

23. Chief Ministers of tiger States addressed at the level of the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests on urgent issues, viz. implementation of the tripartite MOU, creation of the Tiger Conservation Foundation, stepping up protection etc.
24. Chief Ministers of States having tiger reserves affected by left wing extremism and low population status of tiger and its prey addressed for taking special initiatives.
25. Steps taken for modernizing the infrastructure and field protection.
26. Advisory issued for involvement of Non-Governmental Experts in the forthcoming all India tiger estimation.
27. Report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted for looking into the local extinction of tiger in the Panna Tiger Reserve sent to the State (Madhya Pradesh) for the needful action.
28. Issue of tiger farming and trafficking of tiger body parts discussed at the level of Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests with the Chinese Authorities.
29. Action taken for amending the Wildlife (Protection) Act to ensure effective conservation.
30. Initiatives taken for improving the field delivery through capacity building of field officials, apart from providing incentives.
31. Launching of M-STrIPES, a customized monitoring system in the GIS domain for obtaining inference (trend/forecasting) from the field data being collected in the patrolling camps in tiger reserves.

#### **Effect of GM crops on normal crops**

†2490. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the cross breeding of GM plants with normal species may result in such weeds which may not be controlled by spraying any pesticide;

(b) if so, whether Government has decided to formulate a comprehensive policy in this regard;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government is aware that there is a loss of about rupees six thousand crores due to the effect of GM crops on normal crops; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) Cross breeding of herbicide-resistant GM plants if at all crossable with wild species, can result in weeds that will be difficult to control with herbicides. Cross breeding of GM crops possessing traits other than herbicide, with normal crops will not result in emergence of herbicide-resistant weeds. So far herbicide-resistant GM crops have not been approved for commercial cultivation in India.

(b) The Government of India is following a policy of case by assessment of genetically modified (GM) crops. In view of various concerns related to the safety, efficacy and agronomic performance of transgenic seeds, extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place before any GM plant is approved for commercial cultivation. This includes generation of relevant biosafety information and its elaborate analysis to ensure food, feed and environmental safety. The environmental safety assessment includes studies on pollen escape out-crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of terminator gene and baseline susceptibility studies. The food and feed safety studies include assessment on composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes. In case, the transgenic crop is not found suitable for release in the environment or human consumption, the product is rejected during the trial stage itself. A final view on the commercialization of GM plants is taken only when there is a clear economic and technical justification for release of the product.

(c) and (d) Bt cotton is the only transgenic crop approved for commercial cultivation in India. The Government has not received any report regarding loss of about rupees six thousand crores due to the effect of GM crops or normal crops.

#### **Incidents of poaching**

2491. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, despite Wildlife Act in force, the incidents of poaching are constantly increasing in the country;