taken to stop the illegal activities by strengthening perambulation, patrolling and deployment of adequate staff and watchers in the estate localities.

The Ministry had advised, all the elephant range states *vide* letter dated 11.11.2009, to make it known to all tea gardens, coffee estates and other located in the elephant areas that no unregulated voltage power fencing may be erected and wherever deaths of elephants due to electrocution take place the management needs to be prosecuted for hunting.

Further, all the elephant range States have been directed to follow the Guidelines for Management of Human Elephant Conflict issued by the Ministry on 6.10.2017 wherein it has been mentioned that solar fencing may be erected only under specific situations such as to protect small enclaves, institutions and individual farms. Community involvement is essential for maintenance of solar fences. Written agreement should be made with the community that they will take responsibility for its maintenance. Communities should be given monetary support for maintenance of fences provided they take responsibility of maintenance.

Poaching of leopards

2134. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a)   whether it is a fact that more than ninety three leopards deaths took place in just two months of 2018;

(b)   if so, the details thereof;

(c)   whether it is also a fact that most of the deaths were due to poaching, as evident from seizures of leopard hides and body parts; and

(d)   if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) As per the information provided by the State Enforcement Agencies, 19 leopards have died upto February in the current year.

(c) and (d) As per the data provided by the State Enforcement Agencies, the deaths of leopards were due to various factors like poaching, electrocution, accidental, infighting and natural death.

The steps taken by the Government for protection of wild animals including leopard are:

i. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for punishment for violation of its provisions. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).

ii. Law enforcement authorities in the States maintain strict vigil against poaching of leopards.

iii. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to gather intelligence about poaching and unlawful trade in wild animals and animal articles, including leopards, and to achieve inter-state and trans-boundary coordination in enforcement of wildlife laws.

iv. The State/Union Territory Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around Protected Areas.

v. Protected Areas, *viz.,* National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats.

vi. Financial assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant', for providing better protection to wildlife including leopards and improvement of habitat.

Funds for prevention of pollution in rivers, lakes and ground water

2135. SHRI DHIRAJ PRASAD SAHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of funds allocated to various agencies for implementation of programmes relating to prevention of pollution in rivers, lakes and ground water all over the country including Jharkhand during the last three years and the current year;

(b) whether the said funds were spent effectively, efficiently and economically for the purpose for which it was allotted; and

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