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Title: Need to establish a Venom Research Institute and Snake Park in Ramsai, Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.

SHRI BIJOY CHANDRA BARMAN (JALPAIGURI): I wish to draw the attention of the House towards an issue which is both ecologically and economically important.

Apart from many creatures that dwell in its vast range of forests, Jalpaiguri is also very famous for the multiple species of snakes that are hugely available in the entire district. Today, snakes and few species of wild lizards have gained a huge market value internationally for their venom and different body parts. But mostly it is an unorganized market in the hands of international smugglers of snake venom. Alone in my constituency, there are two recent cases of recovery of venom that grossly had a market value of Rs.250 crore and which was being carried from France. Today all over India, snakes and wild lizards are on the verge of extinction because of the poachers and illegal merchants of venom. What is most alarming and unfortunate is the fact that local snake charmers are also involved in this illegal trade of venom ever since their occupation has been banned.

Ramsai, a small Gram Panchayat in Jalpaiguri is always in the headlines because of the availability of hundreds of species of naturally bred poisonous and deadly venomous snakes and also the home of thousands of snake charmers. Madam Speaker, through you, I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to establish a Venom Research Institute and a Snake Park at Ramsai, Jalpaiguri on the line of similar establishments like Haffkine Institute in Pune and CMC Venom Research Centre in Visakhapatnam. The logic of this proposal is multiple: it will not only curb or rather stop the illegal poaching of snakes and wild lizards but will also be a revenue generating source; it will help in restoring the ecological balance which is already imbalanced there; it will save the lives of the snakes which die by the unscientific method of venom extraction.