

the additional benefits which the privatisation would generate and what are the reasons being considered in the direction to privatise any of these sectors?

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: As far as the profit making organisations are concerned, I would like to clarify that in the hotels division ITDC is not a profit making organisation. It is the duty free which really contributes to the profit of the ITDC. However, that apart, I have already said that considerations are the question of widening the capital base, a more professional management, better sales network nationally and internally, more accountability and also contribution towards resources that are to be raised for meeting the deficit in the general budget.

SHRI A. CHARLES: The whole House agrees that the performance of the ITDC, Indian Airlines and Air India is far from satisfactory. That is a larger issue and I leave it there. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister through you to a very small point. The services in the Indian Airlines and Air India is not satisfactory. Even the toilets are very very badly kept and there are instances where foreigners have complained about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Does it arise out of this question?

SHRI A. CHARLES: It is very important, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: But does it arise out of this question?

SHRI A. CHARLES: About the ITDC there is a point. There are a number of vacancies due to the retirement of officials. They are not filled. May I know from the hon. Minister whether action will be taken to fill up those vacancies?

MR. SPEAKER: Not allowed.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Is it a fact that the Government is not any more interested in

continuing the Vayudoot services from 1st January 1992?

MR. SPEAKER: This does not arise out of this question. This relates to Air India, Indian Airlines and Tourism Development.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: There is already a confusion by various statements of Ministers about the public sector undertakings. I think that today's answer of the Minister is going to add to more confusion. He says that there are many options open. The Government is considering various options that may include partial privatisation also. He also says that the Hotel Industry is not earning profit and therefore they want to professionalise it and they want better accountability. There are some high officers of ITDC in the hotel industry against whom CBI cases are pending and investigations are going on. I would like to know whether the Government will take action against such officers who are guilty of corruption or who are doing harm to the industry, so that at least a message goes that their functioning will be better and they will be accountable. The most important thing is that these are mismanaged. It is not that there is wrong with the philosophy as such.

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: I would like to certainly assure the hon. Member that if anyone is found guilty by CBI or any other agency, very stern and deterrent action will be taken against him. As far as the confusion is concerned, I think that would be cleared in a very short time.

Destruction of Himalayas

+

*62. **SHRI BJOY KRISHNA HAN-
DIQUE:**
**SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA
RAJE:**

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

(a) whether there is a large scale destruction and denudation of forests in the Himalaya;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to save the Himalayas; and

(d) the details of area covered by leases granted by the Government for mining and the area therefrom proposed to be de-leased for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). No large scale destruction and denudation of forests have taken place in the Himalayan Region. The actual forest cover in the Himalayan region has shown an increase from 1,87,000 sq. kms. to 1,94,161 sq. kms. during the assessment made in 1987 and 1989 by the Forest Survey of India using Lands at imageries relating to 1981-83 and 1985-87 respectively.

(c) Among various steps taken by the Government for Himalayan conservation are:-

(i) The Forest (Conversation) Act, 1980 was enacted to check the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes;

(ii) The State Governments have been asked to consider a ban on green felling of trees on hilly and mountainous regions above 1000 metres;

(iii) Guidelines have also been issued to the States to involve village communities in protection of forests on usufruct basis;

(iv) The GB Pant Himalayan Institute for Environment & Development is engaged in research and development studies;

(d) Diversion of forest area for mining projects is permitted only after prior approval of the Central Government under the provisions of the Forest (Conversation) Act, 1980. The State wise details of forest areas permitted for mining by the Central Government are as follows:

<i>Name of the State</i>	<i>Forest area released (In hectares) Since 1980)</i>
Andhra Pradesh	4371.42
Assam	0.00
Bihar	717.85
Goa	0.00
Gujarat	107.38
Haryana	0.00
Himachal Pradesh	0.00
Jammu & Kashmir	0.00
Karnataka	13.42
Kerala	0.00

<i>Name of the State</i>	<i>Forest area released (In hectares) Since 1980)</i>
Madhya Pradesh	4560.04
Maharashtra	22.65
Manipur	0.00
Meghalaya	0.00
Orissa	1698.18
Punjab	0.00
Rajasthan	1.37
Sikkim	0.00
Tamil Nadu	111.82
Tripura	0.00
Uttar Pradesh	1684.14
West Bengal	0.00
A & N Islands	8.00
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.00
Daman & Diu	0.00
Arunchal Pradesh	0.00
Total	13286.36

SHRI BHOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE:

The hon. Minister in his statement stated that there are no large scale destruction and denudation of forest. But as reported from various sources, the blasting operations in limestone quarries in the lower Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh has caused massive denudation of forest resulting in extensive land slides, impoverishment of flora and fauna, decline in agricultural production and recurrent and widespread floods. Yet, limestone production has almost doubled from 4.36 lakh tonnes in 1987-88 to 7.95 tonnes in the last week of last February.

MR. SPEAKER: You don't have to give the information. You have to ask the question. Ask a pointed question and get a pointed reply.

SHRI BHOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE: I want to know, since the order given by the High Court is to suspend blasting and it was not done, whether the Government thinks that these existing Environment Acts are not effective to protect the environment or is it due to the wilful connivance of the concerned departments.

MR. SPEAKER: As a matter of fact, different methods have to be followed for getting the laws modified and you cannot do it this way. Anyway, the Minister is on his legs and he will reply.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: The hon. Member has expressed concern about the limestone mining in Himachal Pradesh. Undoubtedly, limestone mining does lead to some environmental degradation. In my answer, I have given figures of the areas which have been diverted for mining purpose in Himachal Pradesh. I have given figures relating to forest land, the land which comes under the Forest Conservation Act. I am afraid, I do not have the figures and I cannot have them of private lands or any other type of non-forest land which has been diverted for mining.

Sir, in Himachal Pradesh the total forest area, as per satellite imagery, has undergone an increase during the years 1981-1983 and 1985-1987. These were the periods, a span of four years in which satellite imagery comparisons were made. In Himachal Pradesh, there is an increase of 3.8 per cent, which if translated into square kilometres, comes to 495 square kilometres.

SHRI BHOJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE: Considering the devastation of trees and plantations, it appears that in large number of cases, the mining leases were either granted or mining was illegally right done with in the forest area, apart from the area permitted for the diversion of mining projects, as stated by the hon. Minister. As suggested by an expert committee constituted by the Minister of Environment and Forest, as per the High Court order of 8th Jan. '91, will the hon. Minister consider banning of mining in certain sectors of the Himalayas so that Himalayan ecology is preserved and the effects of the distributed ecology may not adversely affect the ecological pattern of the plains in the country?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, mining in the Himalayan region has been a matter of concern and I share the concern of the hon. Member. Even the Supreme Court had made

certain observations on this. I have recently constituted a committee to look into all aspects of the environment with regard to mining in the Himalayas. especially in Himachal Pradesh, because there was a view that a lot of mining industries should come up there. There was also a question of environmental degradation. So, to look into this, I have constituted a committee of experts. I shall be getting the report very soon. After getting the report. We shall consider it for appropriate action.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Sir, it is very touching and interesting to note that the Ministry of Environment has actually stated that there is no large scale destruction and denudation of forest, as per imageries relating to 1981-83 and 1985-1987, etc. However, recently a Conference on Energy and Environment was held and they said very clearly that there was tremendous degradation, destruction and devastation in the Himalayan areas; and they further said that the Himalayan Action Plan should urgently be considered. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, if he has done anything about the Himalayan Action Plan and when he proposes to get this going?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I have got figures which shows that there has been an increase in the forest cover in the Himalayan region. But, I am not aware of this Committee or group of people, calling themselves by whatever name, who sat and made certain observations.

The ecological aspects of forests in the Himalayan region are very important. We are giving it all importance. We are giving it all importance. Recently, the G.B. Pant Himalayan Institute for Environment and Development in Almora has been set up. Its objective is to consider the entire gamut of the aspects of environment and ecology in the Himalayan region. So, this Institute itself shall be looking into these aspects. It is being set up by us.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Sir, the Minister is saying that he knows nothing

about the high-powered conference which took place on the 27th September in Simla where experts from different parts of the country attended a two-day national workshop on this.

People had come from all over the place. A plan was even submitted to the Prime Minister. And the Minister has categorically said on the floor of the House that he does not know anything about such a high-powered committee or that a plan was actually proposed to the Prime Minister. I would like to have a reply on that.

Apart from this, he said that among the various steps taken by the Government for conservation, one is the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 which was enacted to check the diversion of forest land. On the floor of this House, during a debate in which participated, the Minister said very clearly something like, 1,37,000 hectares of forest land were diverted for purposes of illegal mining and encroachment. He said this on the floor of the House. What does he intend to do about situations like this? It means that I have not been given the complete truth in the answer.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the Hon. Member is totally confused. (*Interruptions*) I will clarify. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: While asking some other question, you can pay him back in the same coin.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I am very serious. (*Interruptions*)

I never thought that the Member had understood this question in the seriousness which it deserved.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: I am not expecting this kind of answer. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I appreciate the concern of the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: This is like a good Minister.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Between the brother and the sister- the brother is behind me and the sister is in front of me- I am sandwiched.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Please reply to the question. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not the proper way. He is in the habit of avoiding things in a lighter vein..(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: I think, you will direct your ingenuity in the right direction.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: It is all right.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister should reply the question with all seriousness instead of taking it lightly. Probably, the hon. Minister is not aware of what all transpired in the conference.

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, there are 7-800 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which, from time to time, are holding seminars and conferences-very useful and very good. They come up with suggestions. Some of them have already been received by my Ministry before. Some of them are sometimes due. We do have a look at all of them. Now what I mean I will correct myself, if required was that I would have perhaps looked at all these suggestions which come from time to time. I get them on daily basis. They are happening all over the country.

They are very useful suggestions. The Member was concerned that I made a statement on the floor of this House.'

MR. SPEAKER: Generally, the Member is concerned with remedial measure you would like to take.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: About illegal diversion of forest land, I had given figures relating to diversion of forest land-not illegal diversion of forest land. (*Interruptions*) I do not recall. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You should not do like that.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: I would like to know if encroachments are illegal or legal. The word 'encroachment' has been used.

MR. SPEAKER: He was not referring to the 'illegal'. He explained to me in my Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: He is distinguishing the ones which are done with permission and which are done without permission.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I will clarify the position. What I had said both on the Floor of this House and on the Floor of the Rajya Sabha was that certain area was regularised for encroachments prior to 1980, that is, encroachments which had taken place prior to 1980. This regularisation was done subsequent to 1980. In 1980, we had the Forest Conversation Act. This regularisation was done after 1980. But the encroachments pertain prior to 1980. This question is not on that subject. I had given those figures. But I do not have the figures readily available with me now. But we are giving due concern and we are giving all the priority to it. (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Sir, he had used the word 1990. He cannot get away with it... (*Interruptions*) ...Sir, he is a Minister. He should be responsible. I do not expect this kind of an answer from him. He is now saying 1980. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, I think this is a big question and you would like to discuss this matter with the Members who are concerned with this matter. You can call them and discuss it with them.

SHRI ANANDGAJAPATI RAJU POOSAPATI: Mr. Speaker, my question is a logical extension of this question. I would like to ask about the Conference which is going to take place next year in Brazil. Now, environmental concern have come to the forefront and even this question is about forecast denudation and all that. The concept of sustainable development has also come to the forefront. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what work or exercise he has done in that direction to see that developmental concerns of all the developing countries and particularly that of India are maintained along with forest coverage and sustainable developments.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: One of the most important post-war Conferences, the UNCED Summit is going to be held in Brazil in June 1992. It is Head of States Conference. For the last several months, we have been preparing for it. Preparatory meetings have been held. I have personally held meetings with prominent NGOs and taken their views. We are getting inputs from all sectors to prepare a comprehensive strategy for India and sustainable development for the UNCED.

SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHAN-DURI: It is apparent from the discussion that there is a considerable difference in the perception of denudation and deforestation. The Minister has quoted the Landsat figures relating to 1981-83 and 1985-1987. I would like to know whether there have been any efforts to get the latest information in this regard or not. If not, will the Minister kindly plan to get the latest information for different parts of the Himalayan region?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the last figures which we obtained were in 1989. This is an on-going process and even now, this process is on-going. From time to time, Satellite imagery figures are being taken. It is

an on-going process for various parts of the State.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, In response to his written reply to the questions on forest land, I would like to know whether state Governments have violated Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and have denuded and destroyed forests without any prior approval of Central Government. Has any such instance come to notice to the Government?

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: There have been no serious violations of the Forests Act by the State Governments. There have been some cases about which there was some ambiguity and it was done inadvertently on the part of the State Governments. The State Governments have been informed and they themselves have come back and as suggested they have even taken remedial measures in some cases.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KRISHAN DUTT SULTANPURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the detail regarding leasing of land in mining areas by the Central Government. I also want to know how many cases of issues of pattas have been sent by the State Governments for approval of the Centre. Out of the cases so recommended by the State Governments, the number of cases cleared by the Central Government and the names of the persons who have managed to get land on lease at various places and are now damaging the environment? In Mussoorie hills, ban has been imposed on mining of limestone. In my constituency, mining of limestone is going on from Panta Sahib to Pawan. Contractors of Dehradun who were responsible for causing damage to the hills there are now being given contracts. Will the hon. Minister get the matter investigated and take action in this regard as the contracts have been given by

the B.J.P. men....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*].

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I have no information with regard to the allotment of forest land and giving pattas by the State Government to anyone without the permission of the Central Government. When this was brought to my notice, I had checked up with the Government of Himachal Pradesh and I was informed that it was not correct.

With regard to the other question on mining, I request the hon. Member to give me the specific cases that he mentioned and I will certainly look into them.

[*Translation*]

PROF. PREM CHAND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that in Himachal Pradesh no land has been transferred for these purposes. The hon. Minister has also mentioned that he is particularly interested in the Committee constituted for Himachal Pradesh. Has any proposal been received by the Central Government from the Government of Himachal Pradesh to the effect that Central Government should take the responsibility of protecting the ecology of whole of the Himalayan range keeping in view the importance of environment from national perspective. Though it will result in much expenditure but whole of the Himalayan environment will be protected. Will the Government make available funds to the Government of Himachal Pradesh for protecting Himalayan ecology in which interest has also been shown by other nations which are even prepared to provide assistance for the programme? For this scheme will funds be made available..(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, full priority is being given to safeguarding environment in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh is also being given priority in all the international schemes of protecting environment and ecology. The hon. Member is aware of all this and he has also stated that

a committee has been constituted for Himalayan region. Himalayan region is spread in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bengal but the problems in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are different. Committee was constituted for specific issues being confronted by Himachal Pradesh. I think only after receiving the report of the Committee, the Government will be able to pursue the matter.

[English]

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, in relation to part (c) of the Minister's reply I would like to know that what is the exact mechanism for monitoring ; whether the existing set up in the States is going to take up this increased activity and if so, whether that existing staff has been oriented for the protective aspect of forestry vis-a-vis the productive aspect.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you leading to the Ex-Servicemen organisation?

SHRI K.P.SINGH DEO: Yes, Sir, if you want me to.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I wish he was because the ecological task force has done a very good job and I wish his question was about that.

Sir, some of the steps taken for the improvement of Himalayan forests are Integrated Water-shed Development Scheme, Minor Forest Produce Scheme, Area Oriented Fuel wood and fodder scheme and Beneficiary Oriented scheme for Tribal Development. I will be very happy to give more details of these schemes to the hon. Member if he wishes so.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, my question has not been answered. I wanted to know the exact mechanism for monitoring. As narrated in part (c) of the question, very laudable steps have been taken by the Government. I would like to know what is the exact mechanism of monitoring; whether it is doing it through the existing agencies or by supplementary agencies and whether the

existing staff has been oriented sufficiently because so far it is only the productive aspect which is covered in FRI.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Regional offices have been set up by us at six places including one at Chandigarh with the Officer of the rank of CCF, Chief Conservator of Forests to do this monitoring and also to coordinate. I would like to inform the House, through you, Sir, that I have received many complaints from Members, both in the Consultative Committee meetings and otherwise, regarding the figures of afforestation which were planted but did not get saplings out of them. I have asked every State Government to give me specific figures, block-wise, Panchayat-wise and district-wise of plantation taken in the current plantation season. Once I get that figure I will endeavour to inform all Members of Parliament the plantation taken place in each one's constituency so that they can themselves give me the feed back.

MR. SPEAKER: We have given half-an-hour to this question and we had good questions and good answers too.

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government propose to take some special steps for improving environment from Chatra to Madhubani via Birpur Barrage as it has been completed destroyed as a result of felling of trees in the terai region of Himalaya from Chatra to Birpur Barrage.

MR. SPEAKER: This question is specific and if the hon. Minister has any reply then he can go a head.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of the hon. Member is quite specific. If the hon. Member sends me any specific in writing which he prefers to be implemented. I will definitely examine it.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of the report of the

expert committee according to which fast erosion of land in Himalayan region, especially in Western Himalayan area, will convert whole of North India desert in 70 years. Will the Government translate into action the recommendation of the Planning Commission regarding setting up Eco-Development Authority, headed by the hon. Prime Minister and assisted by the Chief Ministers of hill States as Members, for proper monitoring of ecology and to check soil erosion in the hills?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I could not follow the question of the hon. Member which development authority he is referring to ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I did not understand the word 'eco'.*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: How can you expect an answer from him?*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAMAL NATH: My earphone is not working. There have been many suggestions with regard to Himachal Pradesh. There is a problem of erosion. It is a very major problem.

SHRI SUKH RAM: I am talking about the entire Himalayas, particularly, the Western Himalayas.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I have started with Himachal and he is not letting me go beyond that.

MR. SPEAKER: The former Planning Minister has made certain suggestions. You better talk to him and decide about it later on. It has come from his Ministry. Maybe, it has not been brought to your notice! There are so many suggestions.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MANABENDRA SHAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to his statement-C.

1 and C.2. Is the hon. Minister aware that environmental phobia has stopped certain basic developments in the hill areas? Take the examples of road construction, High tension wire and so on.

The fact is that if there is one tree in a field, the road cannot proceed.

MR. SPEAKER: That is why, it is called sustainable development. Let us not go into that.

SHRI MANABENDRA SHAH: Has the hon. Minister made some norms so that the development part does not stop and the environment is also not affected?

MR. SPEAKER: That is the philosophy of sustainable development. This would be the last question.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I hope so, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: You feel relieved?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, some cases of delay had been brought to our notice. We are endeavouring to ensure that there are no delays. If there are any specific delays, we will look into it. There was a cumulative delay because, a lot of information required from the State Government to be sent along with the proposal was not being sent and we are now devising a mechanism by which delays shall not be there.

[Translation]

Cases of Deforestation

*64. SHRI RAM TAHA CHAUDHARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of deforestation, State-wise, reported during the last three years;

(b) whether the Government have stopped the auction of forests for cutting of trees;