

The MoEF has also requested other Ministries, such as Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Department of AYUSH, etc to provide support of JFMCs for value addition and marketing of forest products.

- (iii) As a follow-up of the mid-term appraisal of Tenth Five Year Plan, a new scheme for afforestation involving Panchayati Raj Institutions for tree planting on non-forest lands is mooted.
- (iv) Establishment to two new Eco-Task Force (ETF) battalions for eco-restoration of degraded areas was mooted by the Ministry, in addition to supporting the existing four ETF battalions.
- (v) States have been advised to constitute State-level coordination committee under chairmanship of Chief Secretaries for eliciting cooperation of all land-owning Departments for contributing towards increase in forest and tree cover.
- (vi) Guidelines have been issued by Government of India on 15-12-2004 to the States for rationalization of regulatory provision about felling and transport of trees grown on private lands, so as to promote tree planting by the masses.
- (vii) State Government and Union Territory Administrations have been requested to formulate and implement a comprehensive media plan to create awareness about tree planting.

Forest cover area

†1119. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the total area covered under forests in India and whether Government intends to allot land which is barren to the landless?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): The recorded forest area in the country is 769,626 km² which is 23.41% of the geographic area of the country. At the same time the total forest and tree cover of the country has been estimated as 768,751 km² constituting 23.40% of the geographic area. Of this forest cover is 677,088 km² (20.60%) and Tree Cover is 91,663 km² (2.79%). These figures are as per State of Forest Report (SFR), 2005. The restriction on the dereservation of forests or use of forest land for non-forest purpose is guided by forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and rules thereunder.

Elephant menace

†1120. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether elephant menace has increased in the country, recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.