

The busy NH 37 just skirting the southern edge of Kaziranga has become another disturbing agent. The amount of traffic is increasing from day to day and the road is open to vehicular traffic for 24 hours. The development of the road has enabled the growth of settlements on both its sides, thus increasing the distance between the border of the sanctuary and the Karbi plateau. The descent of elephants in April-June to Kaziranga and their return to the Karbi plateau in September-October involves the crossing of the highway by the herds. The traffic upsets the herds during the crossings.

The situation is going to be aggravated as a broad gauge railway is to be laid along the southern boundary for which a route survey is to start soon. This railway, when completed, may deal the fatal blow to the national park. Besides further widening the distance between the park and the plateau it will also encourage human activity in the area. The movement of rhinos and other animals to the foothills will be disturbed. Animals could even be killed by running trains. The railway will be an intruder in the area and the rhinos will either be scared away or killed. On February 1, 1984 two rhinos were killed near Chandrapur village (about 26 km east of Gauhati) when they charged at a running train. But the worst affected will be the elephants whose twice a year migration between the park and the plateau will become hazardous.

Besides these dangers there is the problem of erosion by the Brahmaputra which washes the northern and northwestern boundaries of the park. Already a chunk of the park has been eroded. The Kaziranga national park is free of encroachment. But with the steady increase in the population in surrounding villages encroachment is a distinct possibility in the future.

## LETTERS

### Kaziranga

THIS refers to my article, "Kaziranga cannot be allowed to die" (March 17). Unfortunately, due to the Printer's devil and misunderstanding at the editing stage, a few errors inadvertently crept into it. The true position is as follows:

Kaziranga was established as a game sanctuary in 1926 (and not 1826). The forest department collects horns mainly from two sources—naturally dying animals and poachers. Hardly any horn is shed during combats to be collected by department em-

ployees.

The elephants descend to Kaziranga in September-October and return to the Karbi plateau in April-June. Thus, they remain in the park throughout the winter and leave at the advent of the floods.

Anwaruddin Choudhury,  
Guwahati