

cartridge from the vehicle. Police have intensified efforts to trace the attackers.

tened to report the incident to her father, he threw a burning lantern at her. The girl suc-

In her dying declaration, recorded by a magistrate at the hospital, the girl detailed

bail and remained in jail since the time of his arrest in July 2017 to his conviction.

PTR's Lagga Bagga region along Nepal border gets initial nod for rhino sanctuary

Dr Mudit Gupta

Keshav Agarwal | TNN

Pilibhit: An expert committee constituted by the principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) gave its preliminary nod to the proposal to declare the Lagga Bagga forest region of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR) as the second rhino sanctuary in UP after Dudhwa National Park.

After a three-day site inspection, head of the committee, BS Bonal, a former additional director general of National Tiger Conservation Authority, and Dr Amit Sharma, national lead for rhino conservation at WWF-India, identified the region in Barahi range of PTR as the most suitable site, which spreads over 2,100 hectares.

This region shares a 14-km-long boundary with Nepal's Shuklaphanta National Park and experiences sporadic transboundary migration of one-horned rhinoceroses from that park.

Speaking to TOI on Monday, Bonal emphasised that



WILD SHELTER: Expert committee identified area, spread over 2,100 hectares in Barahi range, as most suitable site

priority should be to facilitate natural migration of rhinos from Nepal to Lagga Bagga rather than translocating them to other parts of PTR.

"The process of translocation begins with tranquilising the animal and ends with its caging and transportation by vehicle to the targeted destination. This process adversely affects the natural conditions and the nature of the animal concerned. The adaptability of the translocated animal to the new environment is another challenging situation, while the area of

wild animals' natural migration always proves to be like a natural habitat," Bonal said.

He said the launch of the rhino conservation plan at Lagga Bagga would also open doors for improving Shuklaphanta-Lagga Bagga wild corridor. "Lagga Bagga is saturated with good patches of grassland in northern belt along Sharda river. It has potential for good food availability," said Dr Amit Sharma.

"The greater one-horned rhinoceros is found only in Nepal and India. Nepal had reported 752 rhinos as per its

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BS BONAL

Ex-ADG, National Tiger Conservation Authority

estimation conducted in 2021. India recorded 3,327 rhinos as per the estimation of the current year," he said.

Notably, state forest administration, under the rhino conservation action plan 2022-23 to 2030-31, had identified five forest divisions in UP, including PTR, Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Bahraich, Sohagi Barwa Wildlife Sanctuary in Maharajganj, Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary in joint forest area of Balrampur, Shravasti and Gonda, and Kishanpur sanctuary in Kheri, where assessment by the two experts was set to be conducted this year.