

Melting of glaciers

744. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that many mountain peaks in Himalayan range have lost their heights and become semi-bald due to melting of glaciers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the action being taken at Government level to avert the ill effect of global warming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Different findings have been reported relating to melting of Himalayan glaciers. According to Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released in April 2007, the Himalayan Glaciers are receding faster than in any part of the world. However, the studies carried out by Geological Survey of India indicate that the majority of Himalayan glaciers are passing through a phase of recession which is a worldwide phenomenon. Recession of glaciers is a part of the natural cyclic process of changes in size and other attributes of the glaciers.

(c) The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was launched in June 2008 which includes, among others, the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system. This Mission is aimed at understanding whether and the extent to which the Himalayan glaciers are in recession and how the problem could be addressed. A new research centre on Himalayan Glaciology has been established at Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun. Government has also prepared guidelines and best practices for sustaining Himalayan eco-system and has shared it with all State Governments in the Himalayan region.

Elephant reserve in Orissa

745. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the issue of migratory corridors of major fauna has been reported upon during the last few years;
- (b) whether Government is considering to provide statutory cover for them;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of stages of implementation of the Keonjhar Elephant Reserve and the South Orissa Elephant Reserve in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, the State/UT Governments are empowered to constitute any area of faunal importance as a protected area. In the case of wild elephants, migratory corridors have been identified. Where the corridors consist of only notified forests and/or protected areas, statutory cover already exists. But there are corridors with non forest lands also and they need statutory cover. For such corridors, the State/UT Governments have been requested to provide legal cover either under Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 or under Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986.

(d) The Government of Orissa has notified three Elephant Reserves namely Mayurbhanj, Mahanadi and Sambalpur. Permission for notification of South Orissa Elephant Reserve and Baitarani Elephant Reserve (which includes Keonjhar Forests) has been accorded by the Ministry in the year 2005. However, the State Government has not notified these two Elephant Reserves till date.

Illegal mining in forest land

746. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:

SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the illegal mining in the forests of Sandur near the iron-ore rich Bellary district in Karnataka continued despite the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) directive to stop the illegal mining forthwith; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the details of action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The issue of illegal mining in the forests of Sandur near the iron-ore rich Bellary district in Karnataka has come to the notice of the Central Government. Since the responsibility of controlling any illegal mining lies primarily with the State Government, the Central Government has requested the Chief Minister of Karnataka to take necessary action to ensure all illegal mining is stopped.