

14. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Reintroduction of Tigers

15. As a part of active management to rebuild Sariska and Panna Tiger Reserves where tigers have become locally extinct, reproduction of tigers/tigresses have been done.

Creation of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF)

16. The policy initiatives announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech of 29.2.2008, *inter-alia*, contains action points relating to tiger protection. Based on the one time grant of Rs. 50.00 crore provided to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for raising, arming and deploying a Special Tiger Protection Force, the proposal for the said force has been approved by the competent authority for 13 tiger reserves. Rs. 93 lakhs each has been released to Corbett, Ranthambhore & Dudhwa Tiger Reserve for creation of STPF during 2008-09. Central Assistance will be provided to States for creation of STPF in remaining 10 Tiger Reserves in 2009-10.

Himalayan Ski Village Project

902. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gobind Ballabh Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development (GBPIHED) has been asked about its observation over setting up of any projects in the fragile environment of Himalayan region;

(b) if so, whether the views of GBPIHED have been sought with regard to setting up of the proposed Himalayan Ski Village project in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh; and

(c) if so, the details of the report submitted by the GBPIHED and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Madam.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

Ecological Values of Wetlands

903. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of wetlands and the ecological values they possess and the details of areas which fall under the category of wetlands;

(b) whether Government is considering to notify provisions on wetlands in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is also considering to undertake bio-diversity mapping of the wetlands in the country and if so, the details of conservation measures undertaken by Government for the wetlands from 2000 to 2009; and

(d) the details of 40 major wetlands in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Ministry of Environment and Forests operationalized the National Wetland Conservation Programme in 1987 under which 115 wetlands in 26 States/Union Territories have been identified so far for their conservation and wise use. 100% financial assistance is provided to the States/Union Territories to undertake various conservation activities. Wetlands perform various vital functions including providing food, fodder, fuel and water for domestic, irrigation and industrial purposes, habitat for fisheries and rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, maintaining natural biodiversity, helping in regulating hydrological regimes, flood control and recharging of aquifers.

All the areas which are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic eco-systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water fall under the category of wetlands.

(b) As envisaged in the National Environment Policy, 2006 a legally enforceable regulatory mechanism to ensure conservation and wise use of wetlands has been prepared.

(c) Inventorization and mapping is a continuous process. A project on 'National Wetland Information System and Updation of Wetland Inventory' is under implementation which includes biodiversity mapping.

(d) Under the National Wetland Conservation Programme, Kolleru lake is the only wetland identified from Andhra Pradesh. An amount of Rs. 123.309 lakhs has been released so far for undertaking various conservation activities in this wetland. Another 45 wetlands have been listed under a UNDP project implemented by Saiim All Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore. However these wetlands are not part of the National Wetland Conservation Programme.

Panna National Park

904. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the census figures of tigers since 1995 in Panna National Park/Sanctuary; whether tigers in the Reserve have become extinct;