

#### **Illegal quarrying in Ganga and other rivers**

161. SHRIMATI KUSUM RAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of illegal quarrying activities in Ganga and other rivers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof with particular reference to U.P., Bihar and West Bengal;

(c) whether several quarters including environmentalists have represented the Ministry regarding resultant pollution and damage to ecology due to illegal quarrying and crushing activities in the neighbourhoods; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the details of steps taken to stop quarrying in rivers particularly Ganga?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Protection of Olive Ridley turtles**

162. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that despite a ban continual illegal fishing using mechanized trawlers on Astaranga coast and Gahirmatha beaches, is posing serious threat to the endangered Olive Ridley turtles visiting Orissa every year for mass nesting;

(b) if so, the reasons for continuous blatant violation of laws on Orissa coasts; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for strict vigil and close monitoring of illegal Fishing at Orissa coasts by mechanized trawlers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of Orissa has been undertaking protection activities along the Orissa coast. The State Government of Orissa has informed that the reasons for possible violation of laws on Orissa coast and coastal waters are as follows:

(i) The coastal waters of Astaranga is not a Marine sanctuary. Mechanized fishing in this area is only seasonally prohibited from November to May next year within a distance of 10 km coast line under the State Fisheries Act such as Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Act (OMFRA), 1982 and Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Rules, 1983. There is no restriction on the movement of fishing vessels, as per the above Act and Rules, beyond the above restricted period and distance.

Implementation of the laws are constrained due to inadequate manpower such as trained staff to operate in the coastal waters / high seas for extended period of times both during day and night for six to eight months in a year covering the mating and breeding season of the species.

(ii) The coastal waters of Gahirmatha has been designated as a Marine Sanctuary and steps taken for patrolling and other protection measures. However, since the area is vast (above 1408 sq.kms) and there is heavy fishing pressure which involves local vessels as well as vessels from the neighbouring states like West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh and vessels from the neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Thailand, etc, often there are violations of the laws but these are being dealt with to the extent possible with available manpower and resources.

(c) The steps taken by Government of Orissa for strict vigil and close monitoring of illegal fishing at Orissa coast during Olive ridley turtle season are given in the statement.

***Statement***

*Steps taken by the Government of Orissa for strict vigil and  
close monitoring of illegal fishing at Orissa coast*

1. There is statutory ban on fishing in the Gahirmatha Marine sanctuary area and restricted fishing zone which is being enforced.
2. Strict vigil on all important nesting beaches have been made by establishing on shore monitoring and surveillance camps.
3. Off shore patrolling and surveillance camps have been set up near mass breeding and congregation areas in the sea. Patrolling squads, each under a forest Ranger, have been

pressed into service from the off-shore camps for this purpose, and each squad is provided with a hired trawler and a support patrol boat for patrolling around the turtle congregation zones in the sea. Coast Guard, Paradip have also been patrolling in the Marine Sanctuary and other areas. Interim Test Range/Defence Research & Development Organization authorities have suitably instructed their concerned officers to check that fishing vessels do not enter inside the marine sanctuary from the northern end of the Sanctuary.

4. State Police Department provides protection force to the Divisional Forest Officers of coastal Forest Divisions to maintain law and order.
5. Berthing facilities with provision for safety and security have been built up at Barunei, Gupti, and Krushnapriyapur by the Wildlife Division, Rajnagar for boats seized within Gahirmatha marine sanctuary.
6. Meetings are regularly held for close rapport amongst the officials of Forest, Fisheries and the Police Departments as also the Coast Guard.
7. Very High Frequency (VHF) communication has been arranged directly with the Coast Guard ships.
8. Assistant Conservators of Forests of Coastal Forest Divisions have been declared as authorized officers under the Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Act to check illegal fishing vessels entering in to the prohibited fishing zones in the Orissa coastal waters. Range Officers of coastal Forest Divisions have also been designated as authorized officers the Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Act for seizure of vessels illegally entering in to the prohibited areas in the Orissa coastal waters.
9. The Government of Orissa, Law Department have appointed six Special Public Prosecutors for six coastal districts (viz. Kendrapara, Puri, Ganjam, Balesore, Bhadrak and Jagatsinghpur districts) to conduct the prosecution cases arising out of sea turtles.
10. Co-ordination meetings are regularly organized with local fishing communities to obtain their support in protection of Olive Ridley Turtles.

11. Hoardings have been installed at important fishing bases like Chandanipal, Karanjamal, Paradeep Fishing Jetty, Jamboo, Talchua, Devi-nasi, Gangadevi, Jahaniapira, Nuagarh (Astaranga), Gundalva, Chandrabhaga, Purunabanda, Gokharkuda and Kantiagada for public awareness.
12. Turtle carcasses floating ashore and nesting activities are being meticulously counted by the camp personnel each day.
13. A Central Monitoring Unit in the office of the Chief Wildlife Warden is functioning with the responsibility of monitoring the operation carried out in each camp on a day to day basis. It is receiving and compiling information from the concerned Divisions.
14. A High Level Committee has been constituted by the State Government under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Orissa for reviewing the sea turtle protection activities from time to time for coordinating among various Departments and the Indian Coast Guards.

**Increase in forest cover in the country**

163. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government had decided to increase the green forest area by 5 million hectares;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that Government is considering to take action against all those who have encroached the forest area; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Green India Mission envisages increase in forest and tree cover on 5 million hectare area and improvement in quality of forest and tree cover on another 5 million hectare area in next 10 years starting from the year 2012-13, besides enhancing eco-system services and increase in forest based livelihood income of households living in and around the forests.

(c) and (d) The action against the encroachments in the forest areas is the responsibility of the State Government as per prevailing rules and regulation in force.