Increase in Rhinoceros population in Kaziranga

By- Saurabh Pandey

Junior research fellow(JRF)
NET, MA, B.TECH
3 Years teaching experience
UPSC Faculty
Ques- Human population is increasing but population of ‘non – human’ is decreasing. How far this trend is sustainable?
• Ques Pobitora wildlife sanctuary is located in which state?
  A) Assam
  B) Nagaland
  C) Arunachal pradesh
  D) Manipur
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The population of the one-horned rhino in Assam’s Kaziranga National Park has risen to 2,413, a 2018 census has found. This amounts to an increase of 12 rhinos over the 2015 census count of 2,401.
About Kaziranga

• The park is approximately 40 km (25 mi) in length from east to west, and 13 km (8 mi) in breadth from north to south.

• The park area is circumscribed by the Brahmaputra River, which forms the northern and eastern boundaries, and the Mora Diphlu, which forms the southern boundary. Other notable rivers within the park are the Diphlu and Mora Dhansiri.
• Kaziranga has flat expanses of fertile, alluvial soil formed by erosion and silt deposition by the Brahmaputra.

• Kaziranga is one of the largest tracts of protected land in the sub-Himalayan belt, and due to the presence of highly diverse and visible species, has been described as a "biodiversity hotspot".
The park is located in the **Indomalaya ecozone**, and the dominant biomes of the region are Brahmaputra Valley semi-evergreen forests of the **tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests biome** and a frequently flooded variant of the **Terai-Duar savanna and grasslands of the tropical and subtropical grassland, savannas and shrublands biome**.
• Kaziranga National Park is a national park in the Golaghat and Nagaon districts of the state of Assam, India.

• Kaziranga is home to the highest density of tigers among protected areas in the world, and was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006.
• The park is home to large breeding populations of elephants, wild water buffalo, and swamp deer.

• Kaziranga is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International for conservation of avifaunal species.

• Located on the edge of the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot.
The park has the distinction of being home to the world's largest population of the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros, wild Asiatic water buffalo and eastern swamp deer.
Threat to RHINOCEROS

• Kaziranga is home to about 70 percent of the one-horned rhino population in the world.

• An exponential rise in rhino poaching was observed between 2001 and 2016, with poachers killing 239 rhinos. Three rhinos were killed by poachers in Kaziranga in the first three months of this year, while six were poached last year. A total of 342 rhinos have died between March 2015 and March 2018.
• Despite various security measures, a number of rhinos fall prey to the bullets of poachers, particularly at Kaziranga, every year. Scores others die in the annual floods.

• The rhino horn is often smuggled into the South East Asian countries via Nagaland and Manipur.
• In the neighbouring countries, the rhino horn is considered an **aphrodisiac**, both for men and women.

• A horn could fetch Rs.1 crore from the international black market.

• Burgeoning demand for rhino horns – particularly in the markets of Vietnam and China, where they are used in **traditional medicines** or as status symbols
• Villagers as Bangladeshi infiltrators, “illegally encroaching upon the park.”
Solution

• The prospects of Kaziranga National Park largely depend on how we can eventually protect the surrounding Karbi hills.

• Although they fall under two different local administrations, Kaziranga and the Karbi Anglong landscape have to be considered in contiguity when it comes to the protection and conservation of the national park.
• Officials need to spread awareness of the importance of the site among local communities, and build a more intensive and extensive intelligence with the help of surrounding villagers and other agencies.

• Youths from the villages bordering rhino ranges should be recruited as forest guards. They know the terrain and can help garner the support of local communities in protecting vulnerable sites.
• To ensure guards can keep pace with the agility of the poachers, older field staff (52 years and above) should be systematically phased out from rhino-bearing area and replaced with better trained young forest guards from among the new recruits,

• Secure more convictions of arrested poachers by engaging the best legal practitioners to win the poaching cases for the government.
• The state government is on its way to adopting the Rhino DNA Indexing System. With this technology, an individual rhino’s unique DNA profile is compiled in a ready-to-reference database.

• One-horned rhinos are the pride of the nation and when their horns are being used to fund several terrorist organizations in the country, their poaching becomes a source of national concern.
• He called for **wildlife crimes** to be prioritized at the state and national level, and greater involvement from all of India’s law enforcement agencies.

• The need of the hour is for a concerted **multi-state action** involving Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, all of which share borders with Assam as well as Myanmar
• A number of river islands with a lot of good grass have already been added to the park area. A large number of cattle had moved out of those areas leaving the place suitable for rhinos,”

• The Indian **Rhino Vision 2020**, an ambitious plan launched in 2005 to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos in Assam by the year 2020.
The rhino translocation began in April 2008. So far, rhinos have been moved from Kaziranga National Park and Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary to other protected areas where they can breed.
The species is inherently at risk because over 70% of its population occurs at a single site, Kaziranga National Park. Any catastrophic event such as disease, civil disorder, poaching, or habitat loss would have a devastating impact on the Indian rhino's status.
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