

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.

- (ii) All State/Union Territory Governments shall within a period of three months submit to the MoEF details of all such mines where approval under the FC Act for diversion of only a part of forest land has either been obtained or is presently under examination in the State/Central Government. The State Governments in all such cases shall request the concerned user agencies to submit application to obtain approval under the FC Act for diversion of the remaining forest land located within the mining lease. Mining in such leases after two years will be allowed only if the user agency either obtains approval under the FC Act for the entire forest land located within the mining lease or surrenders such forest land for which approval under FC Act has not been obtained and execute a revised mining lease for the reduced lease area.

(c) Approvals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of the forest areas located within the mining leases for which such approval has not been accorded so far, will be subject to fulfilment of *inter-alia* the conditions that the State Governments concerned shall realise from the concerned user agencies the cost of creation and maintenance of compensatory afforestation. Net Present Value of forest land diverted, cost of implementation of wildlife conservation plan (wherever required) etc. The amount likely to be realised from the user agencies will depend on the area of additional forest land for which approval under the FC Act is accorded by the MoEF. Exact amount likely to be realised from such user agencies therefore, may not be assessed at this stage.

**Reducing the forest area in Odisha, Karnataka,  
Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand**

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

(a) whether illegal stone quarry mohrrum quarry are posing danger to elephants corridor and reducing the forest area in Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh; and

(b) whether Government has given any direction to State Governments to stop all auction of quarry insider forest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) There are no reports of illegal stone quarry and mohrrum quarry in forest and elephant corridor areas in Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

(b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests (FC Division) has not issued any direction to states government to stop all auction of quarry inside forest.