

Rate of Afforestation

611. SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the rate of afforestation during the last four years;

(b) how does it compare with the deforestation that has taken place during this period;

(c) the special measures being taken to increase the forests ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BIR SEN) : (a) The average rate of afforestation during the last four years has been 0.83 million hectares per annum,

(b) Figures on the exact extent of deforestation due to various reasons are not available. The average rate of deforestation authorised under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, has been 5896 hectares per annum.

(c) The annual pace of afforestation both within and outside forests was stepped up from 0.4 million hectares in 1980-81 to 1.2 million hectares in 1984-85. This tempo will be further intensified during the ensuing VIIIth Five Year Plan. It is proposed to afforest 5 million hectares per year during the VII plan period. With the setting up of the National Wasteland Development Board, this effort is proposed to be substantially augmented with people's participation.

Deciphering of Indus Script

612. SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether efforts are being made at present to decipher the Indus script;

(b) if so, whether any success has been achieved in this matter; and

(c) if not, the nature of difficulties being experienced in deciphering these scripts ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND CULTURE (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). While a number of valuable studies have been made, there is a lack of unanimity amongst the decipherers themselves regarding the nature of the Harappan language and script. In the absence of any positive evidence like a bilingual seal or epigraph, the claimed decipherment of Indus script can be regarded as an effort.

Development of More Tourist Sports in Kerala

613. SHRI K. KUNJAMBU : Will the the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state .

(a) whether Government of Kerala has sent any schemes for developing more tourist spots in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision of Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) : (a) and (b). The State Government of Kerala had forwarded 28 schemes for implementation with central assistance amounting to Rs. 647.70 lakhs. In view of the constraints on resources, the Department agreed to provide assistance to 4 schemes relating to parking facilities and Wynad and provision of boats/equipment for introduction of water sports at Thekkady, Quilon and Kumarkom at an estimated cost of Rs. 52.42 lakhs.

Tourism Traffic to Orissa

614. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether any measures have been taken by the Ministry to fully exploit the vast potential demand for tourist traffic to the Bhubaneswar/Konark/Puri Sector in Orissa in consultation with the Government of Orissa, Railways and the Indian Airlines; and