

the Chaurabari lake in the upstream could have resulted in a gushing outflow with large amounts of debris which devastated the entire valley. The very heavy rainfall in the entire catchment further increased the magnitude of floods downstream.

Government is implementing the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) with a view to enhance the ecological sustainability of India's development path and address climate change in all regions of the country. NAPCC comprises, *inter-alia*, of eight National Missions including National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system which aims to strengthen the system for observing and monitoring the Himalayan glaciers. Besides, a research centre on Himalayan Glaciology has been established at Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun to undertake comprehensive glacier research in the country. Further, all States including Himalayan States are advised to prepare the State Action Plan on Climate Change to address specific climate change issues.

**Special financial assistance/grant to hilly States to
plant Oak and Utees trees**

†15. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Oak and Utees trees found in all the hilly States of the country including Uttarakhand, discharge water;

(b) if so, whether Government is also aware that half of the population of hilly States is getting drinking water due to these trees;

(c) if so, whether Government would consider to provide special financial assistance/grant to encourage the States and Non-Governmental Organisations to plant Oak and Utees trees in the hilly States; and

(d) if not, whether Government would consider setting up a National level Authority for the development and promotion of Oak and Utees forests in hilly States; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) Forests in general aids in water conservation and recharge of aquifers positively impacting the water availability in the region. In particular, studies have shown positive co-relation between water recharge of springs and Oak forests. A large percentage of the population in hilly States of the country is dependent on natural sources of water like Springs, River, Streams etc.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) The Government does not have any specific scheme to provide special assistance/grant to encourage the States and Non-Government organizations to plant Oak and Utees trees in the hilly States. However under various schemes which support afforestation on denuded, degraded and unproductive land such as National Afforestation Programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, 13th Finance Commission Award, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority, different State Plan/Non-Plan Schemes, External Aided Projects, preference is given to local species. The Government has no proposal for setting up a National level Authority for the development and promotion of Oak and Utees forests in the hilly States.

Environmental clearance in Jammu and Kashmir

16. SHRI G.N. RATANPURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of development projects given environmental clearance in Jammu and Kashmir during the last three years;

(b) the details of development projects from Jammu and Kashmir denied environmental clearance during last three years and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the progress on development of wildlife sanctuary in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir to rehabilitate ibex affected by construction of Mughal Road?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) 13 projects were given Environment Clearance by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in the State of Jammu and Kashmir during the last three years.

(b) No project from the State of Jammu and Kashmir was denied Environment Clearance during the last three years.

(c) The State Governments are empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to establish a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Ministry of Environment and Forests provides financial assistance to State/UT Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats'. No such proposal seeking financial assistance for development of Sanctuary in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir to rehabilitate ibex, has been received in the Ministry.

Pending projects from Andhra Pradesh

17. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state: