

endangered tiger on an assured path of recovery by saving it from extinction, as revealed by the recent findings of the All India tiger estimation using the refined methodology, since viable tiger population exists only in tiger reserve areas, which are under Project Tiger, while the status of tiger population in other areas is low.

(d) The milestone initiatives taken by the Government of India for conservation and protection of tigers and other wildlife are given in Statement. [Refer to the Statement-IV appended to Answer to Starred Question 429 Part (c)]

#### **Contamination due to GM cotton**

3246. SHRI D. RAJA:

SHRI R.C. SINGH:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that there are widespread reports in Europe that premium organic cotton exported by India is contaminated with genetically modified (GM) cotton tarnishing India's image of fast growing segment of the country's textile exports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has conducted any study about the contamination from Bt. Cotton fields as 65 to 75 per cent of the country's production comes from Bt. Cotton; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to prevent such contamination of the field?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Government has not received any reports that premium organic cotton exported by India to Europe is contaminated with genetically modified (GM) cotton.

(c) and (d) On contamination of organic cotton by Bt cotton, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) had carried out an investigation in August, 2008 after receiving a complaint regarding fraudulent certifications of cotton as organic cotton by two certification bodies namely Control Union Certifications, Mumbai and EcoCert India Pvt. Ltd., Aurangabad. The investigation carried out through a physical audit by a team of the 'certified organic cotton' projects revealed non-conformities in the inspection and certification procedures of the two certification bodies. It was found that the cotton seeds used for production were Bt cotton and the certification bodies did not verify before certification. The two certification bodies were served a show-cause notice and a hearing was also held before the National Accreditation Body in the Ministry of Commerce. After the hearing, the National Accreditation Body imposed pecuniary penalty in March, 2009 with instructions that the two certification bodies should take corrective actions within a period of three months. After three months, APEDA verified the corrective actions taken by the two certification bodies.