

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) to (e) A new scheme for free education for girls upto college Level including professional courses is in the process of being framed. A Plan Allocation of Rs. 100 crores has been made for the scheme for the year 1998-99.

WWF Combined Study

30. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of UNICEF-World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) combined study which has warned of a serious water crisis in India;

(b) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps Government contemplate to tackle the problems as spelt out in the study?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The study highlights the importance of integrating conservation of natural resources with developmental activities and enriching bio-diversity of the country.

(c) The Government is taking action for carrying out afforestation programme and other soil conservation works within catchment areas of various rivers. Steps to protect and conserve forests falling within catchment areas are also being taken.

Project on Biological Diversity

31. SHRIMATI RANEE NARAH :
SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated an ambitious taxonomical research project to preserve various lower life forms and help sustain the biological diversity of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of measures taken/proposed to check the vanishing wildlife in the country and priorities set for wild life management;

(d) the details of action plan drawn for current year and Ninth Plan;

(e) whether N.E. States are for changes in the said plan; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) and (b) The Government has formulated an All India Coordinated Project for building capacity in taxonomy, having identified critically important areas and gaps in taxonomic work. The objectives of the project are as follows :

(i) Survey and identification of unexplored and under-explored groups of flora and fauna, with priority to ecologically and economically important groups and species.

(ii) Creation/augmentation of taxonomic expertise and capacity.

(iii) Introduction of new and desirable fields of information in taxonomic work.

(c) and (d) A network of about 520 National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries have been set up in the country for protection and conservation of biological diversity including wildlife. Species specific projects like Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Project on Sea Turtle have been started. Eco-development activities are being undertaken around the periphery of these protected areas. Financial assistance is being provided for protection of wildlife infrastructure development, habitat development, better communication facilities including wireless network etc.

The priorities for wildlife conservation during the Ninth Plan include control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, development of protected area network, eco-development around protected areas, welfare measures for wildlife staff, research and training, eco-tourism, wildlife conservation outside protected areas, prevention and mitigation of wildlife damage and establishment of second home for Asiatic Lions.

The Ninth Plan allocation for the wildlife sector is Rs 520 crores and the amount for the current year is Rs. 120.08 crores.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Setting up National Urban Transport Development Fund

32. SHRI RAMPAL SINGH : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a