

implementation of inter basin water transfer proposals depends upon the consensus and cooperation of the concerned States and agreements with neighbouring countries.

(c) and (d) Most of the States are supportive of the concept of the interlinking of rivers project; provided the project can somehow ensure a "win - win" situation for all States. However, the State of Kerala, has passed a resolution in the Kerala Assembly to drop the proposal of Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar link. The Central Government has taken note of it and has decided not to treat it as a priority link for consensus building purpose at present.

Conservation of ground water

†2006. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any scheme for participation of farmers in conservation of ground water;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of States in which this scheme has been implemented alongwith the results achieved; and

(d) by when the said scheme is likely to be implemented in the whole country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) With a view to create awareness in respect of conservation and efficient use of water, Ministry of Water Resources has sanctioned Farmers' Participatory Action Research Programme (FPARPs) aimed at dissemination of technologies to increase yield and income per drop of water at an estimated cost of Rs. 24.4685 crores through 5000 demonstrations across 26 States/UTs.

In addition to this, the scheme of artificial recharge to ground water through dugwells has been approved for implementation in the States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Declaration of rivers as national property

†2007. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering upon to declare rivers as national property;

(b) whether Government is approving the proposal of privatization of rivers;

(c) if so, the objective thereof; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal under consideration of the Ministry of Water Resources to "declare rivers as national property".

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) No, Sir. Ministry of Water Resources is not approving any proposal of privatization rivers.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

River projects as national assets

2008. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL:
SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has declared fourteen river projects as national assets;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Sardar Sarovar Project does not figure among these projects; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes sir;

(b) Yes sir;

(c) Currently, the Sardar Sarovar Project is already eligible for 90% central grant for the irrigation component to the project falling under drought prone and tribal area. The power House of the project has already been completed. Up to 2006-07, the Sardar Sarovar Project has been provided with Central Assistance of Rs. 4537.7385 crore under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) which is highest Central Assistance provided to any project in the country.

Imposition of higher excise duties on SUVs and commercial buses'

2009. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an environmental group has urged Government to impose higher excise duty on Sports Utilities Vehicle (SUV) and commercial buses;

(b) whether it is a fact that the environment group has urged Government to reduce duties on small cars; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Government has received a request in the pre-budget stage from a non-Governmental Organisation, namely, 'Centre For Science and Environment' suggesting the excise duty rate on small cars and SUVs should be increased in the future depending on fuel and emission efficiency. However, CSE has suggested that the present rate of 16% excise duty on small cars and 24% on SUVs should be maintained in the budget. No suggestion to impose higher excise duty on commercial buses has been received from them.

(c) Having regard to all relevant facts, Government has reduced excise duty from 16% to 12% on small cars, buses and other motor vehicles for transport of more than 13 persons. Excise duty rate on SUVs has been maintained at 24%.