

Connecting joint forest management committees with forest development authority

†2942. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating on connecting all joint forest management committees with forest development authority under National Afforestation Programme; and

(b) if so, by when the same would be implemented for organisational development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir. A new component, namely "Strengthening of Joint Forest Management (JFM)", has already been added in the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) with a view to constituting Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) in all forest-fringe villages and to formulate micro-plan for each JFMC.

(b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has invited proposals from all States and Union Territories for financial assistance under NAP. The proposals will be approved subject to their technical and administrative suitability and availability of funds.

Ozone layer

†2943. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing hole in the ozone layer over Antarctic region has become wide enough this year as a result thereof the pollution preventing measures which were going on for the last twenty years, proved ineffective and whether there are possibilities of further widening of the hole;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the ozone layer is becoming thinner day by day;

(c) whether this hole in the ozone layer has spread over the Ushihya in Pentagon region of southern Argentina and as a result thereof ultraviolet radiation is increasing over the earth; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) the distance between ozone layer and the earth and the measures Government are taking to prevent those dangerous gases reaching the earth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), measurements of total ozone in the atmosphere column from the IMD station of Maitri at Antarctica, during the years 1992 to present, has revealed that the ozone hole occurs every year with varying intensity over the station during the period of southern hemispheric spring season i.e., last week of August to first week of November.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Ozone bulletin, last two weeks of August and the first week of September, 2005 experienced lower ozone column minima than any of the nine preceding years (160 Dobson Units (D.U.) in 2005 and 200 D.U. in 1998). From early October, however, the ozone column recovered faster than most of the years of the last decade (100 D.U. in 1998 and 140 D.U. in 2004) and by mid-November ozone column minima were similar to those observed in 2004. During the last few years, a trend was observed towards earlier recovery of the ozone hole, and the 2005 ozone hole confirms this trend.

(c) Hole in the Ozone Layer occurred for a few days over the Ushihya in Patagonia region of southern Argentina during 2003. It increased the local surface ultraviolet radiation.

(d) The height of the Ozone Layer is maximum over the tropical region and minimum over the polar region and is not correlated to ozone depletion. In order to tackle the issue of ozone depletion, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer are the international agreements. These agreements mandate the measures for phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) in developed as well as developing countries. India is a Party to both the Convention and the Protocol and has taken necessary steps to phase out production and consumption of ODS in various sectors in accordance with the provisions of these agreements.