

(c) and (d) In order to conserve the single isolated population of Asiatic Lions, the Ministry of Environment & Forests had initiated a habitat feasibility study through Wildlife Institute of India, which inter-alia had identified Kuno Palpur Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as an alternative home for the Gir lions and for the release of wild lions from Gujarat. In past, an amount of Rs. 1545 lakhs has been released for relocation of village for preparing the habitat for Asiatic Lions at Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary. However no financial allocation is earmarked for this purpose in current financial year.

#### **Poaching of elephants**

1864. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN:

SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the inter-State ivory peddlers continue to flourish particularly in Kerala and the ivory mafia had killed at least 40 elephants during the last three years;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to bring to book the mafia-gang; and

(c) the steps taken to prevent poaching of elephants in connivance with the officials of forest departments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) There have been occasional reports of poaching of elephants for ivory in Kerala and adjoining States of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. As per the information received from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, 17 elephants have been reported to be poached for ivory in these three States during the last three financial years.

(b) The State Forest Department officials carry out prosecution of the poachers and persons possessing illegal ivory or ivory products under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(c) Ministry has received no report of connivance of the Forest Department officials in poaching of elephants.

#### **Forest village development scheme**

†1865. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal has been received from Madhya Pradesh under forest village development scheme;

(b) if so, whether the proposal is pending; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and whether any time limit has been fixed for disposal of the proposal?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.