

Is amendment to Wildlife Protection Act needed?



Comments 0



Daya Nath Singh 17 May 2008 14562 views

Of late the Assam government is contemplating to make changes in the anti-poaching laws by increasing the provisions of punishment from three years to ten years and doubling the fine to Rs.50,000. The Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi recently declared that his government would amend section 51 of the Wildlife

Protection Act to make punishment under the Act, more stringent. Like all other matters a section of people believe that this statement is also politically motivated keeping in mind to protect certain vested interests.

The chief minister's declaration has come out after a dozen of rhinos in Kaziranga National Park and Rajiv Gandhi National Park, Orang, have been killed by the poachers during last four months. The common people have doubt over the fruitful result of the amendment of the law, which seems as ridiculous. In their opinion trouble is not with the existing laws. The problem is on the front of its implementation, on which the state government has totally failed. Despite tight security arrangements, the question is, how the poachers get access to the valuable wildlife of the state without involvement of some 'insiders'?

Earlier, All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and a few NGOs, had demanded an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

alleging that some high officials of the state forest department have nexus with the poachers and anti-social elements, due to which the incidents of killings and poaching of rhinos have recently increased. The forest minister, Rakibul Hussain has also sought to get the poaching incidents probed by the CBI.

Under the circumstances, there is no point in amending the existing law, instead the need is to strictly follow the guidelines given and implement the same in true words and spirit. Going beyond the burning issues is just to divert the public attention like any other political issue with an intention to protect some body in one's own house.

It may be mentioned here that the state forest department has failed to book a large number of anti-social elements and poachers of rhinos. In such circumstances when criminals are not apprehended, who would pay the fine of Rs.50,000 or even if it is rupees one lakh. It is better for the state government to wait and see the result of CBI investigation and book the people involved in such crimes, even if they are the government employees or high officials.

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