

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5427

ANSWERED ON:29.04.2013

CHECK ON DEATHS OF ONE HORNED RHINOCEROS

Gandhi Smt. Maneka Sanjay;Meghe Shri Datta Raghobaji

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any trend study on the deaths of the one-horned Rhinoceros in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and the current year, State-wise and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether any action has been taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for their preservation; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a)&(b) Reports of death of rhinos are received in the Ministry. However, no specific trend study on the deaths of rhinos in the country has been carried out. The details of cases during last three years and the current year, State-wise are given in the Annexure.

(c)&(d) Central Government has been providing financial assistance to the State Governments including rhino bearing States under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' and 'Project Tiger' for better management of its protected areas. Most of the one horned rhinoceros habitats like Manas, Kaziranga, Dudhuwa, Valmiki are being managed as Tiger Reserves, thereby enhancing the management effectiveness through a focused scheme including increasing budgetary allocation and protection machinery. State Government of Assam, which has the largest population of one-horned rhinos in the country, has taken the following steps to protect and preserve one horned rhinos in Assam:

1. Government of Assam has granted the power to use firearms to forest officers at all levels for protection of the forest and wildlife in the state under section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code vide state notification no. FRW.22/2009/5 dated 14.7.2010.
2. Government of Assam has enhanced the maximum punishment to the poachers up to life imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 75,000 through the amendment of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 vide 'The Wildlife (Protection) (Assam Amendment) Act, 2009'. The wildlife related offences have been made cognizable and non-bailable through this amendment by the state government.
3. Armed Home guards and local youth have been deployed in the rhino bearing areas of the state to augment the strength of the field staff.
4. Sophisticated arms (Self Loading Rifles) have been deployed in the rhino bearing areas of the state to match the weapons used by the poachers.