

### Wetlands

\*319. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a National Wetland Authority/Committee;

(b) if so, the main objectives thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Government for conservation of wetlands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b). A National Committee on Wetlands, Mangroves and Coral Reefs has been constituted by the Government in 1992. The National Committee advises the Government on appropriate policies and action programmes for conservation, research, training, identification of priority areas of wetlands and international cooperation. The National Committee reviews progress of implementation of management action plans and research programmes.

(c) A *Statement* is laid on the Table of the House indicating steps taken by the Government for conservation of Wetlands.

### STATEMENT

The main steps taken for Conservation of wetlands include the following:

1. A Plan scheme for the conservation of wetlands has been launched to provide catalytic support to the State

Governments for conservation and management of selected wetlands. So far, 21 wetlands have been included in the National Programme and financial assistance has been provided to the concerned State Governments for supplementing the activities relating to survey and mapping, afforestation in the catchment areas, siltation control, weed control and creation of environmental awareness.

2. Criteria for selection of wetlands of national importance and guidelines for preparation of management action plan for conservation of wetlands have been issued to the State Governments.
3. A network of protected areas, consisting of National Parks, Sanctuaries and Biosphere Reserves including wetlands within their boundaries, has been set up.
4. The Botanical Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India, Wildlife Institute of India and the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History have undertaken surveys and scientific studies on wetlands in different parts of the country.
5. The non-Governmental Organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)—India and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have also taken up programmes for the conservation of Wetlands.

6. Through the State statutes and Central laws, such as Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 etc. legal measures have been taken to regulate activities that have a bearing on the wetlands ecosystems.
7. Under the programmes on environmental education and awareness, conservation of biological diversity in wetlands has been given priority.
8. Research studies have been commissioned through the university system and research institutions for conducting scientific studies and investigations on various aspects of wetlands ecosystems.
9. Under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl habitats (Ramsar Convention) of which India is a signatory, 6 wetlands have been declared as Ramsar sites. These are: Chilka Lake (Orissa), Keoladeo Ghana National Park (Rajasthan), Wular Lake (J&K), Harike Lake (Punjab), Loktak Lake (Manipur) and Sambhar Lake (Rajasthan).

SHRI K. PRADHANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minister, in his reply to part (c) of the question, stated that a Plan scheme for the conservation of wetlands has been launched to provide catalytic support to the State Governments for conservation and management of selected

wetlands. So far, 21 wetlands have been included in the National Programme and financial assistance has been provided to the concerned State Governments.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister which are these 21 projects that have been identified and what assistance has been provided to the State Government for the development of these wetlands.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, there is a list of natural and man-made wetlands in the country. There are 192 natural wetlands and 678 man-made wetlands. There are also a large list of the amounts which has been sanctioned. If there is any particular one the hon. Member wants to know I would mention it. Otherwise I will be happy to send him a list of all the funds sanctioned to all the wetlands in the country separately.

SHRI K. PRADHANI: In reply to Sl. No. 9 under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Water-fowl habitats in Ramsar Convention of which India is a signatory, six wetlands have been declared in Ramsar. Out of these Chilka Lake is one of the internationally important wetlands. Hence may I know from the hon. Minister what action has been taken so far and what allotment has been given to the State Government for the development of this wetland at Chilka Lake?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the hon. Member is right that India is a signatory to Ramsar Convention and India has acceded to this Convention in September, 1981. Six of the wetlands in Rajasthan, Orissa, Punjab, Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir have designated as wetlands in Ramsar Convention. With regard to Chilka,

a total amount of Rs. 112 lakhs have been sanctioned over last four years under the scheme of conservation of wetlands. The last amount sanctioned was almost a crore of rupees to the Chilka wetland in Orissa and several steps have also been taken. The Chilka is a eco-sensitive wetland and amongst various schemes the setting up of bunds, weed control, siltation, etc. have been taken up in Chilka.

*[Translation]*

**SHRI VISHWESHWAR BHAGAT:**  
Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is being done for the other wet land apart from the Chilka Lake.

**SHRI KAMAL NATH:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are many such wetlands. From the point of environment we are concerned of our tanks. The formation of a national policy is under consideration for it and it is also under consideration that a national survey plan should be framed for their purpose. When it will be decided, I will give the information.

*[English]*

**SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQU:**  
Mr. Speaker, Sir, I refer to the part 10 of the hon. Minister's statement that we explore the possibility of using the solid waste generated in the problem areas like using fly ash for stocking the abandoned mining areas or for brick manufacturing etc Sir, the country has 45 million tonnes of fly ash produced by 70 thermal plants and an accumulated stock of more than 10 million tonnes as phosphogypsum at 13 fertilizer plant sites. At the same time, according to the Eighth Five Year Plan there will be shortage of 95000 million bricks, of which

55000 million bricks are meant for housing alone. So, may I know what steps the Government have taken to convert the fly ash and other solid waste into cheap building material.

**SHRI KAMAL NATH:** Sir, it is true that every thermal station generates about two thousand to three thousand tonnes of fly ash every day. Fly ash continues to be a major problem as far as the pollution of suspended particle matter is concerned. In sanction of environmental approval and environment site clearance of thermal stations which is currently being given, a stipulation is being made that it is the project authority, the project promoters itself which must promote the ancillarisation, the usage of fly ash and just not merely dump the fly ash which is so produced.

It is expected that over 90 per cent of the fly ash which is generated by the power projects which will be set up in the future will be consumed by the industries in that area.

Sir, as far as bricks are concerned there is a problem. While it is true that fly ash produces very good quality bricks, there has been a problem on the question freight. Beyond a radius of 100 kms it becomes very difficult to have either economic benefit or cost benefit because of the cost of freight. But nevertheless, all thermal stations coming up in the future must fulfil a conditionality as to how they will treat their fly ash. State Governments as also the Central sector undertakings have been advised that they must give preference to fly ash bricks. So, in regard to consumption of fly ash, though it is a problem, we do expect that while setting up of thermal plants in future, this shall be integrated in the project itself.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI KRISHAN DUTT SULTAN-PURI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Minister has said in his reply that the Government is going to develop the tanks in the States. The hon. Agriculture Minister had been to the foot hill area of Himachal Pradesh alongwith me. I had shown him a very big tank in my district, Solan, on which the Government has so far spent crores of rupees. There are several other tanks in the State for whom the hon. Minister has stated that he will consider about it, but has any survey been conducted so far in this respect.

Secondly, the hon. Minister has mentioned about the ash. This ash is produced in the thermal power stations. Whether any survey has been conducted in this regard? What steps are being taken up to set up bricks kilns there or to utilise it. The names of the States where these have been set up and if not by when these are likely to be set up.

**SHRI KAMAL NATH:** A questionnaire was framed many years back for testing the wetlands and in reply the State Governments had informed about the locations of their wet lands. This information was passed on to the State Government, University Research Institutes etc. and a directory has been compiled on its basis. In reply to the questionnaire, there are 192 natural and 678 man made wetlands. So far as the question of the hon. Member regarding ash is concerned, he is right. Today the problem of ash is grave. It not only affects the wetlands but it also creates severe air pollution.

**SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether the

Committee, likely to be set up, will visit each State and after testing what steps will be taken up for the survey?

**SHRI KAMAL NATH:** Sir, the national lake conservation scheme which I had mentioned is being considered, as to how it should be framed from where it will be funded and what will be the role of State Governments in this scheme. Only after that it would be possible to say anything about other tanks, waste lands and their problems. Different schemes will be chalked out to solve different problems.

**KUMARI FRIDA TOPNO:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the environment of Chilka Lake in Orissa was very beautiful earlier and varies species of birds from far and wide used to come there but its environment has been polluted now after the establishment of naval training centre there. There is too much silting and on account of it even the sea water cannot flow towards it properly and even it is not being maintained. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if the Ministry of Forest is going to do something to preserve its environment and for the development of this lake?

**SHRI KAMAL NATH:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is correct that due to the developmental works and high density of population there, it is a sensitive wetland. A scheme of 60 crore rupees has been formulated for this purpose, on bilateral basis and it is posed to the European Union. Specially the problems of weed management, siltation and dividing are included in it besides the scheme of infracture development. This scheme is formulated keeping in view the present and the future problems of the Chilka Lake. I hope that it will be cleared very soon.

[English]

SHRI UMRAO SINGH: Pollution is one of the greatest problems in the country and the world. In view of this increase in pollution, is the Government or the Committee thinking to introduce any Course or studies in the Universities and Schools so that the students and the nation is made familiar with the dangerous aspect of pollution and of conservation of wetland?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Under the National Environment Awareness Campaign, the entire spectrum of environment is taken into account and the sensitivity of wetland is one of the areas which is being given a thrust in addition to all other aspects concerning environmental degradation. I am happy that environmental awareness stage in the country has reached a profile as never before, and this is only because we have been able to imbibe and instil not only in the level of students but in the common man that concern and sensitivity to environment and the impact of people's own action in their daily lives on environment.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: It is stated in part 'c' No. 8 of the reply to the question that:

"Research studies have been commissioned through the University system and research institutions for conducting scientific studies and investigations on various aspects of wetland ecosystems."

My query is whether any such research is going on to detect the wetland because people may not be aware of their own wetlands and if such researches

are going on, whether any wetland in Kerala is identified and if identified, what are the results of study upon that.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: There are 26 research projects which have been sanctioned covering the whole country. I specifically do not know if there is one in Kerala.

But, there are very large number of colleges and universities which are very very environmentally aware and it has been in Kerala irrespective of whether projects are sanctioned by my Ministry or not. I am aware that a large number of colleges and universities are themselves doing projects in wetlands, in Kerala.

[Translation]

SHRI AYUB KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, that the Government has constituted the National Committee on Wetland; would you please apprise me about areas where the survey was conducted the Rajasthan and how much amount was allocated for Rajasthan. Rajasthan is a desert area and there are so many lakes through which water crisis can be solved there, so please tell something about it.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: The Committee which is constituted is a permanent committee and it is not going to be dissolved. As I have said that out of the wetlands of Rajasthan there are two such wetlands which are famous in the country. These two have been identified and schemes have been formulated for these wetlands. Keeping in view the severe condition of Picchola Fatehsagar Lake Complex, a scheme

has been formulated for it and the Centre has granted fund for it.

[English]

SHRI K.T. VANDAYAR: Wetlands and lakes are converted into plots for habitation. There is a very big lake in my constituency which has been converted into plots. Has the Government allotted any funds for Tamil Nadu for conserving these lakes and wetlands?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I am not aware specifically of the lake in the hon. Member's constituency. If he just gives me more details on it, I will attempt to see that, if possible, and if at all, something can be done.

SHRI G. DEVARAYA NAIK: From environmental aspect, wetlands programme is a very important one. But as pointed out by the hon. Minister, an amount of Rs. 60 crore only has been allocated. Compared to huge work in the country this amount is a meagre one. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any idea in the Government to increase the amount from Rs. 60 crore to further develop wetland areas in the country and whether the hon. Minister is aware of wetland areas in the country, especially in southern part of India?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Undoubtedly, wetlands play a major role in environment, in flood control, in recharging of aquifers. I entirely agree with the members especially for regulating water quality, reducing sediment load, pollution abatement etc. So, wetland has to be a major area of focus. It is not correct that only Rs. 60 crore has been allocated. I said there is a project of Rs. 60 crore for Chilka lake. In addition to that, there

are several schemes which are in the pipeline are being funded. There is an upper and lower lakes of Bhopal for which there is 7,055 million yen for conservation and management of the Bhopal lake. There are other schemes for the wetlands of Calcutta being formulated. There is a scheme of the Sagar lake in Madhya Pradesh which has been prepared for Rs. 5.83 crore.

SHRI G. DEVARAYA NAIK: I particularly asked about South India.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: As I said I am only illustrating, I am not giving exhaustive details. There are various schemes for protecting wetlands and I shall send to the hon. Members about the other schemes which are being considered in the South.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Sir, the owners of the tanks both in villages and cities are selling these to the builders throughout the country. As in Nagpur city in Maharashtra there were a number of tanks, now the builders are buying these tanks to construct buildings there which is becoming a hazard for the environment. We have made several complaints through your department to keep the status quo of those tanks and buildings should not be constructed there. Would the hon. Minister pay heed to our complaints.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Definitely we will pay attention to what the hon. Member has said. As far as the rural areas are concerned I have written to the State Governments. Out of the total allocation under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana 20 per cent should be spent on the works concerning environment. As far as cities

are concerned, it is a fact that the population is growing continuously in the cities and its pressure is on the cities. The pressure is mounting on the open land whether it is a tank or the plain. I agree to the proposal of the hon. Member and I would like to draw the attention of the State Governments towards it by writing them letters.

[English]

SHRI INDER JIT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minister, in his reply to parts (a) and (b) has stated that a National Committee on Wetlands, Mangroves and Coral Reefs has been constituted by the Government in 1992. He has also informed that the National Committee advises the Government on appropriate policies and action programmes on conservation, research, training, identification of priority areas in wetlands and international cooperation. He has also said that the National Committee reviews implementation of action plans and research programmes. I would like to know from the Minister what is being done in regard to coral reefs.

I had an occasion to visit Lakshadweep earlier this year, where we have a cluster of some thirty-two very beautiful islands. Of course, the top place goes to Bangarappa which in my opinion is the ultimate in sea-resort tourism. What is being done in regard to coral reefs and, particularly, coral reefs in this cluster of islands called Lakshadweep? I would like to know this because of the fact that it helps us in promoting tourism, both internal and international. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that Australia gets a very large number of tourists because of its Great Barrier Reef, which again is a coral reef. So, I would like him to throw some light

on this aspect also because his entire statement is devoted only to wetlands. Perhaps, the question was related to that. Maybe, he could throw some light and inform the House as to future of Lakshadweep islands.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the first term of reference, amongst the terms of reference of the National Wetland Committee, is to advise Government on appropriate policies and action programmes of conservation of wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs and related ecosystems. So, coral reefs are very much there in the terms of reference of this National Committee.

The hon. Member has talked about tourism. While coral reefs may be attracting tourism, we must also recognise that tourism is one of the biggest threats to coral reefs because the carrying capacity of these areas which have coral reefs is not there. Therefore, the more the tourists, the greater the threat to coral reefs. In order to protect our shoreline and in order also to protect areas which are rich in bio-diversity, areas which have very very exceptional coral reefs, under the Environment Protection Act, we have issued a Coastal Regulation Notification, which regulates developmental activities in these areas. So, developmental activities like tourism and industry cannot be carried out in these coastal areas, which are the habitat of the coral reefs.

So, this has been done considering the importance of coral-reefs in our ecosystem.

SHRI INDER JIT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was hoping that there would have to be some kind of a balance. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Today, I will allow.

SHRI INDER JIT: Sir, there has to be some kind of a balance between tourism and coral-reefs. Both have to be supplementary and complementary to each other. What kind of a balance we do have? How do you view the Lakshadweep Islands and their position as coral-reefs?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Lakshadweep is one of the four coral-reefs areas which have been identified. They are Lakshadweep Islands, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Gulf of Kachchh, etc. Of course, a balance has to be maintained between tourism and coral-reefs. But, since there is a heavy imbalance in the past, it is necessary to correct that imbalance. Already these areas are under tremendous stress. As I said, these areas have a carrying capacity. We have to see, what is the load that they can bear of tourism, of development, etc. to remain protected. Everything has been weighted against them in the past. Now that we have got Management Action Plans for these areas, we are trying to correct the imbalance of the past and that will lead to the balance in the future.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO: In spite of the best efforts from the Ministry of Environment, it is not the preservation alone but the encroachment of the wetlands, especially the shallow backwaters, which is there. There is a proposal for filling up nearly thousand acres of shallow backwaters at Cochin and exploiting it for commercial purposes. May I know whether the proposal has come to the notice of the Ministry of Environment? May I also know whether the Ministry has given clearance? If not or if so, what is the attitude of the

Government towards this kind of a proposal? The shallow backwaters are being filled up for economic exploitation or for commercial exploitation.

Another thing is this. The coral-reefs matter was mentioned here. The coral-reefs are rich with Calcium Carbonate content. There are proposals from the State Governments and the State Government agencies for extracting coral reefs for the manufacture of white cement. The proposals are being finalised and are being submitted to the Government. What is the attitude or the approach of the Ministry of Environment and Forest to this kind of industrial schemes?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: *Prima facie*, the approach of the Ministry, based on what the hon. Member is saying is that these are very very inappropriate, environmentally. Basically, filling up of low line or shallow coastal areas which amounts to nothing but reclamation has severe environmental impacts. So, *prime facie*, I can best say that this is not something which my Ministry would be able to easily approve of.

With regard to taking out the coral-reefs for the production of cement, I think, to me, it sounds very strange because I do not think, such a proposal would stand scrutiny at all.

With regard to the other proposal which the hon. Member has mentioned I shall get the information about it and inform the hon. Member.

SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE: Sir, not many coal mining activities are going on in the country especially in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and other States. But, different coal mining activities



are going on where little attention is paid to the environmental aspect. Will the hon. Minister take steps so that the coal mining authorities do not put such hazards to the environmental aspects? Recently in Chandrapur, there have been heavy rains and all the areas were flooded because of coal mining activities. No environmental aspect is taken care of there. Will the Minister take some interest in this aspect and do something about it?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: It is true that a large amount of coal mines where mining has been carried out in the last several years — the mines are in exhaustion after the mining is complete—is left in a very degraded condition which leads not only to the degradation of themselves but it also affects the adjoining areas. Now, whenever any of these coal mining projects are approved, a condition is made about the rehabilitation of coal mines and of integrating various environmental considerations within the new mining projects.

This is happening. This is under constant monitoring. Coal mines, in the past, have caused severe degradation. Attempts are also being made by us to take up projects for environmental correction and for filling up, etc., all these degraded coal mines. It is only when these coal companies are agreeing to correct what they have done earlier, are their new schemes being sanctioned simultaneously.

\*SHRI R. JEEVARATHINAM: Hon. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to put a question to the Minister for Environment as regards the degradation of wetland.

I would like to cite a particular instance in my constituency. There are several leather units and tanneries near the Palar river in my constituency. The effluents from them continue to flow into the river and these affect wetlands in the area because of the pollution so caused.

Let me know from the Minister whether this has come to the notice of the Environment Ministry. If so, what are the measures they contemplate to put an end to the pollution problem faced by the wetland farmers who live by the Palar riverbed?

MR. SPEAKER: Could you get the translation in English?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: From wetland, it goes to coal mines and now to leather. I suppose they all affect wetlands. (Interruptions) It is in relation to wetlands.

With regard to the leather industry and tannery industry, environmentally it is a major delinquent. Several schemes have been launched, especially in the State of Tamil Nadu and in Kanpur which are two heavily clustered leather and tannery areas. Some of these schemes are complete and some of them are not. There is an element of subsidy. There is an element of support.

I will request the hon. Member to let me have separately a specific case of the lake and the units which are causing this pollution. We will look into that.

SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD: Sir, in my constituency, there is a very old lake known as Rankala Tank. For the

last two years, it is full of weeds which have started spreading. In Marathi, we call it 'Kandal'. The whole water is polluted and nobody goes for swimming. Even the Corporation tried to remove the weeds but they could not succeed. I have given Rs. 5 lakh from MP's Fund. To my knowledge, that fund cannot be used for this purpose. Even then, the Corporation is trying to find out some way. The citizens have set up a committee. They are also helping financially and physically.

I would like to know from the Environment Minister whether he would help us in this respect and send some funds for removal of weeds and to purify the water.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: The hon. Member's concern is about weeds. But weeds in the wetland have an ecological function. Efforts should be made to control them rather than eradicate them. So, just removal of weeds may not be the answer for the lake because the lake eco-system is dependent upon those weeds. Sometimes the biological control is not desirable as this may lead to total extinction. If some biological method is found for its removal, it may lead to total extinction and may have adverse ecological effects. Manual removal of this is also possible. I am sure, the hon. Member would think that manual removal of weeds would also lead to avenues of employment.

With regard to Rs. 5 lakh, I am thankful to him for allocating Rs. 5 lakh. I hope he agrees to increase it for this area. He may like to take this up with the Minister concerned to be able to utilise these funds for such activities because it is these activities which have an impact on the society around. I would be happy to hear from the Member about

a specific project. We shall look into how we can help in the matter.

[Translation]

SHRI TARA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister through you, whether he is aware of the fact that previously, the lakes were encroached at lower level and the flood water used to gather there. It used to maintain the ground water level but now-a-days the flood water flows away and the fertile land is converted into wasteland. Whether the Government would enact a law to stop the encroachment of lakes so that the fertility of the land, which is being fading away may be preserved?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this problem has cropped up due to the lack of co-ordination between man and nature during the last few years. Besides it, if the State Governments stop the encroachments we can get those benefits from the lakes and canals.

[English]

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA: May I know from the hon. Minister as to how many States in the country have taken up the programme? Further, how much money is provided to them by the Government of India?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: As stated earlier, a large number of the wetlands have been identified which include those wetlands which come under the Ramsar Convention and also those who do not. I have given a total list of areas which have been identified from amongst both man-made and natural wetlands. A total sum of Rs. 535.95 lakhs or roughly Rs. 536 lakhs has been allocated for the conservation of

wetlands. A large number of schemes are also in the pipeline. The main question before us now is to make viable projects, i.e. projects which encompass all aspects of conservation. As already stated, these schemes have been made and they are in the pipeline. And the money sanctioned to various States is roughly Rs. 536 lakh.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: One year back, the hon. Minister had an opportunity to come to the forest areas of Kerala. But I am sure he did not have an opportunity to pass through or fly over the beautiful backwater areas of Kuttanad in Alleppey District. We are told that 21 projects have been taken up after the National Survey. I am sure if the Minister sees this area, he will include it as one of the projects. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will make a survey of this large area of Kuttanad which is actually below the sea level like some of the lands in Holland. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether this area, after the survey, will be included as one of the projects for protecting the wetlands of the nation.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I would very much like to avail of the hon. Member's invitation. I am aware of not only the ecological sensitivity but also the natural beauty of that area. In the first instance, I will send a team to see what can be done to take it up as one of the projects. For the information of the hon. Member, I would like to mention that there are two wetlands in Kerala which have been selected for conservation and management. These are Asthamudi and Sansthanakota. As regards Kuttanad area, on the basis of the hon. Member's suggestion, I would send a team there.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will you please send the team immediately, without much delay?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, this is the longest question that I had to face. This should also go on record.

MR. SPEAKER: We appreciate your tenacity.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the Wooller Lake of Jammu and Kashmir, since it is a major lake of our country and slowly and steadily it is extinguishing. It is the biggest lake of our country. What steps are being taken by the hon. Minister to save it.

Secondly, he has mentioned Madhya Pradesh. There are so many lakes in Madhya Pradesh which are extinguishing gradually. What steps are being taken to save the lakes in the small villages of Madhya Pradesh?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: As far as the lake of Madhya Pradesh are concerned, I have told that major schemes have been formulated for Bhopal and Sagar and out of the small districts such a scheme is being formulated for Chhindwara also.

So far as the lake of Kashmir is concerned, I will send the requisite information to the hon. Member about the schemes for the lake.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: The Question Hour is over.