

state schemes being implemented currently to improve the navigation potential of Buckingham canal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Hydrographic survey and Techno-Economic feasibility study in South Buckingham Canal including integration from Kakinada to Mercanam alongwith river Godavari and Krishna has been conducted recently. The report is under examination.

(c) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme for improvement of the central reach of the Buckingham Canal at a cost of Rs. 2.00 lakhs has been implemented by the State Government covering earth work, excavation and desiltation of the canal.

Poaching of Elephants

3703. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a number of elephants in the Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu forests were killed by the poachers in recent years;

(b) if so, the number of elephants killed by the poachers in these forests during the last three years;

(c) the steps taken by the respective State Government for the protection and safety of elephants.

(d) whether the Union Government is extending any financial assistance to the States for the protection of elephants; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) As reported by the State Governments of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu the number of elephants killed by poachers in the last three years are given below:

Sl. No.	State	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
1.	Kerala	10	8	2 (upto December, 97)
2.	Karnataka	11	16	15
3.	Tamil Nadu	7	10	6

(c) The State Governments have informed that all efforts are being taken to control poaching of elephants. The Chief Wildlife Wardens of these States are in regular contact for effective co-ordination of anti-poaching efforts. Periodic raids are being conducted at various places to trace out smuggled ivory. Strict vigil is being maintained at the State borders, airports and other possible smuggling routes.

(d) and (e) This Ministry is providing financial assistance to the States for the protection of elephants and their habitat. The amount released to these States in the last three years is given below:

State	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
			(Rs. in 'lakhs)
Kerala	42.25	71.96	76.87
Karnataka	68.09	119.82	51.79
Tamil Nadu	-	15.00	30.60

UGC Grant to Universities

[Translation]

3704. SHRI PRABHASH CHANDRA TIWARI:

SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the universities to whom the UGC sanctioned the grant and the Heads under which the grant was sanctioned during the Eighth Five Year Plan till-date;

(b) the universities who have utilised the sanctioned grant;

(c) whether any complaints have been received regarding misutilisation of grant or using the grant for some other purposes by the universities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Strengthening of Press Council Act

[English]

3705. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV:

SHRI NARESH PUGLIA:

SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Press Council of India has sent a package of suggestions of the Government for strengthening the Press Council Act;

(b) if so, whether the Government have considered those suggestions;

(c) if so, the details thereof and whether the two-day international conference of World Associations of Press Councils was held recently; and

(d) if so, the proposal discussed in the conference and outcome thereof?