

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, August 26, 1991/Bhadra 4,
1913 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Poaching of Wild Animals

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*549. SHRI BHAGWAN SHAN-
KAR RAWAT:
SHRI MAHESH KUMAR
KANODIA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRON-
MENT AND FORESTS be pleased
to state:

(a) whether the incidents of poach-
ing of wild animals are increasing;

(b) if so, the poaching incidents
that have come to the notice of the
Government during each of the last
three years;

(c) whether the Union Government
propose to amend the Wildlife (Pro-
tection) Act, 1972 to punish the poa-
chers suitably;

(d) if so, whether a Bill in this re-
gard is proposed to be introduced in
the Parliament; and

(e) if so, when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF
THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRON-
MENT AND FORESTS (SHRI
KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The in-
formation is being collected and
would be placed on the Table of the
House.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) A Bill has been intro-
duced in the Rajya Sabha on 10-1-91.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR
RAWAT: Sir, Sikandra in Agra is a
place of historical importance. Several
species of deer inhabited that area.
Now those deer are being killed.
Poaching of deer in that area has be-
come common. There is no provi-
sion on the part of the Government
for feeding and looking after those
deer. Is the Government aware of
the situation? If so, what action has
been taken by it? A number of
complaints have been sent regarding
this matter.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, our
ministry is aware of poaching being
prevalent all over the country. The
new Wild Life (Amendment) Bill in-
troduced in Rajya Sabha, provides for
strict action for this purpose. I am
confident that when the Bill comes to
this House, the poaching will be brought
under control.

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR
RAWAT: Sir, the hon. Minister has
explained the plans for the future. It
may take a long time. What is the
number of people against whom action

has been taken for poaching during the last one year under the existing Forest (Protection) Act? I think, perhaps no action has been taken because the influential people are involved in it. So I would like to know the number of people who have been prosecuted during the last one year?

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, there is no doubt that poaching has increased as I have just now said. I have figures which relate to the number of animals which are specific on deer. I have these figures which are very detailed figures and I shall either lay it on the Table of the House later or inform the hon. Member.

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: In a number of Game Sanctuaries and National Parks, the population of deer and antelopes has increased to such an extent that it is leading to over-grazing in those National Parks and Sanctuaries. The specific point which I want to raise is that in the Great Indian Bustard Game Sanctuary near Shivpuri, the population of blackbucks has grown to such an extent that it is causing problems for the villagers. Would the hon. Minister consider culling out such animals selectively and allow people to hunt in and around those areas or blocks which we open up?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, culling will very easily degenerate into killing. I shall examine the specific problem of Shivpuri. We have a scheme which is being introduced intensively from the current year, that is Ecological development around National Parks and Sanctuaries and we shall ensure that this is specifically directed towards solving such problems.

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESHWARLU: While appreciating the stand that is being taken by the Union Government in protecting the Wild life, I would point out that in Andhra Pradesh, the wild pig menace

has increased like anything. Most of the crops are being spoiled by these wild pigs. Wild pig is in the list of the wild animals, by which they get protection. If they are killed by the farmers, they are being booked under the Wild Life Protection Act, even if they spoil the crops. Will the Government examine and take action to delete the wild pigs from the list of Wild Animals so that crops can be protected? Crops in about 1.7 lakh acres of land are being spoiled because of this.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Undoubtedly in some cases, wild pigs are a menace. But, it shall not be possible to delete it. The amended Wild Life Protection Bill provides that elimination of animals under Section 11 of the Act for safeguarding loss of life and property and under Section 12 of the Act for Education, Scientific Research, can be permitted, subject to certain conditions. So, if the wild pigs fall in the category of protecting the loss of life and loss of property, this shall be allowed.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Sir, the Government proposes to have the amendment to the Wild Life Protection Act, to give suitable punishment for the poachers. I would like to know as to what is the provision made to give suitable punishment.

Secondly, the connivance of the officers and Government servants who are supposed to be responsible for the protection of wild life, is one of the reasons why the poachers do all these things. My second part of my question is, what is the provision made to give punishment for the Government servants and the Government officers who have failed to protect them, because the failure of both has resulted in poaching.

MR. SPEAKER: Will you ask this question if it is provided in the Act? You can find this out in the Act itself. It is a Bill and such a question is not generally allowed.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is aware of the poaching that is going on increasingly in some of the wild life sanctuaries and obviously with the connivance of the Government officials.

Is it due to some revenue villages situated in and around the sanctuaries? That is also increasing the poaching in such sanctuaries.

If so, what steps would the Government like to take in this direction?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: There are 70 parks and 411 sanctuaries extending over an area of 1,38,000 sq. kilometres. In some of the sanctuaries, settlement has not been made of the villages. That is true.

We are prevailing upon the State Governments to go through and finish off with the settlement procedures. If any specific instance of poaching in such revenue villages, which have not been settled, has come to the notice of the Member, I shall be grateful if he brings it to my notice.

From time to time, we do get some complaints about this. These are acted upon expeditiously.

SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE: Of all the measures against poaching of wild animals, particularly those in danger of extinction, rousing public awareness and motivating people in the neighbourhood of the habitats of such animals, is most effective. May I know from the Hon. Minister what steps have so far been taken in this regard, such as, popular literature and dissemination of useful information in local languages and film-shows in local dialects on the necessity of conservation?

Will the Government also consider bringing out a book underscoring the saving of various vanishing species on the pattern of the *Red Book* as published by the UNO?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: My Ministry has an awareness programme. This awareness programme is being strengthened. It shall be again activated in the next couple of weeks. We shall consider the suggestion made by him about bringing out the booklet.

MR. SPEAKER: This is an assurance.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Sir, the population of 'Neelgai' is increasing in the eastern districts of U.P. and the western districts of Bihar and this has become a problem for that region. According to the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, the 'Neelgai' cannot be killed, caught or in any way disturbed. May I know from the hon. Minister whether any steps would be taken to deal with the 'Neelgai' menace which leads to the destruction of crops worth crores of rupees every year?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I cannot make any provision regarding the 'Neelgai' but some concession has been given in case of loss of property or life. We shall do something if possible under the provisions of the Act. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Will compensation also be given?

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY: There are many wild elephants in North Bengal and as they do not get proper food in the jungles they go for grazing to the tea gardens and places where discarded trunks of banana trees are available. This wild elephants come during day or night and indulge in destruction of life and property. They have already killed many women, children and labourers. Will the Government make arrangements to ensure that wild elephants could get adequate food material in the jungles so

that they do not come out of the jungles in search of food?

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: This question is directed towards poaching. Now, we are getting towards wild elephants. As regards making provision for feeding of elephants, I can only say that I shall look into it.

SHRI SWARUP UPADHYAY: Sir, the increasing number of elephants has caused damage both to the standing crops and also the human lives. I would also like to submit that the elephant menace has become a regular feature in the State of Assam recently. In view of this, will the hon. Minister consider or allow restricted catching of elephants and selling them to reduce this menace particularly in Assam?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: No Sir. I will not allow it. But I have noted the hon. Member's suggestion and we shall look into it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether forest guards have not been provided with weapons in view of the increased poaching in wild life sanctuaries? We talk of entering the 21st Century and yet we expect the forest guards to do their work armed with sticks only. Are you providing them with arms? My second submission is that all the sanctuaries should be provided with wireless sets so that information regarding poachers can be communicated quickly from one place to another. Is such a system in operation? If not, the reasons therefor and the time by which it will become operational?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the suggestion is good but we lack in funds to provide such a system. Provision of arms and wireless sets is under consideration. This would be done on a selective basis so that they can get more facilities.

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: By when will this provision be made?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: It is under consideration.

[*English*]

SHRI SARAT CHANDRA PATANAYAK: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether or not the Government is considering to give power to forest officers under CrPC to prosecute the poachers. If so, from when will it be effected?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: As I said, the Wild Life Protection Act (Amendment) Bill is in the Rajya Sabha which has most stringent provisions. It is not only allowing the State Government officers to file complaints but also the Central Government officers to file complaints. It is also allowing the public, under certain conditions and after fulfilling certain formalities, to make or file complaints. So, I am certain that the need under CrPC will not arise.

World Bank Assistance for the Pollution Control Projects

*550. **SHRI C. SRINIVASAN:** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are likely to receive financial assistance from the World Bank for pollution control projects to be set up in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the States which will have Central Pollution Control projects; and

(c) the number of places where common effluent treatment plants are proposed to be set up in Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.