

in February, 1981, for release of 260 ha. of forest land for the Varadarajaswami Gudi Irrigation Project in Kurnool District was considered by the Central Government and not agreed to. The State Government sent a revised proposal in August, 1982, in which the requirement of forest land was reduced to 200 ha. This revised proposal was considered by the Advisory Committee set up under Section 3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and it was found necessary to have the project cleared first by the Central Department of Environment from the environment angle. The Department of environment constituted an expert group for this purpose. On the basis of the recommendations of the expert group, the Department of Environment recommended in January, 1983, that the irrigation project at the proposed site should not be taken up considering the importance of preserving the wildlife habitat. The area coming under submergence forms part of Nagarjunasagar—Srisailem Wildlife Sanctuary, which has also been constituted into a Tiger Reserve.

Before taking a final view in the matter, an inter-departmental team consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Director (Tiger Project) and Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Government of Andhra Pradesh, was constituted to carry out a site inspection of the area and to submit its recommendations. The team recommended the lowering of the height of the dam and the release of only 160 ha. of forest land subject to certain safeguards, including the shifting of a village to a place outside the sanctuary area. The State Government has been requested to initiate action for the relocation of the village. The State Government has also been requested, to examine and report immediately the implications of lowering the height of the dam. As soon as the required information is made available by the State Government, the case will be decided.

**Regularisation of Daily Rated Clerks
in Central Passport Offices**

1280. SHRI GADADHAR SAHA :
SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of daily rated clerks working in central Passport Offices;

(b) whether Government have decided to regularise such employees as have fulfilled the conditions for absorption in regular employment including those who have become over aged; and

(c) if so, the procedure being adopted for such regularisation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN) :

(a) 307 daily rated lower division clerks are working in 19 Passport Offices all over India under the Central Passport Organisation, of the Ministry of External Affairs.

(b) and (c). It has since been decided to regularise such employees, (including those who were overage at the time of their initial appointment or have since become overage) who qualify in the Department Competitive Examination (including typing test) scheduled to be held on the 24th March, 1985 at 5 centres viz Delhi, Lucknow, Bombay, Madras and Cochin. This will also be subject to availability of regular vacancies of Lower Division Clerks, Services of those Daily Rated Clerks who do not qualify in the above mentioned examination as well as the typewriting test will have to be terminated accordingly.

**Free Tickets to Foreign/Indian
Journalists**

1281. SHRI SANAT KUMAR
MANDAL :
SHRIMATI GEETA MUL-
KHERJEE :

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme or guidelines laid down for issuing of free tickets to foreign/Indian journalists and their families by Air-India, if so, the broad outlines thereof;

(b) whether a written complaint has been made to the Air-India management in India about the preferential treatment to atleast three London based correspondents of some Indian national newspapers in the issue of free tickets for themselves and their families as mentioned in the news item appearing in the 'Business Standard' Calcutta Issue dated 11 February, 1985; and

(c) if so, whether the matter has been investigated and its outcome ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) :

(a) Free tickets can be given to foreign/Indian journalists by an airline in terms of a contract signed between the airline and news-papers/magazines, in lieu of the advertisements in such news papers and magazines. Free tickets can also be provided under a similar contract signed between Air-India and an individual journalist in lieu of articles published in national news-papers. In these cases the Corporation in return for free tickets receives the benefit of advertisement and publicity. In certain cases facility of casual credit is provided to the journalists to enable them to visit India to obtain a proper perspective of Indian National/International events while reporting on such events and also to counter adverse publicity on such events in the foreign press.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It was felt necessary by Air India that the adverse publicity in the foreign press relating to conditions in India, which tended to discourage foreigners from visiting India, should be countered in the interest of promoting traffic to India and for this purpose tickets against casual credit were issued to certain journalists so that on their return from India their reporting of the conditions in India in the foreign press would be in the proper perspective. The facts being known, Air-India did not consider it necessary to make any investigation.

Conservation of Wild Life

1282 PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether many rare species of wild life are facing threat of extinction in India;

(b) if so, whether effective conservative measures are not being implemented; and

(c) the details of the steps being contemplated by Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BIR SEN) : (a) Of the many identified species of wild life in India some are rare and some are endangered. None of the identified species are facing extinction.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

Negotiations with Akali Leaders on Punjab Problem

1283. SHRI S.M. BHATTAM : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government intend to resume negotiating with the Akali Leaders on the Punjab problem ;

(b) whether the high powered committee formed to study the various aspects of the problem for finding a peaceful solution has made any recommendations; and

(c) whether Government intend to release the remaining Akali Leaders who are now in prison ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) :

(a) Government have throughout been keeping the door open for negotiated