

Safeguarding of Western Ghats

835. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any plan to safeguard the Western Ghats; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The steps taken by the Government for safeguarding the Western Ghats include the following:

- (i) Based on the recommendations of the High Level Working Group (HLWG) report on Western Ghats, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013, for safeguarding the Western Ghats and maintaining its environmental integrity. As per the Directions, five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems shall not be considered for granting environmental clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) of Western Ghats as identified by the High Level Working Group.
- (ii) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the following six as ecologically sensitive zones/areas in the Western Ghats in order to regulate/prohibit certain identified developmental activities:
 - Eco-sensitive Zone around Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat
 - Eco-sensitive Zone around Vansda Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat
 - Eco-sensitive Zone of Mahabaleshwar-Panchgani, Maharashtra
 - Eco-sensitive Zone of Matheran, Maharashtra.
 - Dahanu Taluka Eco-fragile area, Maharashtra.
 - Eco-sensitive Zone around Bandipur National Park, Karnataka.

Tiger Protection Force

836. SHRI V. P. SINGH BADNORE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) how many Project Tigers have been given "Tiger Protection Force" and the details of their numbers; and