustrates the reduction in FPMS funds allocated over recent years:

Financial Year	Scheme	Amount Proposed (Rs. in Lakh)	Amount Released (Rs. in Lakh)
2022-23	FPMS	2242.94	241.43
	FPMS (TSP)	402.20	202.42
2023-24	FPMS	1766.91	441.73
	FPMS (TSP)	601.10	150.28
2024-25	FPMS	959.11	49.17
	FPMS (TSP)	497.87	42.35

In light of these reduced allocations, it is requested that FPMS funding be increased to align with Kerala's accomplishments and the State's substantial need for sustained fire management resources. Enhanced funding would allow Kerala to continue its proactive approach to forest fire prevention and ensure the protection of valuable forest ecosystems. It is requested that funds for an amount of Rs. 959.11 Lakhs under FPMS and Rs. 497.87 lakhs under FPMS (TSP) may be allocated to the state as requested in the APO for FY 2024-25.

(iv) Central Sector Scheme for Conservation and Management of Mangroves in Vembanad and Kannur Regions

Mangroves are considered as one of the most productive eco systems in the world owing to its ecological significance. Mangroves play a critical role in preserving rare and endemic plant species and have significant medicinal, agricultural, and industrial potential. In

Kerala, mangrove forests are found across several districts, including Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Kasaragod.

Since 2006-07, the Social Forestry Wing of the Kerala Forest Department has implemented a Central Sector Scheme (CSS) for the "Conservation and Management of Mangroves in Vembanad and Kannur regions." Initially, this was funded at 100% by the central government. Since 2016-17, however, the scheme has been funded on a 60:40 cost-sharing basis between the Government of India and the Government of Kerala.

This scheme, implemented in multiple districts across Kollam, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode regions, focuses on the following core activities:

- **Raising Seedlings and Plantations:** This includes distributing mangrove and associated species to the public and planting agroforestry species, *vetiver* grass along fringes of lake/water bodies, canal banks and streams, and casuarina as bio-shield and shelter belt in coastal areas.
- **Community Empowerment and Ancillary Activities:** These efforts include promoting community health, improving drainage and sanitation, mosquito control, provision for distribution of biogas plants, fish fingerlings, and educational workshops. These measures empower communities that depend on mangrove ecosystems and address livelihood needs.

The Management Action Plans (MAPs) for Vembanad and Kannur Regions for FY 2023-24 were reviewed and approved by the State Level Steering Committee on 16/05/2023. These MAPs were submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for funding approval but have not yet disbursed funds. Hence, the Management Action Plans for Vembanad and Kannur Regions has to be resubmitted to MoEF & CC for considerations during 2024-25 vide letter no. SW2-6462/22 dated 12.07.2024.

The requested fund allocation for the scheme in 2024-25 is as follows:

- Conservation and Management of Mangroves in Vembanad Region: Rs. 239.73 lakh
- Conservation and Management of Mangroves in Kannur Region: Rs. 102.40 lakh
- **Total: Rs. 342.13 lakh**

We seek approval and timely release of funds for these critical conservation efforts to ensure the ongoing protection and management of Kerala's mangrove ecosystems.

(v) Funding for acquisition of Mangrove Areas

Mangroves, which thrive in tropical and subtropical regions, serve as crucial ecosystems at the confluence of rivers and seas. These forests, primarily composed of salt-tolerant trees and shrubs, support a range of ecological functions and provide essential services, including carbon sequestration, coastal protection, nutrient cycling, and nurseries for aquatic life. Mangroves also play a vital role in local livelihoods by providing non-wood forest products and resources for fuel, fodder, and traditional uses.

a. Current Status and Legal Context

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kerala had extensive area under mangroves (70,000 Ha) which is now reduced to just 2,300.335 Ha in ten districts. So far, government has accorded legal protection for 590 Ha area of mangroves only. The ownership of the remaining mangroves is with revenue, other departments, panchayats and private individuals. That means, there is a need to accord legal protection to 1,710 Ha of mangroves. The current ownership of these areas is with

revenue, other govt, agencies, panchayats and private individuals. While mangrove forests with revenue, panchayat and government agencies can be notified under Kerala Forest Act, 1961 or the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, mangroves with private individuals need to be acquired and notified as Reserve Forests. It is estimated that around 1362.516 Ha of mangroves in private land need to be acquired and restored. Further, mangrove-based rural livelihood and income generating activities also need to be initiated.

b. Rationale for Acquisition

To halt further degradation, it is essential to bring privately-owned mangrove land under legal protection. This acquisition will allow for the restoration and conservation of these critical ecosystems, while also supporting rural livelihoods through mangrove-based income-generating activities. The project will cover nine districts of Kerala namely Kasargode, Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Alappuzha, and Kollam,

c. Method of Acquisition

It is proposed that the mangrove sites under private ownership identified in nine districts shall be acquired after paying compensation to the private owners in accordance with the relevant provisions of The Kerala Forests (Vesting and Management of Ecologically Fragile Lands) Act, 2003 and the corresponding Rules of 2007, following the prescribed procedures.

d. Proposed Phasing and Cost

The acquisition process will be voluntary and executed in phases, beginning with sites where landowners have already expressed willingness to participate. Phase I targets five districts - Kollam, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, and Kannur and covers 135 sites totaling 99.04 Ha. The estimated cost for Phase I is Rs. 52.40 crore.

d. Implementation and Funding

The Kerala Forest Department will implement this scheme through the Custodian (Ecologically Fragile Lands), Territorial, and Social Forestry wings.

e. Funding Summary

Phase	Districts Covered	Area (Ha)	Estimated Cost (Rs. crore)
Phase I	Kollam, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur	99.04	52.40

We request approval and funding support to enable the Kerala Forest Department to proceed with the acquisition and conservation of privately-owned mangrove areas, preserving these invaluable ecosystems for future generations.

F. Allotment of Rs.10 crore for payment of compensation to the victims of human wildlife conflict.

The Government of Kerala is spending large amount towards paying compensation for the damages sustained on account of human wildlife conflict. For instance, an amount of Rs. 21.79 crore was disbursed as compensation during 2023–24 alone. As of now, the Government of Kerala is bearing the lion-share of it. Though paying compensation to the victims of human wildlife conflict is an identified activity in the CSS-Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, Project Tiger and Project Elephant, very little allocation is made for paying compensation as it is one of the several activities bunched together in the whole scheme. This practically puts the entire burden of paying compensation solely on the shoulders of the State Government. It is submitted that the Central Government also has a moral responsibility of supporting the efforts of the State Government in ameliorating the hardships of people who are victims of human

wildlife conflict. Hence, it is requested that an amount of Rs. 10 crore may additionally be allotted to Kerala either from the existing Centrally Sponsored Schemes mentioned above or from the National CAMPA for providing compensation to the victims of human wildlife conflict.

G. Financial support for conservation of forests and biodiversity in Sabarimala, Malayattoor and similar such pilgrim centres deep inside forest

Certain pilgrim centres in Kerala are located deep inside forests. Sabarimala in Pathanamthitta District is one such destination frequented by lakhs of pilgrims. There are similar such destinations in other parts of the State as well. It is imperative that the health and sanctity of these forests are to be preserved so as to ensure an ecologically-friendly pilgrimage. This requires financial resources and it is requested that Rs. 10 crore may be allotted to Kerala Forest Department for this purpose from the National CAMPA so as to undertake measures for the proper upkeep and maintenance of the biodiversity rich forests around the pilgrim destinations.