

Use of forests land for non-forest purposes

1683. SHRI JERLIE E. TARIANG: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 prohibits the State Governments from using forest land for non-forest purposes without the prior approval of the Central Government;

(b) whether it is a fact that requests of State Governments is seeking permission of the Central Government for the use of forest land for developmental purposes are not cleared;

(c) if the answer to part (a) and (b) above are in the affirmative, whether Government propose to amend the Act so as to empower the State Governments to grant exemption from the purview of the Act for use of forest land for developmental activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI VIR SEN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Fifth Indian Expedition to Antarctica

1684. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the results achieved by the recent visit of Indian expedition to Antarctica;

(b) what objectives were achieved by the 'third' team;

(c) by when the fifth expedition is likely to start and on what type of ship;

(d) whether it is a fact that there has been much improvement over the MV Finnpolaris type ship in other countries; if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what steps Government propose to take to acquire more improved ship for the fifth Antarctica expedition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS, SPACE AND OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL):

(a) The Fourth Indian Antarctic Expedition team has accomplished its task fully. It carried out scientific experiments in the fields of geology, geo-physics, glaciology, meteorology, biology and oceanography. It also conducted geophysical surveys to locate the mineral potential in and around the area where the Indian Station Dakshin Gangotri is located. It established a direct high frequency (HF) communication link between India and Antarctica. This is in addition to the satellite link already in operation for the last three years. It also carried out maintenance of the permanent Indian Antarctic Station constructed additional accommodation and laboratory space, erected a large garrage for parking of vehicles and storage of equipment. The team has built a small field station consisting of three cottages in the hills at a distance of about 60 kilometres from the permanent Indian Antarctic Station.

(b) During the Third expedition in 1983-84, a permanently manned scientific station was established in Antarctica. This station is fully equipped with living accommodation and working laboratories. A team of 12 persons was left at the station which successfully returned to India after spending 15 months in Antarctica.

(c) The Fifth expedition is likely to start towards the last week of November, 1985. An ice-strengthened ship will be chartered for this purpose.

(d) Yes Sir, it is a fact that as time passes more and more advances are being made on the ice-breaking capabilities of the ships going to polar regions. These improvements are in the design of the vessels, their navigational capabilities, their manoeuvrability and strength to negotiate the ice conditions.

(e) An enquiry has been floated through the chartering wing of the Ministry of Shipping for locating a suitable ship for the Fifth Indian Antarctic Expedition.