

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2431
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2009
RHINOS POPULATION
Ajmal Shri Badruddin

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

- (a) the present population of rhinos in reserved forests of Assam;
- (b) the number of rhinos killed by poachers during the last three years in the reserved forests of Assam;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry into the reported rhinos poaching in Assam;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (e) the number of persons arrested for poaching during the last three years; and
- (f) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to protect rhinos in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) As per the information received from the State Government, the estimated population of rhinos in the different Protected Areas of Assam in 2009 are as below:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Kaziranga National Park - | 2048 Nos. |
| 2. Orang National Park - | 64 Nos. |
| 3. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary - | 84 Nos. |
| 4. Manas National Park - | 5 Nos. |

(b) The number of rhinos killed by poachers during the last three years in Assam are as below:

2006 - 9 Nos.
2007 - 21 Nos.
2008 - 16 Nos.

(c) Government of Assam had constituted several Enquiry Committees to enquire into the reported killings of Rhinos. These are as below:

1.High Power Committee vide notification No. FRW. 18/2003/59, dated 22.01.2009 for making suggestions for revamping of protection measures in the Kaziranga National Park.

2.One Man Committee vide notification No. FRW. 18/209/62, dated 1/2/08 to inquire into the reasons for rise in the incidences of poaching in Kaziranga National Park and to make recommendation for prevention of such incidences in future and for effective protection of the Park.

3.One Man Committee vide notification No. FRW.18/2003/77, dated 28th May 2009 to enquire into the circumstances leading to the death of a male Rhino at Medella beat in Dehing Mukh Reserved Forests.

In addition, the Regional Deputy Director (Eastern Region) of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau of the Ministry had also conducted an

enquiry in 2008 on the poaching of rhinos in Assam.

(d) The Committees had suggested certain measures for strengthening the protection of rhinos, which inter alia, include the intensification of patrolling, strengthening intelligence network, seeking co-operation of the fringe villagers, providing employment to suitable local youths, exchange of information with police and forests officials, augmentation of staff strength and armed personnel, providing facilities to field staff, etc. The State Government has taken action on the lines of the suggestions made by the Committees.

(e) The number of persons arrested for poaching of rhinos in Assam during last three years are given below:

| | |
|------|-----------|
| 2006 | - 57 Nos. |
| 2007 | - 37 Nos. |
| 2008 | - 38 Nos. |

(f) The steps taken by Government of India to protect wildlife including rhinos are as under:

1. The Central Government has enacted the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to deal with the issues of wildlife crime. Stringent penalties are imposed on the offenders for the contravention of the provisions of the Act.
2. A network of Protected Areas has been set up across the country to protect wildlife including the habitats of rhinos.
3. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, with a network of five Regional and three Sub Regional Offices, has been set up to control wildlife crime.
4. Financial support is being provided under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes –Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, Project Tiger and Project Elephant, to State/UT Governments for the conservation and development of wildlife and its habitats including those of rhinos.
5. India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that regulates international trade in wildlife and its derivatives.
6. India has bilateral arrangements with China and Nepal on combating wildlife crime.

In addition, the State Governments have also taken the following measures to protect wild animals including rhinos:

1. Intensive patrolling in sensitive areas and filling up of vacant posts.
2. Coordination with other law enforcement agencies.
3. Provision for arms and ammunition, and communication facilities.
4. Conducting nature awareness campaigns for the public.
5. Soliciting cooperation from the local communities.