

(a) whether a Forest Project has been launched to check and reduce soil erosion by Gandhi Sagar and Chambal rivers and if so, the area under this project ;

(b) the number of employees working in this Forest Project ;

(c) whether even after launching this project, deforestation has increased and the forests have nearly been destroyed ; and

(d) further steps Government propose to take to protect forests and check soil erosion under this project ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BIR SEN) : (a) A Centrally sponsored scheme of soil Conservation in the catchments of various rivers including Chambal has been under implementation since 1962 to check soil-erosion. The Chambal river has a catchment area of 2.6 million hectares and includes the catchment area of Gandhi-sagar.

(b) The total number of employees working under the scheme in Chambal catchment is 443.

(c) The local demands for fuelwood and cattle fodder exceed the sustainable capacity of the forests, which is tending to have an adverse effect on them.

(d) The following important steps have already been taken to protect the forests and to check soil-erosion :—

- (i) Patrolling vulnerable forest areas through special teams to prevent illicit cutting of trees.
- (ii) Intensifying soil conservation and afforestation programmes.
- (iii) Undertaking the programme of social forestry inclusive of farm forestry on an extensive scale in non forest areas to supplement the supply of fuelwood and fodder and thereby mitigate pressure on forests.

Criteria for Giving Tribal Status to a Particular Area

1210. SHRI KRISHAN PRATAP SINGH : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the grounds on which people of an area or community are given tribal status;

(b) the names of areas and communities the people of which were declared as tribals during the last five years and reasons thereof ; and

(c) the names of areas and communities which are presently demanding tribal status and reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI-MATI RAM DULARI SINHA) : (a) The general criteria followed to give tribal status to any community under Article 342 of the Constitution are (i) Indications of primitive traits, (ii) distinctive culture, (iii) geographical isolation, (iv) shyness of contact with the community at large and (v) backwardness.

(b) No new community was declared as Scheduled Tribe during the last five years.

(c) The proposals received from the State Governments are being considered in the context of the proposed comprehensive revision of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and at this stage, are not disclosed in the public interest.

[Translation]

Deployment of BSF and CRPF to Check Culprits From Nepal

1211. SHRI ABDUL HANNAN ANSARI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Jai Nagar district Madhubani and district Sitamarhi are situated on the borders of Nepal;