

drawn to the news report published in the Economic Times of 18th March, 1985 stating that the area under Forests has shrunk considerably since independence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if so, whether Government intend to take immediate steps so as to halt this process and ensure adequate increase in this area under green cover during the Seventh Five Year Plan; and

(d) if so, the nature of the steps contemplated for this purpose with the co-operation of the States concerned ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI VIR SEN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The data gathered by the National Remote Sensing Agency indicate a loss of about 18.74% of forest area in the whole country between 1972-75 and 1980-82. The NRSA estimates are being analysed and refined to determine the degree of the error in their estimates. These steps include ground verification on a sample analysis.

(c) and (d). The following steps have been taken to conserve and develop the forests of the country :—

- (i) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to check indiscriminate diversion of forest lands to non-forest purposes.
- (ii) Guidelines have been issued to the States and Union Territories for preparation of working (management) plans for the working of forests and to strengthen the enforcement machinery at the field level.
- (iii) The National Forest Policy is being reviewed to provide the needed thrust in favour of forest conservation and to create a massive people's movement for this purpose.
- (iv) An in-depth study is being undertaken with a view to work out the modalities for relieving pressure

on forests, specially by encouraging the use of substitute materials.

(v) As a measure to relieve the pressure on our forest-resources, it has been proposed in the 1985-86 budget to totally exempt from duty imported pulp and wood chips and make this concession available to all user industries. Customs duty on wood in certain specified forms is also proposed to be reduced from the existing level of 100 per cent to 10 percent *ad valorem*.

(vi) A massive afforestation programme is being taken up, specially with the objective of bringing about 5 million hectares of land every year under fuelwood and fodder plantations.

Modification of Service Rules to Avoid Delay

2432. PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal for fixing the responsibility for the inordinate delay in taking/implementing decisions at various levels of the official channels so as to streamline the administration;

(b) if so, the nature of the proposals under consideration in this regard and whether the delay would be constructed as a lapse;

(c) whether any modifications in service rules or amendments in the Constitution are also being contemplated; and

(d) if so, the nature and scope thereof along with the likely period required for this purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND CULTURE (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) :

(a) to (d). According to the provisions of the various conduct Rules that apply to government servants, they shall maintain devotion to duty at all times. Inordinate delay in taking/implementing decision is

hence an act of mis-conduct and Disciplinary Authorities can take action against erring government servants in accordance with the rules prescribed in this behalf. No amendments to the Service Rules are hence contemplated by the Government. Government are addressing themselves continuously to improvements in procedures and greater delegation of powers, at appropriate levels, so that delay in taking/implementing decisions can be reduced.

Construction of Tourist/Youth Hostels

2433. PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Tourism and I.T.D.C. would launch a programme for the construction of Tourist/Youth hostels at all district headquarters/University campus in co-operation with their counterparts in the States for the promotion of tourism and travel among the youths, as part of the activities in the International Year of youth 1985;

(b) if so, a brief outline of the programme chalked out in this regard; and

(c) if not, whether any such comprehensive programme would be included as a strategy to promote tourism in the country, during the Seventh Five Year Plan ?

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

(a) to (c). The Department of Tourism had constructed 18 Youth Hostels in various parts of the country, till the Sixth Five Year Plan. Further ten Youth Hostels are in various stages of construction and are likely to be completed during 1985. All these projects were taken up in collaboration with the concerned State Governments. ITDC has no specific scheme for the construction of the Youth Hostels.

Department of Tourism is now considering a scheme for the construction Yarti Niwases, providing accommodation for budget tourists at places of tourists' interest in the country in collaboration with the concerned State Governments. This will also help promoting travel among the Youth.

Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan Areas

2434. SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the Special Central Assistance provided to the States/Union Territories during Fifth and Sixth Five Year Plans for Tribal sub-plan areas, year-wise and State-wise;

(b) The funds provided by the States during Fifth and Sixth Plan for Tribal sub-plan areas;

(c) whether the aims and objectives of Special Central Assistance have been fulfilled;

(d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) the reasons for change of matching grant to Special Central Assistance ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) : (a) State-wise and year-wise break up of Special Central Assistance provided to the States/Union Territories from 1974-75 to 1978-79 and 1980-81 to 1984-85 is given in the statement annexed.

(b) During the Fifth Plan (1974-79), the States/U.Ts provided funds to the tune of Rs. 760 crores for the Tribal sub-plan areas and for the Sixth Plan period, they provided about Rs. 3550 crores.

(c) and (d). The Special Central Assistance has been provided for the Tribal sub-plan programmes in ITDPs programmes for Tribal pockets outside ITDPs and programmes for primitive Tribes. 181 ITDPs have been formed and 245 Pockets have also been identified. 72 communities who are very backward have been identified as Primitive Tribes for special programmes. The programmes for these areas and groups are being implemented by the State Governments generally in a satisfactory manner.

(e) The Special Central Assistance is meant as an additive to the States' efforts from the very inception of the Tribal sub-plan.