

Illegal mining in wildlife sanctuaries/national parks

678. SHRIMATI KUSUM RAI:
SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of illegal mining in wildlife sanctuaries/national parks;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether inspite of Supreme Court's ban, 30-40 mines have begun operating inside the Sariska sanctuary;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether it would adversely impact the animals in the national park; and
- (f) the reasons for failure on the part of Government to check it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Hon'ble Supreme Court has *vide* its order dated 4th August, 2006, prohibited mining both inside as well as within 1 km. outside from the boundaries of the National Park and Sanctuaries. Management of the National Parks, Sanctuaries and other Protected Areas are under the administrative control of the concerned State/Union Territory Governments. Details of illegal mining, if any, occurring within the National Parks, Sanctuaries and other Protected Areas are not generally compiled in the Ministry.

As per information received from the Government of Rajasthan, no mines are in operation inside Sariska Tiger Reserve.

(d) to (f) Question does not arise.

Prevention of illegal felling of trees

679. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether illegal felling of trees has taken place in different parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by Government to prevent this; and
- (c) the number of States where there has been encroachment in forest areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Due to biotic pressures illicit cutting and encroachment does happen across various States. The Forest Departments in all State Governments have an elaborate forest protection machinery to prevent such activities. The forest protection force is also equipped with wireless sets, weapons and trained manpower. State Governments are empowered to protect forest from illicit felling and encroachment as per the provisions of Indian Forest Act, 1927.