

## RHINOS IN ASSAM POLITICS



### Issue

Political parties are continuously invoking the one-horned rhino during the course of Assam's elections. Poll promises are also made to protect and save "the pride of Assam".

### Background

Rhinos are herbivores animal that is mainly found along the plains. The Indian one-horned rhino is found in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh along with Assam.

### Details

- From a long time, rhinos have been an emotional issue for the people of the state. Rhino as a part of Assam's identity started during the Assam movement.
- The importance of Rhinos in Assam's culture is further strengthened by large number of Bihu songs based on them.
- The Rhino became part of political narrative when its poaching was directly linked to indigenous identity and also control over resources of the land.
- Rhino is still believed to be an Assamese resource and rhino protection is seen as a sign of good governance.
- If the government can protect national parks and sanctuaries, it is considered control over law and order.

### Rhino poaching

- Rhino poaching in Kaziranga had been a common phenomenon up to the year 2013. The highest figures were in 2013 and 2014.
- In 2020 there had been two cases of Rhino poaching but in 2021 there has not been a single such incident.
- There are also incidents of accidental killing when Rhinos leave their core habitat and venture towards the areas where there is human settlement.

NOTES

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