

and what is the reaction of the private sector in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Under the Import and Export Policy, only crude oil and 8 other petroleum products are not de-canalised.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Four refineries in the private sector and the award of four exploration contracts to private sector companies have been cleared so far.

Extinction of tigers in Ranthambhore National Park

*40. MISS. SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that poaching has already claimed nearly half the tigers in Ranthambhore National Park;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Conservation Scientists fear a virtual extinction of Tigers within the next 10 years, as per the newstitem entitled "Scientists fear Tigers extinction" which appeared in the Times of India, dated 10.9.92; and

(c) if so, what corrective steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) There has been some evidence of poaching in Ranthambhore, the extent of which is not yet known.

(b) and (c) The news item referred attributes the apprehension of extinction of Tiger to one scientist only. The efforts at conservation of tiger will continue taking note of all scientific data.

Forest Conservation Act

227. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 7 State Governments have submitted a Memorandum to the Prime Minister for immediate repeal of Forest Conservation Act and on matters relating to Central-State relations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) Representations have been received from various State/UT Governments for repeal/amendment of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 including matters relating to Centre State relations. After discussing the issue in various fora including the State Forest Ministers' Conference held during February, 1992, it has been decided to further decentralise and streamline examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Accordingly, Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981 have been suitably amended on 21.5.1992 and revised consolidated guidelines for examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been issued on 25.10.92. Revised consolidated guidelines *inter alia* include delegation of powers to Regional Chief Conservator to finally decide proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 5 ha. excluding proposals in respect of regularisation of encroachments and mining and initial examination of all proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 20 ha.