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Title: Regarding rise in poaching of animals in the country.

SHRI GAURAV GOGOI (KALIABOR): Mr. Chairman, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Kaziranga National Park which falls in my constituency, Koliabor, and is a world heritage site.

Sir, the one-horned rhinoceros found in Kaziranga is the biggest star attraction in Assam. Earlier in the 1970s, their population had dwindled to below 100, but due to conservation efforts of the Assam Government, their population has increased to 2,500 in 2013. But since 2008, Assam has again been caught in a web of increased poaching of rhinos. Since 2008, 120 rhinos in Assam have been poached, primarily because of their horns which in the international market can fetch a person up to Rs. 16,500 per gram.

Popular research and media reports say that most of these horns are sold in Vietnam. I urge upon the Government of India to take steps both at the national and international levels. The Government of Assam has already strengthened the Wildlife Protection Act and has issued shoot-at-sight orders as well as life imprisonment for poachers. At the national level, the Union Government, specifically the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Home Affairs, can set up a Project Rhino similar to Project Elephant and Project Tiger in which there can be a Central Intelligence Unit, a database of all rhinoceros as well as fast track wildlife courts.

I would also urge upon the Ministry of External Affairs to protect our national inheritance, the rhinoceros, and urge upon the Government in Vietnam to have a complete ban on all products made out of rhino horns.