



## Human-Animal Conflict

### Context:

- A pregnant wild elephant in Kerala died on May 27 after she ate a pineapple filled with firecrackers. Scores of elephants are killed every year in India which indicates the rising instances of human-animal conflict.



### MAN-ANIMAL CONFLICTS

98 Deaths due to tiger attacks from 2013-14 to 2016-17

2,804 Deaths due to elephant attacks from 2009-10 to 2015-16

₹15cr Money spent on conflict mitigation (2013-14 to 2016-17)

### STEPS TAKEN TO MITIGATE CONFLICT

584km of elephant-proof trenches

1,501km of solar-powered fences

35km of elephant-proof walls

3.5km of stone-pitched trenches

259km of boundary walls and 43km of bio-fences

“ There are locations, where elephant-proof trenches, walls and solar-powered fences exist in parallel  
— Expert report on human-wildlife conflict mitigation

### About the Indian elephant:

- One of three extant recognised subspecies of the Asian elephant and native to mainland Asia.
- Listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- The wild population has declined by at least 50% since the 1930s.
- Threatened by loss, degradation and fragmentation of its habitat.

### What are the reasons for man-animal conflict?

- Lost ranges and blocked corridors for elephants have made elephants look for soft landscapes adjoining forests such as coffee, tea and cardamom estates, and in the absence of these, wander into food-rich farms falling in their movement pathways.
- Expansion of human settlements into forests – expansion of cities, industrial areas, railway/road infrastructure, tourism etc.
- Commercial pressures eat into already diminished habitat.
- Allowing livestock to graze in forest areas.
- **Land use transformations** such as change from protected forest patches to agricultural and horticultural lands and monoculture plantations are further destroying the habitats of wildlife.
- Unscientific structures and practices of **forest management** in the country.
- Infestation of wildlife habitat by **invasive exotic weeds** leads to decreased availability of edible grasses for wild herbivores.
- Decreased prey base caused by **poaching** of herbivores has also resulted in carnivores moving out of forests in search of prey and to indulge in cattle lifting.



## What is Project Elephant?

- It is a flagship programme of Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).
- Launched in 1992 it is a Centrally-sponsored scheme.
- Primarily aimed at protecting elephant, their habitats and corridors.
- It addresses issues of man-animal conflict and welfare of domesticated elephants.

## India's Conservation culture:

- Despite a billion people India still has most of our large wildlife species- India today has the largest population of the tiger, Asian elephant, leopard, sloth bear, gaur and many others.
- People have accepted coexistence of human & animals, and incorporated it in our culture. All our deities have animals associated with them; it shows the inclusion of these animals in our mind space.
- The **Velip community in Goa** worship the tigers and this practice is done even today.

## Way Ahead:

- Inclusion of local community in forest wildlife management.
- To ensure that money which comes in through tourism (of Tiger reserves) should be used for the development of the local villages as has been done in **Tadoba tiger reserve, Maharashtra**.
- Ensuring that elephant corridors are not razed/neglected due to overzealous developmental approach.