

Launch pad in Tamil Nadu

2379. SHRIMATI SASIKALA PUSHPA:

SHRI A. VIJAYAKUMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been conducted to establish launch pad at Kulasekarapattinam in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether any target has been fixed for construction of launch pad there or at any other place in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, an expert committee was constituted to assess the need for a new launch site considering the capabilities of existing launch pads at Sriharikota, launch vehicles currently operational and the future launch requirements for the next decade. The committee concluded that there is no immediate requirement to establish a new launching site in the country.

(c) Does not arise.

Notification of Village Forest Rules by States

2380. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Governments have been notifying Village Forest Rules (VFR), which is in complete contradiction to Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Area) Act (PESA) Act and Forest Rights Act (FRA); and

(b) if so, the names of States and the details of the steps being taken not to allow implementation of VFR and to ensure strict implementation of Forest Rights Act (FRA)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT): (a) and (b) Sub-Section (1) of Section 28 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 defines village-forests. According to this definition all forests, where State Governments have assigned to any village-community the rights of Government to or over any land which has been constituted a reserved forest, are village-forests. The State Governments may also cancel such assignments. Sub-Section (2) of Section 28 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 further empowers the State Governments to make rules for regulating the management of village-forests,

prescribing the conditions under which the community to which any such assignment is made may be provided with timber or other forest-produce or pasture and their duties for the protection and improvement of such forest. In terms of Article 1(1) of the Constitution of India, India is a Union of States. In terms of Part XI of the Constitution States own equal responsibility in maintaining the federal structure. Further, Article 254(1) of the Constitution provides that the provisions of laws made by the Parliament would prevail if provisions of laws made by the Legislature of a State is repugnant to provisions of laws made by the Parliament which Parliament is competent to enact. Thus the constitutional scheme duly provides that State laws automatically become inoperative when they contravene Central Acts including PESA and Forest Right Act. As per information available with Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Village Forest Rules (VFR) have been framed by three States namely Odisha, Punjab and Maharashtra. Odisha had framed these Rules in 1985 which precedes PESA, 1996 and FRA, 2006. Punjab had framed the Rules in 2013 but as per Census 2011, there is no ST population in the State nor any Scheduled Area. As regards Maharashtra, it notified these Rules in 2014. Sub-Rule(3) of Rule 1 of the Maharashtra Village Forests Rules, 2014 prescribes that these rules shall not be applicable to such forest areas covered under or communities who have already acquired community forest rights under the Forest Rights Act and to any villages in Scheduled Areas of the State of Maharashtra where the provisions of PESA apply.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

2381. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of funds allocated, released and utilised for the National Commission on Scheduled Tribes separately showing the expenditure incurred for each centre during the last three years;

(b) the details of sanctioned strength and vacant positions across various centres/offices of the Commission; and

(c) the details of cases dealt with by the Commission during each of the last three years along with current status of such cases State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANTSINH SUMANBHAI BHABHOR): (a) Statement indicating BE, RE and Actual Expenditure incurred by National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) for the last three years (2014-15 to 2016-17) is given in the Statement-I (*See below*).

(b) Details of sanctioned strength and vacant positions for NCST including its Regional Offices is given in the Statement-II (*See below*).