

(c) the area of land covered by forest in the years 1951, 1961, 1971 and 1981 ;

(d) the area of the land which has been brought under afforestation programme in last decade ; and

(e) the steps (including penal) Government have taken to curb illegal deforestation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) and (b) The Government are aware that deforestation causes environmental hazards. However,

the rate of deforestation has been effectively checked after the Forest (Conservation) Act was enacted in 1980.

(c) The forest area for these years is given below :

1950-51	70.80 million ha.
1960-61	68.96 million ha.
1970-71	74.93 million ha.
1980-81	75.06 million ha.

(d) The area covered by afforestation programmes since 1968-70 is given below :

	Social Forestry	Production Forestry	Total
Fourth Plan 1969-74	1,98,280 ha.	5,23,990 ha.	7,14,270 ha.
Fifth Plan 1974-79	5,67,335 ha.	6,53,861 ha.	12,21,196 ha.
Annual Plan 1979-80	1,21,057 ha.	1,01,301 ha.	2,22,358 ha.
Sixth Plan (target)	15,23,870 ha.	6,24,042 ha.	21,47,912 ha.

(e) The Government of India have enacted the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Some States have adopted specific legislation to check deforestation and provide better protection to the forests as well as strengthened the protection and enforcement machinery. Steps have also been taken to promote social and farm forestry programmes with a view to divert the pressures on the forest resources. A massive programme of afforestation has been launched for this purpose under the Prime Minister's 20-Point Programme. Revision of the National Forest Policy and the Indian Forest Act is also under the active consideration of the Government.

Apex Single Passenger Transport Authority for Metropolitan Cities

4894. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT : Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to set up an apex single passenger transport authority for Metropolitan Cities ;

(b) if so, the objectives, terms, conditions and the personnel of the working group appointed to achieve the above ;

(c) whether such apex authority will be concerned with transport planning, co-ordination of different agencies, fare structure, management and location of traffic ; and

(d) the time limit given to the working group to submit its report in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, IN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) to (c) The Government has accepted the recommendations of