

Wild and the human

Beasts are not to be blamed for attacking humans as it is only when we disturbed their habitat that they turned wild

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At a time when frequent reports of confrontation between humans and wild animals are pouring into media from various parts of the state, the experts in the field believe that the same is due to a few reasons and surprisingly there is no role of animals in this respect. Imtiyaz Lone, Wildlife Warden, South Kashmir says that frequent attacks of wild animals on human beings is due to population explosion and increase in livestock. "Over the years human population has increased by manifolds and people were forced to look for places where they could settle down. Some of them reached areas falling very close to the forests and also to the areas where wild animals lived for centuries together. It is here that the friction between man and animal started and same has reached alarming proportions as on today," says Lone. The Wildlife Warden opines that once the wild animals noticed that somebody has encroached upon their habitat they quite naturally reacted. He added that the matters were left unattended and no concrete action was taken to address the issue. "First we encroached upon the habitat of wild animals and also took our livestock to their new place of living. Once the wild animals observed the move-

ment of livestock near their habitat they could not resist. They would pounce upon the same and consume them as and when desired by them. Naturally, this would hurt the man and then the same would be followed by human-animal confrontation," says Lone.

The Wildlife Warden feels that his department does not have the required infrastructure to counter the attacks of wild animals. He added that people have expectations from the department to do their job in more professional manner, but fail to understand the lacunae as well as loopholes in the overall functioning of the department. "We have highly professional and trained manpower to handle the incidents related to human-animal confrontation, but the professionals are not available in the desired number. Besides, the equipments as well as infrastructure needed are not available in desired manner and these things are acting as a block in the better management of animal-human conflict," Lone adds.

Emphasizing upon the need to carry out operations at the Tehsil level the wildlife expert says that the department has recommended to the government to set up flying squads at the Tehsil level. He believes that same would help in tackling the situation arising out of human-animal conflict in a

quick manner with less fatal casualties to both human and animals. All this is quite understandable. Once our teams are present at the Tehsil level they would be able to reach their area of operations more swiftly compared to those coming from far off places. These teams should be equipped with all the necessary equipments and at the same time they should be given sufficient stock of tranquilizers and sedatives so that they don't feel underequipped, hence incapable of performing duties.

There is also a need to stressing upon the cooperation from police department. Officials of the wildlife department feel that police have a pivotal role to play in handling the situation following the surfacing of a wild animal in a human populated area. The wildlife department and the police have to work in close coordination with each other. It is important that contact numbers of the concerned wildlife officials are with the local police station so that they could inform about any incident of attacks on humans by animals or vice-versa. It is the duty of the police to manage the situation as and when they a wild animal barges into



a populated area. The wildlife officials need to be helped here because their rescue teams have the mandate just to recover the wild-animal and as such they are not expected to diffuse the situation and control the mob. "According to the Wildlife Act the mandate of wildlife department is limited to ensuring the safety and security of wild animals in protected areas and this is maintained at every cost. We are not responsible for any action of a particular animal beyond the boundaries of a particular protected area. As and when a wild animal surfaces in a human inhabited area it is the duty of police

to save lives of people living there. We have to ensure that no harm whatsoever is caused to the animal and we have the necessary expertise to catch an animal," say the department officials.

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