

[1 August, 2003]

RAJYA SABHA

डा. कुमकुम राय : बड़ी मुश्किल से तो मुझे सवाल पूछने का मौका मिला है। आप मुझे सवाल पूछ लेने दीजिए ।(व्यवधान)... सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि समाज कल्याण बोर्ड के द्वारा कितने राज्यों में विवाह पूर्व और विवाह पश्चात परामर्शी केन्द्र चलाये जा रहे हैं? उन परामर्शी या काउंसिलिंग सेंटर्स में किस प्रकार के केसेज आ रहे हैं? क्या आप उनकी संख्या से सतुष्ट हैं?

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : सभापति महोदय, इसके लिए एक अलग से नोटिस चाहिए।

Forest cover in U.P.

*191. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the present percentage of forest cover in Uttar Pradesh and how does it compare with the All India level;

(b) the steps proposed to increase the forest cover in that State, particularly in the areas in the plains where the forest cover is unsatisfactory;

(c) whether any financial assistance is proposed to be provided to the State Government for the purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Forest Survey of India has been assessing forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 using satellite data. As per the latest State of Forest Report, 2001, forest cover in Uttar Pradesh is 5.71% and the forest cover of the country is 20.55% of the respective geographical areas.

(b) The important measures undertaken by the Government to increase the forest cover in various States including Uttar Pradesh are:

- i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments/UT Administrations from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.
- ii) Guidelines have been issued to all States/UTs to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.
- iii) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes.
- iv) A network of protected areas has been established.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests have sanctioned 36 Projects and released an amount of Rs. 20.01 crore during 2002-2003 and an amount of Rs. 5.25 crore during 2003-2004 under the Scheme "National Afforestation Programme". Rs. 80.00 lakhs was released during 2002-2003 under the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme for fire conservancy works.

SHRI LALIT SURI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for releasing about Rs. 26 crores under the National Afforestation Programme in 2002-03 and 2003-04. However, in his reply, the hon. Minister has stated that the average forest cover in the country is 20.55 per cent whereas the forest cover in Uttar Pradesh is only 5.71 per cent. Now, there is illegal felling of trees, especially in Jhansi, Bundelkhand, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra and also in the border area of our neighbouring country, Nepal. So, in the light of this, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what action his Ministry is taking to stop illegal felling of trees.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, actually, the law and order issue is a State subject. But, at the same time, we are encouraging the Joint Forest Management Committees. Now, in all, we have the Joint Forest Managements in 72,620 villages. As far as UP is

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concerned, 945 Joint Forest Management Committees have been established. Sir, 1/3rd of women are participating in the Joint Forest Management Executive Committees. This Joint Forest Management takes care of conservation of forest, identifies the poachers and other culprits and intimates to the law enforcing agencies.

SHRI LALIT SURI: Sir, the plants, which are economically and otherwise beneficial to human beings, are in the list of endangered species and are intentionally or unintentionally being destroyed. To save such plants, there was a proposal to set up a botanical garden at Noida. But, it seems, nothing has been done so far. This scheme has been identified as a green channel project. Looking at the national importance of this project for research, training, conservation of endangered species and building up public awareness, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what action the Government has taken on this project.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, I am sorry. It is not being handled by my Ministry, it is being handled by the Department of Biotechnology.

प्रो. रामगोपाल यादव : सभापति महोदय, उत्तर प्रदेश में वन विभाग की बहुत बड़ी जमीन पर भू-माफियाओं ने गलत कागज बनाकर कब्जा कर लिया है। इस वजह से वहां पर वन विभाग की बहुत कम जमीन रह गई है। क्या माननीय मंत्री जी उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार को निर्देश देंगे कि जो वन विभाग की जमीन पर लोगों ने नाजायज कब्जा कर लिया है, उसे छुड़वाया जाये?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, this issue has already been discussed in the State Forest Ministers' Conference. But, the problem is, the State Governments are reluctant to fill in the vacancies or appoint the forest guards, whereas they are ready to fill the vacancies in the department of police. So, this particular problem has already been discussed in the State Forest Ministers' Conference. If there is any specific instance, I will take up the matter with the State Government concerned.

SHRI ROBERT KHARSHING: Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal, in view of the answers given, to totally ban forest cutting in those States where the forest

cover is very low? Because, the experience in our State, Meghalaya, has been that the ban imposed by the Supreme Court has been very beneficial in a sense that within a few years after the ban, the forest cover has gone up. Is there any proposal to ban felling of trees in those States where the forest cover is low?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, there is already a ban on felling of trees. Unless and until, a working plan is there, there is a ban on felling of trees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Siding track from KRIBHCO to Hajira

*186. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the Industrial growth of the area around Hajira Port to it's hinterland;

(b) whether Railways will consider extending the siding track of KRIBHCO up to Hajira; and

(c) if so, by when this work will be taken up?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Although industrial development is taking place around Hajira Port, the decision about connectivity of part to hinterland and alignment of line through KRIBHCO (Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd.) siding or otherwise can only be taken after techno-economic feasibility study is done for the project. Such a study is being done on behalf of Gujarat Maritime Board by RITES (Rail India Technical & Economic Services).

Expansion of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

*192. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to expand the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh;