

The number of Royal Bengal tigers killed in man-animal conflict has not been collated separately.

(c) In a few instances reports have appeared in the media that after the killing of wild animals in conflict cases, their corpses were mutilated, burnt or mistreated by mobs.

(d) The details of such instances have not been collated in the Ministry. Ministry has, however, issued instructions to the Chief Wildlife Wardens of States to take strict action against the offenders involved in such killing or brutality against wild animals in accordance with the provisions contained under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Poaching of Rhinos in Assam

799. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the condition of Kaziranga National Parks in Assam is not good;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the killing of Rhinos has yet not stopped;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps being taken by Government to stop killing of Rhinos and development of Kaziranga National Park?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (e) Poaching of rhinos in the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve is a cause for concern.

Central assistance under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger is provided to the said reserve, *inter alia*, for development, protection and antipoaching activities. The steps taken by the State Government to protect and preserve one horned rhinos in Assam is given in Statement.

Statement

The steps taken by the State Government to protect and preserve one horned rhinos in Assam

1. Government of Assam has granted the power to use firearms to forest officers at all levels for protection of the forest and wildlife in the State

under section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code vide State Notification No. FRW.22/2009/5 dated 14.7.2012.

Immunity from prosecution without the prior sanction from the State Government has also been granted to all the forest officers in the State. This has given a big morale boost to the staff engaged in the protection of the rhino and other wildlife species.

2. Government of Assam has enhanced the maximum punishment to the poachers up to life imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs. 75,000 through the amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 vide The Wildlife (Protection) (Assam Amendment) Act, 2009'. The wildlife related offences have been made cognizable and non-bailable through this amendment by the State Government.
3. Two new battalions of the Assam Forest Protection Force have been raised for protection of the forest and wildlife including the rhino bearing areas of the State.
4. Sufficient numbers of antipoaching camps have been constructed in all rhino bearing areas of the State.
5. Infrastructure viz. road network, patrolling path, antipoaching camps, vehicles, boats, departmental elephants etc. have been improved/enhanced over the years.
6. Armed home guards and local youths have been deployed in the rhino bearing areas of the State to augment the strength of the field staff.
7. Sophisticated arms (Self Loading Rifles) have been deployed in the rhino bearing areas of the State to match the weapons used by the poachers.
8. Management interventions for protection and maintenance of the rhino habitat have been taken up on regular basis.
9. Close coordination with the civil and police administration is being maintained in the field for efficient tackling of the poachers.
10. Programmes on education and awareness are being regularly organized in the field involving local people and civil society.

11. The State Government of Assam is taking adequate steps to ensure the protection of rhinoceros in the State. Most of the one horned rhinoceros habitats have been declared as Tiger Reserves, thereby enhancing the management effectiveness through a focused scheme including increasing budgetary allocation, protection machinery. The measures taken for protection of rhino population have resulted in a sustained increase in their population in the State, as per the following census figures received from the State Government:

Year	Estimated population (Nos.)
2006	2006
2009	2201
2012	2505

Modification in forest clearance norms

800. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has modified the forest clearance norms of mining projects;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the quantum of additional revenue estimated to be generated from this move of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) vide letter dated 01.02.2013 informed the all State/ Union Territory Governments as below:

- (i) Henceforth, in case of mining leases having forest land in part or in full, approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FC Act) for diversion of entire forest land located within the mining lease shall be obtained before execution/renewal of the lease under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. Applications seeking prior approval under FC Act for diversion of the entire forest land (and not a portion thereof) located within the area proposed to be assigned on lease shall only be accepted by the Nodal Officers in the concerned State/ Union Territory Governments.