

respondents have omitted and neglected to inquire into and determine the existence, nature and extent of the rights of persons in or over the land comprised within the limits of the national parks or sanctuaries. The court has directed the State Governments to complete the settlement proceedings expeditiously.

Ozone depletion

3631. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-items which appeared in the Times of India dated 18th September, 2000 under the caption, "Experts worry about Ozone dip over India";

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the exact nature of dangers arising from depleting Ozone and how Government propose to contain the dangers?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Ozone data has been regularly recorded over India since 1957. Studies have shown that there seems to be no depletion of Ozone (beyond the natural variability) in the tropical region.

(c) The depletion of the Ozone Layer results in an increase of harmful Ultra Violet B radiation on earth's surface, which affects human health with potential risk of eye diseases, skin cancer and infectious diseases. It also affects plants and animals in aquatic ecosystem, bio-geo-chemical cycles, air quality and materials.

The Ozone depletion is caused by various Ozone depleting substances like chlorofluorocarbons, halons, etc. As signatory to the Montreal Protocol, a Country Programme was prepared in 1993 to phaseout Ozone depleting substances as per the stipulation of the Protocol and the Government has initiated several steps as per the action plan mentioned in the Country Programme. The Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 have been notified in the Gazette of India in July 2000. So far, in India 225 enterprises have received financial assistance from Multilateral Fund to phaseout 8619 Ozone Depleting Potential (ODP) Tonnes.