

(Protection) Act, 1972. In order to discourage poaching of tuskers, a ban has been placed on the trade in ivory. For international control, the elephant has been included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), which

prohibits international trade among the signatory countries in ivory. In order to strengthen the protection of elephant populations and their natural habitats in India, the Government of India has launched Project Elephant to provide assistance to the elephant range states.

Statement

Sl. No.	State	1993-94		1994-95		1995-96	
		N	P	N	P	N	P
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Nil	1	Nil	1	Nil	Nil
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Nil	Nil	4	Nil	2	Nil
3.	Assam	20	4	24	3	14	6
4.	Bihâr	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
5.	Karnataka	3	12	4	18	—	10
6.	Kerala	6	6	33	3	34	3
7.	Meghalaya	Nil	1	7	1	9	10
8.	Nagaland	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	6	8
9.	Orissa	—	12	—	13	6	10
10.	Tamil Nadu	—	2	—	4	—	7
11.	Uttar Pradesh	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	—	19
12.	West Bengal	12	2	13	3	6	3
Total		41	40	85	46	77	77

Child Labour

1725. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are convening a meeting to discuss the strategy on the growing problems of child labour and street children;

(b) if so, the time by which a meeting is likely to be convened;

(c) whether the Ministry have also decided to set up a 15 member Committee to suggest the ways and means for making the functions of NGOs and other social organisations engaged in the rehabilitation programmes of children more effective and purposeful;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take in this direction ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (e) The information is

being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Prices of Rice, Wheat etc. under P.D.S.

1726. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO :
SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN :
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering a hike in the Central issue prices of rice, wheat and other essential commodities being distributed under the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of items and extent of increase in their prices during the last three years;

(d) whether any final decision to hike the prices of these items has been taken; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (e) In statements made in both the Houses of Parliament on 24.2.97, the Government have proposed the introduction of Targeted Public Distribution System with Central Issue Prices as under :—

	(Rs. per kg.)			Wheat
	Common	Rice Fine	Supertine	
Below Poverty Line	3.50	3.50	—	2.50
Above Poverty Line	—	6.50	7.50	4.50

The aforesaid prices show a decrease in the prices for B.P.L., and increase in the prices for A.P.L. population.

So far as sugar is concerned, the price has been raised from Rs. 9.05 to Rs. 10.50 per kg. w.e.f. 10.2.1997. Important reasons for the revisions include increases in the Minimum Support Prices, higher cost of procurement incidentals, increase in statutory minimum price of sugarcane and over all inflation.

Central Issue Prices of rice and wheat and retail price of levy sugar have been as under in the last three years :—

Central Issue Prices of Rice & Wheat

Effective from	(Rs. per quintal)			Wheat
	Common	Rice Fine	Superfine	
11.1.93	437	497	518	330
1.2.94	537	617	648	402

Retail Issue Price of Levy Sugar

	(Rs. per kg.)
17.2.93	Rs. 8.30
1.2.94	Rs. 9.05
10.2.97	Rs. 10.50

WWF's Report on Population of Tigers

1727. SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAIKWAD : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Saviours of Tiger Fight

for Funds" appearing in the 'Asian Age', dated December 18, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the precise concern expressed or conveyed to the Government by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) about the fast depleting population of the Indian Tigers; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Concern has been expressed over the threat faced by Indian Tiger. Government is already taking all possible measures to save the tiger. World Wildlife Fund — India (WWF—India) have been associated as member of Indian Board of Wildlife, Steering Committee of Project Tiger and Tiger Crisis Cell.

Cost of Processing Milk

1728. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING be pleased to state :

(a) whether in the Dairy Sector the cost of processing milk is very high;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to lower the cost of processing milk ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (c) The cost of processing of milk can be reduced by having larger capacity plants so as to make use of economies of scale. But in India, milk production being scattered, it is often not feasible to have large capacity plants. But efforts have been made to put up state of art technology dairy plants in areas of high milk production thereby saving on cost of processing.

Number of Gorkhas and Nepalese

1729. SHRI BHIM PRASAD DAHAL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of Indian Gorkhas/Indian Nepalese; and

(b) whether sub Castes like Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Gurungs, Mangar, Bahun, Chhetri, Newar, Sanyasi, Bhujel, Thami, Kami, Damai, were counted as Indian Nepalese/ Indian Gorkhas of Darjeeling hills, Sikkim, Assam, Dehradun, Himachal Pradesh and North-East States of India ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b) These details are not collected at the Census and hence are not available.