

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3654
ANSWERED ON:18.04.2005
HEALTH CONDITIONS OF ELEPHANTS
Sarvey Shri Sathyanarayana

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government is aware of the deteriorating health of working elephants and they are becoming weak without balanced nutrition and medical attention as reported in the Hindu dated February 27, 2005;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any deaths have also occurred on this count;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to protect the elephants?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

- (a) The Central Government has not received any information regarding the deteriorating health of the working elephants in Assam and their becoming weak without balanced nutrition and medical attention as reported in the Hindu dated February 27, 2005. The Government of Assam has also denied the receipt of any such information.
- (b) Does not arise
- (c) & (d) The Government of Assam has informed that no such report has been received.
- (e) Elephants are included in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which prohibits their hunting and also trade in ivory. As far as the working elephants are concerned, it is the duty of their owners to protect and feed them and to provide them with veterinary care. The Wildlife (protection) Act, 1972 prohibits any person from possessing an elephant without obtaining an ownership certificate from the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State. The Act also stipulates that before issuing the ownership certificate, the Chief Wildlife Warden shall ensure that the applicant has adequate facilities for housing, maintenance and upkeep of the animal. The Government of Assam has permitted the engagement of private elephants for tourism purpose in National Park and Sanctuaries to create employment opportunities for them. The owners are also being permitted to take their elephants outside Assam to seek any job. The Central Government has released an amount of Rs 1.30 Cr to the Government of Assam under Project Elephant during 2004-05 which includes Rs 11.50 lakh for registration of domesticated elephants, veterinary support for wild and domesticated elephants, and training of mahouts and veterinarians.