

>

Title: Need to take immediate steps to check the declining population of wild elephants due to rapidly decreasing forest area in Orissa.

SHRI JUAL ORAM (SUNDERGARH): The decline in the population of wild elephants in Orissa has caused a great concern for the people of the State. Apart from natural causes their deaths are taking place due to disease and poaching. The prominent wild life organisations have warned that the survival of wild elephants are under threat owing to large scale deforestation and diversion of forest lands mainly for mining and other development projects.

The private sector mining and Aluminium and Alumina refinery have started in Kalahandi, Jajpur, Keonjhar and Sundergarh districts. Besides a number of steel projects have also started in these districts causing a large-scale deforestation. The wild elephants are getting shelterless with the deforestation. They are marching towards villages and destroying the poor man's huts. The fight between men and elephants are causing the deaths of both sides. Any further deforestation and issue of licences to MNCs to set up Aluminium, Alumina and Steel projects will cause severe damage to the flora and fauna of Orissa besides causing untimely death of wild life and human beings in the State.

As such, I demand that the planner, administrators at the Centre as well as State carefully examine the questions on the survival of the wild lives including elephants as well as poor people living in small huts before giving any mining and other project clearance.