

RhoDIS India Programme

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RhoDIS India Programme Latest News

A specialised team has initiated the genetic analysis of samples collected from 2,573 rhino horns and will add them to the RhoDIS India DNA data library.

About RhoDIS India Programme

- In 2016, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India in partnership with **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**, the forest departments of **Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh**, and WWF India launched this programme.
- The **Rhino DNA Index (RhoDIS) System** is a **wildlife forensics tool** that was specially developed for investigating **wildlife crime cases**.
- The programme seeks to **improve the crime investigations** scientifically and provide technical support for the scientific management of India's rhino population.
- The **protocol standardised** for the RhoDIS India analysis, **approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**, will be followed for creating the DNA profiles from these samples.

- RhODIS uses a DNA indexing system whereby genetic sequences are created to get a signature unique to each individual rhino.
- **Significance:** It has proven to be a successful tool in aiding crime investigation and strengthening legal presentations.

What is a Rhino horn?

- It is **made of keratin**.
- It is chemically complex and contains large quantities of **sulphur-containing amino acids**, particularly cysteine, as well as tyrosine, histidine, lysine, and arginine, and the salts calcium carbonate and calcium phosphate.
- Rhino horns are **similar in structure to horses' hooves**, turtle beaks, and cockatoo bills.
- Three of the **five rhino species** have **two horns**, whilst the others – **Greater one-horned rhinos and Javan rhinos** – have only **one horn**.

Source: **TH**

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