

**Shortage of potable and irrigation water**

† \*88. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various parts of the country are facing acute shortage of potable and irrigation water;

(b) whether it is also a fact that cleansing of various ponds, canals and rivers of the country has become a thing of the past;

(c) if so, whether Government would formulate any phased scheme in this regard; and

(d) if so, by when and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) to (d) Due to the deficient rain in the South-West monsoon, certain parts of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan are facing drought like conditions. The storages in the important reservoirs in these states varies between 6% to 67% of average of last 10 years capacity.

Cleansing of ponds and canals by way of desilting is taken up as part of routine maintenance by the state Governments from their non-plan funds. Some of the states plan to improve the condition of the old tanks through externally aided schemes. A Centrally sponsored scheme for improvement of irrigation tanks in different part of the country has been formulated. Desilting of rivers is not considered as a techno-economically viable option for increasing their capacity.

**Bilateral Free Trade Agreements with Neighbouring Countries**

\*89. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have succeeded in entering into bilateral free trade agreements with neighbouring countries in

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.