

hazards, enhance the capabilities of forest personnel and institutions in fighting fires, and speed up recovery after a fire event.

Ministry is the Nodal Ministry for disaster management caused by forest fire, water pollution and hazardous substances in the country. A Crisis Management Committee has been constituted in the Ministry under the Chairmanship of Secretary. For the supervision and review of forest fire management, a Central Monitoring Committee has also been constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary and represented by Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of all States, and Union Territories. Nodal Officer for forest fire prevention and control has been appointed in all the States.

Forest Survey of India has been made responsible to keep constant vigil on forest fire across the country and send forest fire alerts on registered mobile numbers in the States. Till date around 50,000 users have been registered to receive the fire alerts from Forest Survey of India.

Since the forests are managed by the State Forest Departments, responsibility of forest fire prevention and management lies primarily with the respective State Governments. Ministry supports the efforts of State/Union Territory Governments in prevention and control of forest fire by providing financial assistance for various forest fire prevention and management measures under the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme. State Government prepares Annual Plan of Operation for prevention and management of forest fire under this central sponsored scheme and funds are released as per the Central Sponsored Scheme Guidelines. A sum of ₹125 crore (Rupees one hundred twenty-five crore) have been released to the States in last three years under this scheme.

In addition, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Rules 2018 provide for utilisation of net present value component of the fund for capacity building and providing appropriate firefighting equipment to forest fire fighting squads and activities for forest fire management in the States.

Environmental clearance to Mekedatu dam project

2411. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has given environment clearance for Mekedatu project by Government of Karnataka to construct dam across river Cauvery;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government had considered all aspects including the final verdict of Cauvery water tribunal before granting Environment Clearance to his project; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Proposal of Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir and Drinking Water Project in Ramanagara and Chamarajanagar Districts of Karnataka has been submitted to the Ministry for the Terms of Reference (ToR) on 20.06.2019. Proposal is yet to be placed before the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) for consideration of the project for ToR.

Plantation drive in 2019

†2412. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the density of forest cover and green belt existing in the country in post-independence era, and the number of trees added through plantation drives in the forest area, the State-wise and year-wise details thereof; and

(b) the measures undertaken to promote plantation, preservation and irrigation and the expenditure incurred on plantation corresponding to the target fixed, in this regard, during the rainy season and thereafter, in the year 2019, the State-wise details thereof, including the State of Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) and (b) As per the India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2017 a biennial report by Forest Survey of India (FSI) of this ministry, the total forest and tree cover in the country is 24.39% of the geographical area of the country. There is an increase of 8021 square kilometer (sq.km) (forest cover 6778 sq.km, tree cover 1243 sq.km) of total forest and tree cover compared to that of ISFR-2015. In terms of density classes, area covered by Very Dense Forest (VDF) is 98,158 sq.km, that with Moderately Dense Forest (MDF) is 3,08,318 sq.km and Open Forest (OF) is 3,01,797 sq.km corresponding to 2.99%, 9.38 % and 9.18 % respectively of the total geographic area.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.