

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI-MATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Under the present phase of the Ganga Action Plan, 262 schemes at an estimated cost of Rs. 278.62 crores have been sanctioned for the three States of U.P., Bihar and West Bengal. Taking into account the expenditure on the Ganga Project Directorate establishment, research projects, operation and maintenance, and cost escalations on the schemes that is likely, the total outlay is expected to be of the order of Rs. 350 crores.

(b) the monitoring of the progress of the Ganga Action Plan is carried out periodically by a Monitoring Committee which has suggested greater scientific inputs, resource recovery and public participation.

(c) Sixty eight industries on the banks of River Ganga were identified as gross polluters by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Of these 37 units have set up effluent treatment plants (ETPs) to treat their effluents, ETPs are under construction in 11 more units and 10 units have closed down. The other 10 units have either not responded or are delaying action. Action taken in their regard is given below, Statewise.

	UP	Bihar	West Bengal	Total
1. Legal action being taken	4	1	4	9
2. Extension of time granted for submitting a time-bound programme	—	—	1	1

Development Works in Ambala Cantonment Area

906. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any development works in the Ambala Cantonment Area (Haryana) have been carried out during the tenure of the present President of Cantonment Board, Ambala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Since February '89, when the present President took over, Rs. 0.47 lakhs have been spent on original and miscellaneous works upto February, 1990 during the current financial year.

An expenditure of Rs. 12.10 lakhs was incurred during the same period on works which are under execution. Details are not maintained at the Centre.

[Translation]

Denudation of Forests

907. SHRI RAM SAGAR (Saidpur): Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total land area which has become barren in the country due to denudation of forests;

(b) whether Government propose to check indiscriminate denudation of forests; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI-MATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) According to the study conducted by Forest Survey of India with help of satellite imagery in the country during the period 1981-83 to 1985-87, there has been a reduction of 0.19 million hectares of forest cover during four years. The annual rate of loss works out to 47,500 hectares.

(b) and (c). Steps taken to check indiscriminate felling of forests are given in the statement below.

STATEMENT

Steps taken to check denudation of forests

1. The National Forest Policy, 1988, lays more emphasis on conservation of forests. There are specific provisions for protection of forests from grazing, fires and encroachment.
 2. Forest (Conservation) Act was enacted in 1980 to check diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. The Act has been made more stringent by an amendment of 1988.
 3. A Centrally sponsored scheme is under implementation to assist the States for development of infrastructure for protection of forests.
 4. Alternative sources of energy are being encouraged to replace fuel-wood in domestic and commercial sectors.
 5. Wood is substituted by alternative materials in packaging, railway sleepers, building construction, furniture etc.
6. Import policy for timber has been liberalised.
 7. Fiscal incentives are given to industries for wood substitution.
 8. Efforts are being made to control shifting cultivation.
 9. Guidelines have been issued to State/UT Governments from time to time for protection of forests. Some of these guidelines are as follows:
 - (i) To avoid felling of natural forests and where such felling are inevitable for restoration of crop of other silvicultural consideration, it should be restricted to area not exceeding 10 hectares in the hills and 25 hectares in the plains.
 - (ii) To consider banning of felling in the hills above 1,000 meters atleast for some years.
 - (iii) To identify critical areas in the hills and mountains which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigorous afforestation.
 - (iv) To set apart 4% of the geographical area as protection area like wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, biosphere reserve etc.
 - (v) Special guidelines have been issued for protection of forests from forest fires.

[English]

New Initiatives and Measures for Ocean Development

908. SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state