

spatially explicit capture recapture protocols using joint models have been employed. The method is peer reviewed in both national and international fora and has been published in an international scientific journal. The national assessment 2018 is being conducted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority in collaboration with the State Forest Departments, Wildlife Institute of India and National level Non Governmental Organisations, using the same methodology.

(b) and (c) Peer reviewed literature and processes have been consulted and fine tuned to India's field requirement. Tiger population estimation in India is based on published standard methodology which is thoroughly grounded in field craft and adapted to Indian conditions.

(d) M-STRIPES (Monitoring system for Tigers' Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) has resulted in cleaner data receipt from the field for processing and analysis.

(e) An amount of ₹ 1022.21 lakhs has been sanctioned to the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun for the All India Tiger Estimation, while an amount of ₹ 809.02 lakhs has been sanctioned to the States under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger for the purpose of tiger estimation.

#### **Status of Afforestation Programme**

†51. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of stringent provisions, no significant reduction is reflected in the incidents of cutting of trees;

(b) whether Government has conducted any study to ascertain the reasons why there are no significant results of the initiatives taken for the growth of afforestation;

(c) if so, the results thereof; and

(d) the details of steps taken by Government in the direction of mass awareness campaign regarding environment conservation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) No, sir. The cutting of trees is regulated under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and State Acts implemented by State Government. Felling of trees for the development works are regulated under these Acts. Trees are also felled after diversion of forest land for non-forestry development works under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 after due permission of the Central Government for development activities.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) In order to increase the forest cover in the country, afforestation programmes have been taken up under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Green India Mission (GIM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), which from 2015-16 has been amalgamated as the Watershed Development Component of the “Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)” and under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA). Local people are involved in afforestation activities by the State Forest Departments.

As per the latest India State of Forest Report *i.e.* ISFR-2017 published by Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, a subordinate organization under the Ministry, the total forest and tree cover in the country is 8,02,088 square kilometers (forest cover 708273 square kilometer, tree cover 93815 square kilometer) which is 24.39% of the geographical area of the country. There is an increase of 8021 square kilometer (forest cover 6778 square kilometer, tree cover 1243 square kilometer) of total forest and tree cover compared to that of ISFR-2015.

(d) The Ministry recognizes the fact that publicity and awareness program for general public is important for conservation of forests in the country. Many forestry schemes of Central and State Government have an inbuilt component of publicity and awareness generation. State Forest Department also carry out awareness campaigns to educate people regarding conservation of forests. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change also has a Central Sector Scheme namely Environment Education, Awareness and Training (EEAT). The scheme aims to promote environmental awareness amongst school and college level students across the country. The Ministry celebrates Van Mahotsav, Earth Day, World Environment Day, Forest Day and Wildlife Day to create awareness regarding forest and biodiversity conservation.

#### **Environmental clearance for Vijayawada terminal**

52. SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY VEMIREDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) when was the proposal for clearance from the Ministry, for construction of a new terminal at Vijayawada was submitted by AAI with an estimated cost of ₹ 500 crores;

(b) the reasons for delay in getting approval from the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry; and

(c) by when approval of EAC is going to be given?