

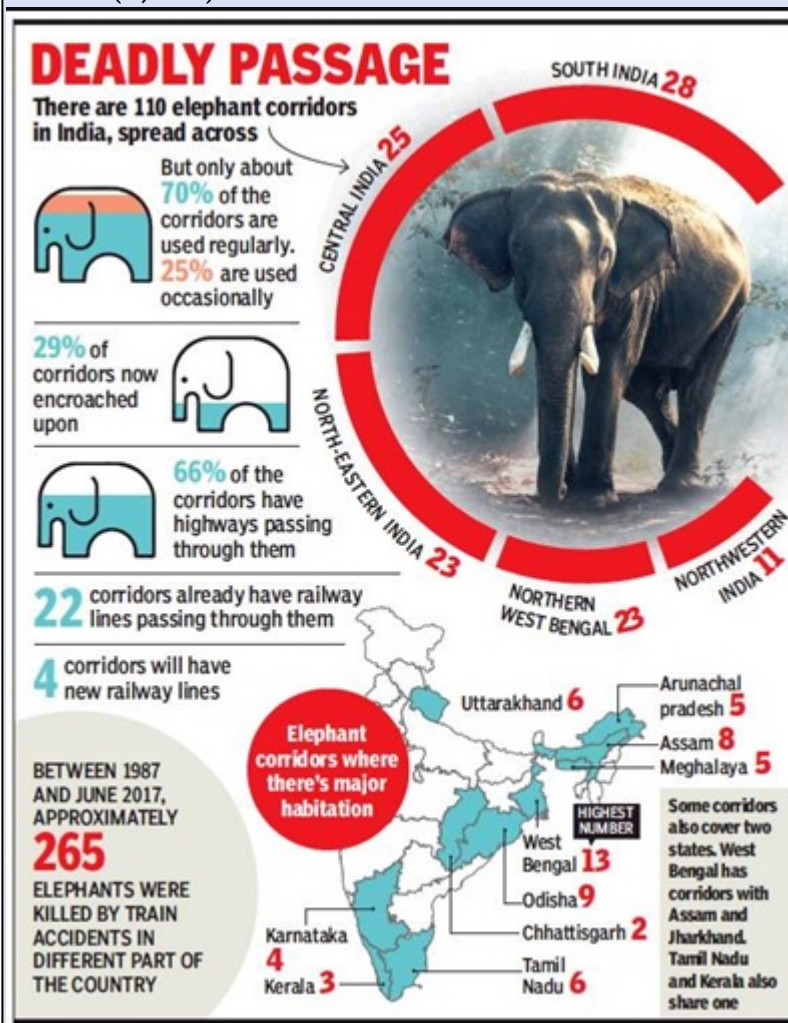
## **Elephant Corridors in India**

### **Why in news?**

The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change recently directed Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to prepare a proposal to notify the Dulung-Subansiri elephant corridor.

### **Status of elephants**

- Elephants are the natural heritage animal of India, elephant calves are able to walk within 1 or 2 hours of birth.
- The *Asian elephant* is the largest mammal living on the land of Asia.
- **Scientific name** - *Elephas maximus*
- **Gestation period** - 22 months
- **IUCN Red List** - Endangered
- **Wildlife Protection Act 1972** - Schedule I
- **CITES** - Appendix I
- **Population** - There are about 50,000-60,000 Asian elephants in the world.
- **Elephant reserves**- There are 33 elephant reserves in India, latest being Terai Elephant Reserve in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Elephant corridors**- About 101 elephant corridors have been identified in the country which need to be secured for conservation of elephants.
- **West Bengal**- It has the highest number of identified elephant corridors in India, accounting for over 17% of all the reported elephant corridors in the country.
- **World elephant day**- It is an international annual event, celebrated on 12th of August every year.
- **Status of elephants**- More than 60% of the world's elephant population is in India., Karnataka has the highest number of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054).



### How elephant corridor is designated in India?

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**- It empowers the state governments to declare areas that link protected regions as “conservation reserves” under Section 36A.

- **Community reserves-** It can also be designated as “community reserves” according to Section 36C of the wildlife protection act, 1972.
- **Role of ministry-** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change collaborates with state forest departments to identify and validate elephant corridors.
- **State level designation-** State governments play a crucial role in demarcating and designating these corridors as “ State Elephant Corridors”.
- **Legal protection-** These designations subject the corridors to legal protection under relevant laws, such as the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- **National Elephant Corridor Project-** It aims to ensure and manage these vital pathways for elephant movement, this project identifies and conserves corridors to ensure the long term survival of Asian elephants within India’s political boundaries.

### Why India needs elephant corridor?

*Elephant corridor is that it is a strip of land that facilitates the movement of elephants between two or more viable habitat patches.*

- **Legal protection-** The corridors will legally protected, potentially designating it as a wildlife sanctuary or conservation reserve.
- **Reduce habit isolation-**It allow elephants to continue their nomadic mode of survival, despite shrinking forest cover, by facilitating travel between distinct forest habitats.
- **Keystone species-** Supreme Court in elephant corridor case said that its State’s duty to protect a “keystone species” like elephants, which are immensely important to the environment.

*Supreme Court upheld the Tamil Nadu government’s authority to notify an ‘elephant corridor’ and protect the migratory path of the animals through the Nilgiri biosphere reserve.*

- **Forest conservation-** Animal paths are blocked as forests have been turned into farms and unchecked tourism, these elephant corridors would check the negative impacts on wildlife habitats and migration routes.
- **Man-animal conflict-** Animals are forced to seek alternative routes resulting in increased [elephant-human conflict](#), these particularly affect animals that have large homes like elephants, a dedicated elephant corridor would reduce the fatalities.

*Kerala is the first state to declares man-animal conflict as a state-specific disaster.*

- **Forest regeneration-** They would help regenerate forests on which other species, including tigers depend.

- **Preserve migratory corridors**- The negative impacts of forest fragmentation on ecosystems highlight the necessity of preserving and restoring migratory corridors to mitigate these effects.
- **Hydropeaking risks**- Worldwide Institute of India report highlighted the dangers of hydropeaking in lower Subansiri hydroelectric project which could lead to flash floods and pose threat to elephants, particularly calves.

## Quick facts

### Project elephant

- **Launch year**- In 1992 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- **Objectives**
  - To protect elephants, their habitat and corridors
  - To address issues of man-animal conflict
  - Welfare of captive elephants
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides financial and technical support to major elephant range states in the country.
- **MIKE**- Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephant is launched in 10 elephant reserves since 2003.
- Project Elephant completed 30 years in 2022.

### Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants

- **Established by**- CITES (The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).
- **First implementation**- It was started in South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka) in the year 2004.
- **Objective**- It is an international collaboration that tracks trends in information related to the illegal killing of elephants to monitor effectiveness of field conservation efforts.

## References

1. [Indian Express- Ready proposal of Elephant corridor](#)
2. [MoEFCC- Elephant corridor of India](#)