

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5094
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2014
FLAPSHELL TURTLE
Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

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

- (a) whether smuggling of the endangered Indian Flapshell Turtles from Bangladesh to Meghalaya's Garo hills has come to the notice of the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and the current year; and
- (c) the action taken by the Government in this regard and the measures taken for the protection and conservation of these turtles?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The cases of smuggling of the endangered Indian Flapshell Turtles from Bangladesh to Meghalaya's Garo hills have come to the notice of the Government. However, details of such cases are not available with the Ministry.

(c) Protection and conservation of forest is undertaken by the State Forest Departments. As reported by the State Forest Department of Meghalaya, the Department is conducting regular patrolling and checking of vulnerable areas and weekly markets along the Indo-Bangla borders to check illegal sale of wildlife products. The State Government has also taken up such matter during the District level intelligence meeting regarding Indo-Bangla Border issues with the Border Security Force (B.S.F)

The Ministry is taking following steps for protection and conservation of wildlife including flapshell turtles:

- (i) Coordination of inter-agency enforcement efforts in combating organised wildlife crimes through Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).
- (ii) Joint operations are carried out with navy, coastguard and local enforcement officials to apprehend criminals indulging in poaching and illegal trade of marine species including turtles.
- (iii) Trans-border linkages detected within the country are shared at international Forums to sensitize the authorities of the country concerned.
- (iv) Issuance of Alerts and Advisories to enforcement agencies on latest modus operandi, trade routes, concealment techniques etc.
- (v) Collection of intelligence through Wildlife Crime Control Bureau on organized criminal networks and dissemination of the same to the enforcement agencies for further necessary action.
- (vi) Conduct of capacity building programmes for wildlife enforcement officers in detection and investigation of wildlife offences involving sea cucumber and sea horse.
- (vii) Running awareness campaigns and sensitization programmes on wildlife and wildlife crime to various stakeholders.