

Smuggling of skin and other organs of animals

†1276. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the smuggling of skins and other organs of the animals in the forests is on the rise throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details of the smugglers held and items confiscated during the last two years;

(c) whether Government has prepared any action plan to check it; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) There are no reports with the Ministry indicating increase in smuggling of skins and other parts of wild animals in the country.

(c) and (d) The Ministry has taken a number of steps to conserve and protect wildlife in the country. Important initiatives of the Ministry are given below:

- (i) Threatened species of wildlife are placed in the Schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according these the highest degree of protection.
- (ii) The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended from time to time and made more stringent against wildlife related offences.
- (iii) A network of Protected Areas has been established to protect and conserve wildlife including rare animals and their habitats.
- (iv) Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to check illegal trade in wildlife and its products.
- (v) The State/Union Territory Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around forests and protected areas.
- (vi) Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State/Union Territory Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz, 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' with a view to improving protection and conservation of wildlife.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (vii) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', a new component has been added titled 'Recovery Programme for critically endangered species and their habitats' during the 11th Five Year Plan period.
- (viii) India is signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that regulates international trade in wildlife and its derivatives.

Poaching of dolphins

†1277. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether instances of poaching of national aquatic animals, Ganges dolphins, is constantly increasing;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has formulated any policy or fixed any responsibility in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) There are no reports in the Ministry indicating increase in poaching incidents of the Gangetic dolphin, which has recently been notified as National Aquatic Animal. However, there is decline in population of dolphins in India due to various reasons including habitat degradation, increase in pollution and siltation in the river systems, construction of barrages on rivers causing physical barriers to the movement of this migratory species and unintended entrapment of dolphins in fishing nets.

(c) and (d) Gangetic dolphin is placed in the Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby accorded the highest degree of protection. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for stringent punishment for poaching of wild animals including dolphins.

Creation of Eco Sensitive Zone

†1278. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

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

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.