



सत्यमेव जयते

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Finance
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps
Co-Chairman, District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee, Bengaluru Urban District

July 30, 2018

Dear *Hanshvardhan*,

Sub: Death of a wild elephant due to electrocution in Chinnakanal, Kerala.

It is with deep concern that I am drawing your attention to the recurring death of elephants in Kerala arising due to electrocution: the result of contact with illegal, high-voltage electric fences erected around various estates, forested areas and plantations.

I have, recently, received a deeply distressing image of a deceased female wild elephant that was discovered dead on the edge of a private estate in Chinnakanal, located at: Chinnakanal Suryanelli Road, Chinnakanal, Kerala 685618. I understand that the address corresponds to the Thachankary Estate held by the Royal Group of Companies, upon which Fort Munnar, a resort, is situated. The image, which I have annexed herewith for your perusal, indicates that the deceased elephant was, at the time of its death, in close contact with an electric fence erected on the periphery of the estate, suggesting that its demise was the result of such contact.

The Indian elephant (*elephas maximus*), which is classified as an endangered species according to the most recent 'Red List' published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, is a protected animal under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The death of the concerned elephant, if arising from electrocution via contact with the electric fence, constitutes a criminal offence under Section 9 read with Section 51(1) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and is punishable with imprisonment up to seven years. The Indian Penal Code, 1860, similarly regards the maiming, rendering useless or killing of an elephant as a criminal offence, punishable under Section 429 thereunder with up to five years' imprisonment. Further, Section 11(1)(a) of the



Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, makes it an offence to torture or otherwise subject any animal to unnecessary pain. The use of a high-voltage electric fence that results in the death of an elephant clearly falls within the ambit of the offences listed above and should, accordingly, attract the associated penalties. I urge you to take immediate action in this instance, including instructing the officials concerned to investigate the use of such electric fencing and to bring to book those responsible for the same.

The persistent use of such life-threatening electric fences by estates, in particular, as in the present case, is also a blatant violation of a Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change directive, issued by the Inspector-General of Forests and Director (Project Elephant) on November 11, 2009, *vide* Letter No. 2-2/04-PE, banning the use of electric fencing in elephant-prone areas, and instructing Chief Wild Life Wardens of all 'Project Elephant' States (which includes Kerala) to, *inter alia*, prosecute the management of estates that have been instrumental in the death of elephants through electrocution, and to remove all such fencing immediately. The strict enforcement of the directive is vital to securing the future of the Indian elephants in Kerala.

I request you to depute a team to investigate the matter and prosecute those who have flouted the Environment Regulations. I hope that you will take immediate action in this instance.

Yours Sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Dr Harsh Vardhan

Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bagh, New Delhi - 110003

Encl: Image of a deceased female wild elephant on the edge of the Thachankary Estate, Chinnakanal, Kerala

Annexure 1

Deceased female wild elephant on the edge of the Thachankary Estate, Chinnakanal,
Kerala

