

**Unfavourable condition of forest in Assam**

2035. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the condition of forests in Assam is getting unfavourable for the animals and a number of elephants and rhinos are being killed and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(b) whether a number of culprits have been arrested in the last two years and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken by Government to stop killing of animals and development of Assam forest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) As informed by the State Government of Assam, the condition of forests in Assam is not getting unfavorable for the wild animals. The population of rhinos, one of the major species of wildlife found in Assam has been steadily rising in Kaziranga and has gone up from 1855 in 2006 to 2328 in 2013.

However, there have been a few cases of killing of elephants and rhinos in the past. A total of 4 and 6 elephants and 9 and 22 rhinos were killed in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The elephants were killed in retaliation by the victims of the man-animal conflict, while the rhinos were mainly killed by criminal and anti-social groups, primarily to smuggle the rhino horns out of the country.

(b) The number of culprits arrested during the last two years in Assam are as given below:—

Sl.No	Year	No. of poachers arrested
1.	2011	20
2.	2012	148

The major steps taken by the Government of Assam to stop killing of animals and development of forests include:—

- (i) Development and modernization of infrastructure in protected areas of Assam has been done.
- (ii) The Section 51 of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended by promulgating Wildlife (Protection) (Assam Amendment) Act, 2009 raising the

penalty to the poachers up to life imprisonment and fine not less than Rupees 75,000/-. Assam is the first State in the country to take such legal step.

- (iii) All forest officers have been given power to use fire arms for protection of forests and wildlife along with the immunity from prosecution without prior Government sanction.
- (iv) Assam Forest Protection Force Jawans have been equipped with SLRs and sufficient armed Home Guards have been deployed to augment the strength of the field staff.
- (v) Committees have been constituted for effective co-ordination among civil, police and forest Administration for effective surveillance and anti-poaching measures.
- (vi) Rhino poaching cases have been handed over to CBI for investigation by the State Home Department.
- (vii) Awareness and education Programmes have been undertaken among the various communities.
- (viii) People participations through Eco-development committees are being conducted.
- (ix) Community based wildlife Eco-tourism is being promoted.

The Protected Areas of Assam are being provided funding through the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats. The State has 5 National Parks and 18 wild life sanctuaries. The Kaziranga and Manas forests are managed as Tiger Reserves. Forests of Sonitpur, Dihing-Patkai, Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong, Dhansiri-Lungding and Chirag-Ripu areas are notified as Elephant Reserves in the Project Elephant. The funding support provided by the Government of India is meant to be utilized for. *Inter-alia*, development of the forests to provide for improved habitat for the wildlife and to improve protection status to them. The funds provided to State Government of Assam in last three years under these schemes are as below:—

Amount: Rs. lakhs

Year	Name of the Schemes		
	IDWH*	Project Tiger	Project Elephant
1	2	3	4
2010-11	186.63	1509.4720	139.55

1	2	3	4
2011-12	234.17	947.5088	200.00
2012-13	146.00	373.894	250.00

\*IDWH: Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat.

### Funds disbursed to 'Project Tigers' for relocation of villages

2036. SHRI V.P. SINGH BADNORE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of funds disbursed to various 'Project Tigers' for relocation of villages during last three years, project-wise;

(b) the number of villages that have been relocated, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of villages that used to be relocated in Sariska and Ranthambhore Project Tigers, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) The details of funding support provided during the last three years for voluntary relocation of the villages from the notified core/critical tiger habitats of tiger reserves, under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger, are given in the Statement-I (*See below*).

(b) and (c) As reported by States, the details of villages relocated from the core/critical tiger habitat of tiger reserves, *inter-alia*, including Sariska and Ranthambhore, are given in the Statement-II.

### Statement-I

*Details of funding support provided during the last three years for voluntary village relocation under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger*

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl. No.	Name of Tiger Reserve	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Achanakmar (Chhattisgarh)	723.98 505.21	260.810	0.00
2.	Nagarahole (Karnataka)	784.40	944937	0.00