

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1655  
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2013  
CHECK ON POACHING OF WILD ANIMALS  
Ajmal Shri Badruddin

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

- (a) whether the incidents of poaching of Rhino, Elephant and other animals are increasing day by day in various forest areas of Assam;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, animal-wise and forest-wise;
- (c) the action taken by the Government in this regard including the number of poachers arrested and punished;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to review the situation to completely restrain the poaching of animals in the forest areas of Assam; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

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

(a)&(b) There have been a few cases of killing of elephants and rhinos in the State of Assam in the past. A total of 4 and 6 elephants and 9 and 22 rhinos were killed in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The elephants were killed in retaliation by the victims of the man-animal conflict, while the rhinos were mainly killed by criminal and anti-social groups, primarily to smuggle the rhino horns out of the country.

However, as informed by the State Government of Assam, the population of rhinos, one of the major species of wildlife found in Assam has been steadily rising and has gone up from 1855 in 2006 to 2328 in 2013 in Kaziranga National Park.

(c),(d)&(e) The number of poachers arrested during the last two years in Assam are as given below:

S.No	Year	No. of poachers arrested
1.	2011	20
2.	2012	148

The action taken by the State Government of Assam to stop killing of animals and development of forests includes:

- i. Development & modernization of infrastructure in protected areas of Assam has been done.
- ii. The Section 51 of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended by promulgating Wildlife (Protection) (Assam Amendment) Act, 2009 raising the penalty to the poachers up to life imprisonment and fine not less than Rupees 75,000/-. Assam is the first state in the country to take such legal step.
- iii. All forest officers have been given power to use fire arms for protection of forests and wildlife along with the immunity from prosecution without prior Government sanction.
- iv. Assam Forest Protection Force Jawans have been equipped with SLRs and sufficient armed Home Guards have been deployed to augment the strength of the field staff.
- v. Committees have been constituted for effective co-ordination among civil, police and forest Administration for effective surveillance and anti-poaching measures.
- vi. Rhino poaching cases have been handed over to CBI for investigation by the State Home Department.
- vii. Awareness and education Programmes have been undertaken among the various communities.
- viii. People's participation through Eco-development Committees is being promoted.

ix. Community based wildlife Eco-tourism is being promoted.