

(a) whether the accounting regulator the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has submitted a report to Government with a recommendation that the Chartered Accountants Act be amended to include provisions for punishing erring audit firms whose CAs are found guilty of misconduct;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ICAI has also suggested the scope of penal provision be extended to cover audit firms in addition to Chartered Accountants; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (d) The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has submitted a report wherein it has recommended for amendments in the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, for empowering ICAI for taking action against firms of chartered accountants themselves, in addition to individual chartered accountants, for misconduct.

The ICAI has been asked to submit specific proposals for the consideration of the Government.

Implementation of NER Vision-2020

4020. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the time-bound implementation of North-East Region Vision-2020, released by the Prime Minister in July, 2008;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the progress made hitherto in realizing the aims, objectives and goals and targets of Vision-2020 and details thereof; and

(d) whether Government would support efforts by civil society in the North-East Region to monitor and advise on the implementation of the Vision-2020 document?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The process to develop mechanism for realizing the aims, objectives and goals enunciated in the North Eastern Region Vision 2020 has already been initiated. For this purpose, 17 Thematic Groups were constituted, headed by the senior officials of the line Ministries comprising

representatives of the State Governments of the North Eastern States and eminent experts in various sectors viz. Panchayati Raj and Local Self Government, Poverty Eradication, Human Resource Development, Industry, Connectivity (major roads), Connectivity (inland waterways), Connectivity (air), Connectivity (railways), Connectivity (rural roads), Tourism, IT enabled services and Cyber Connectivity, Power, Health, Rural Sector, Financial Services, Sports, Art and Culture and Look East Policy. These Thematic Working Groups prepared sectoral Action Plans which were presented before the public representatives and media of the North East in Shillong in 2009. The action plans of these Thematic Groups will be finalized in consultation with the concerned Ministries and 'in principle' approval of the Planning Commission will be taken for funding the same. Thereafter, these Action Plans will be implemented by the concerned Central Ministries from their gross budgetary allocations.

(d) The Government would appreciate and welcome the efforts and advice from the civil society or any other organization for the implementation of the Vision 2020 Document.

Biosphere Reserves

4021. SHRIMATI RENUBALA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) The number of the existing biosphere reserves in the country and details of their status;
- (b) what are the criteria to accord status of biosphere reserve;
- (c) whether any proposal of biosphere reserve from Orissa is pending with Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether Government has any proposal to set up a research unit to study on Olive Ridely turtles at river Rushikulya river mouth in Orissa Ganjam district where thousands of the turtles come every year for mass nesting; and
- (f) the steps taken by Government for protection of these turtle species?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Sixteen Biosphere Reserves have been designated in the country. They are : Nilgiri (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka), Nanda Devi (Uttarakhand), Nokrek (Meghalaya), Manas and Dibru-Saikhowa (Assam), Sundraban (West Bengal), Gulf of Mannar (Tamil Nadu), Great Nicobar