

hilly track, we have got lot of difficulties over that area. But we are doing our best.

As far as the accident is concerned, I have got a full list of the accidents of all the places and the recommendations which have come. I can send it to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

Utilisation of Rain Water

*553. SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL:
SHRI JAGMEET SINGH
BRAR:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have chalked out any scheme to ensure full utilisation of rain water; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) and (b). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The country receives annual precipitation of 4000 cubic kilometres out of which the average annual flow available in rivers is around 1850 cubic kilometres. Owing to the topographic, hydrological and other constraints, the utilisable surface water is assessed at 690 cubic kilometres in addition to the annual replenishable ground water resources which is about 450 cubic kilometres. The State Governments are implementing major, medium and minor irrigation schemes for increased utilisation of utilisable water. A total of 263 major irrigation projects and 1104 Medium irrigation projects have been taken up so far all over the country in addition to promotion of well irrigation and minor irrigation works to increase the utilisation of

utilisable water. 83 major projects and 777 medium projects have been completed so far. At present, the utilisation of water has been assessed at 552 cubic kilometres out of the total utilisable quantity of 1140 cubic kilometres.

For maximising the availability of utilisable water, the Government has prepared national perspectives for transfer of water from surplus areas to water-deficit areas, which comprises of two components viz. Himalayan River Development Component and Peninsular River Development Component. National Water Development Agency is engaged in carrying out detailed studies on inter-linking of major rivers in each component. Already studies on 7 water transfer links out of the 17 water transfer links in the Peninsular River Development Component have been completed and the Preliminary feasibility reports have been sent to the concerned State Governments for concurrence. Further studies for the remaining water transfer links are programmed to be completed in the Eighth Plan. Studies on Himalayan component have also been taken up recently. Separately, water shed development programmes have also been undertaken to conserve and utilise the rainwater where it falls. But full utilisation of rain water is not possible due to evaporation and vegetation losses and because of the need to allow certain amount of water to flow in the river for maintaining the river regime

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the reply to my question laid on the table of the House. The hon. Minister has said that the country receives annual precipitation of 4000 cubic kilometres out of which only 25 to 30 per cent of water is utilized. There always remains an acute shortage of drinking water in the country. What to talk of human beings even the animals do not get drinking water. Therefore, my submission is that a comprehensive programme should be chalked out to be launched in rural areas. In this state-

ment you have referred to major schemes which include comprehensive projects to promote irrigation through wells and minor irrigation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, besides raising my question through you I would like to submit that perhaps these schemes would not be effective to overcome the water shortage in rural areas. In this regard I would like to suggest to the Government to chalk out a plan to dig up small ponds in rural areas and the funds for this purpose should be provided directly to the people. I am not in favour of providing funds for this purpose through the Government officials. Because if this method is adopted there will be irregularities, the money will be swindled and not reach the needy. If such small ponds are dug in rural areas, the farmers can instal even handpumps or tubewells there. In this manner, they will get water comparatively at a higher level and the people in those areas will be benefited in many ways. Hence, what I would like to know from the hon. Minister is whether the Planning Ministry has formulated any such scheme to utilize the rain water that goes waste in the country? If so, how long it will take to implement the plan?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has rightly said that our country receives 4000 cubic kilometres of total water, the most of which comes in the form of snow. The flowing water in our country is just 1850 cubic kilometres and in that too the water that can be used is just 690 cubic kilometres in total. A part of it evaporates, some goes in vegetation loss and some is soaked in by the ground. The flowing water when evaluated was found to be about 690 cubic kilometres. Less than even half of it is being utilized at present. We can utilise even more than half of it and efforts are being made for its utilisation.

The hon. Member has asked about the digging of tube-wells etc. So far as the Ministry of Water Resources is concerned, we conduct surveys for water throughout the country and find out the places where underground water is available, its quantity besides — the places where water level decreases and the places where its level is

stable. On the basis of these surveys schemes are prepared by the Central Government and transfer these to the State Governments who implement these schemes jointly and dig tubewells.

I agree with the hon. Member that large scale irregularities do take place and it is essential to check them. I think that the general consciousness being generated at present, will help a lot to improve the situation in this regard.

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: The hon. Minister has been very subtle in his reply. He stated that full utilization of rain water was not possible due to evaporation and vegetation losses and because of the need to allow certain amount of water to flow in the river for maintaining the river regime. Nobody can fully utilize the water but it is difficult to understand not to utilize water just for maintaining the river regime. The blockade of water would increase the fertility of the land, it also guards the trees and plants. It is true that when the accumulation of water is more than required then the trees wither. But it is also helpful in protecting the trees. The question I raised is important and that the boring facility is provided free of cost to the farmers in the country and that money is misused. When the farmers avail the facility of getting personal tubewells installed free of cost, then some conditions are imposed that the machines will have to be purchased from a particular dealer. The result is that the farmers do not get good machines. I would request the Government to provide money for the purpose directly to the farmers. Middlemen are the source of corruption and dishonesty. Machines are defective, the farmers find it difficult to irrigate their land with those machines and thus ultimately the output is not up to the mark. This is a national loss. Provision should be made to provide money directly to the farmers. Does the Government propose to make such an arrangement?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: As I have already stated that this facility is provided by the State Government and we have

also received complaints to this effect. These complaints are not baseless, they are true to a large extent. The Central Government have drawn the attention of the State Governments towards it several times. In regard to the submission made by the hon. Member, the Government would again draw the attention of the State Governments towards it so that the underground water may be utilized properly and the farmers may be benefited.

[English]

MR SPEAKER The question is on utilisation of rain water, not on anything else. Please bear this in mind.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE From the reply of the hon. Minister it is evident that only 50 per cent of the utilisable water is being utilised, even less than that. Also, it is a fact that because we could not control and harness this water every year we are losing Rs. 100 crores worth of crops due to floods and droughts. In view of these facts, will the Government take necessary steps to implement the scheme that was suggested very long back by the late Dr. K. L. Rao for linking the Ganga and the Cauvery rivers where the available water could be put to the best use so that it will lead to the prosperity of this country? And as a part of it, will the Government clear the Polavaram project proposal from Andhra Pradesh linking the rivers Godavari and Krishna to utilise the rain water? What is the role of the Central Government in helping the State Government to take up such schemes?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA Sir, the linking of rivers had been suggested in various forms by various people. One of our very distinguished scientists and our former Minister, Dr. K. L. Rao, had made a suggestion, which was examined in detail. And then it was found impracticable in view of the very high cost involved and also because of various geographical features. But none the less the linking of rivers becomes the only answer to water shortages in various river basins. Therefore, the National Water De-

velopment Agency has started the work of linking the river basin, firstly in the Peninsular India and secondly of the Himalayan rivers. The Himalayan rivers cannot be linked, technically because of geographical reasons with the southern rivers. Therefore, these two separate projects have been undertaken. And I am sure that in course of time we will be able to link these river basins so that the water from the water surplus areas can be transferred to the water shortage areas.

As far as Polavaram project is concerned, this is a project which is useful and which is being implemented. And we are paying full attention to that.

SHRI PALAK M. MATHEW Sir, in each State there is very big variation in the availability of rain water. For example from District to District. In Kerala, especially in the hilly and terrain district of Idukki, there is no water at all now in most areas. Will the Government consider a scheme for linking the areas of surplus water supply and the areas of heavy drought? There should be a scheme for the storage of rain water in the areas where there is surplus and then linking those areas with the areas where there is drought.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA It is true that in Kerala there are areas which have excess rainfall and in the watershed areas there is shortage of water. Therefore, a study was undertaken to divert the waters of the west flowing rivers to the east. There are certain problems, which are being sorted out and the areas that the hon. Member have mentioned are receiving special attention from us.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask a question in regard to the matter about which the hon. Minister has considerable information. A large part of land in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. (Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER This matter relates to the whole of India

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI Mr Speaker, Sir, I am coming to the question If the rain water is collected and stored within the periphery of a village, it will strengthen the irrigation facility Will the Government of India provide financial assistance to the State Governments to implement such system and include it in the Eighth Five Year Plan?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA Mr Speaker, Sir, implementation of small irrigation projects is completely under the charge of the State Governments Wherever technical assistance and the advice of the Central Government is required, we provide them

[English]

SHRI K KUPPUSWAMY I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government proposes to take any action to utilise excess flowing rain water from Tamil Nadu, Kerala border to Arabian sea to help water starved Coimbatore District

Is there any proposal to divert excess water from northern States to Tamil Nadu either through Garland Canal Scheme or any other new scheme?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA I have already stated that interlinking of various rivers is under study and as soon as this study is over, we will be able to say something candid about it

[Translation]

Theft of Telephone Equipment in Delhi

*554 **SHRIMATI BHAVNA
CHIKHLIA
SHRI RAMKRISHNA KUSI
MARIA**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether there is an increase in the

incidents of theft of telephone cables and P C M equipment in Delhi,

(b) if so, the number of such incidents during 1991-92,

(c) the loss suffered by the Government as a result thereof

(d) whether the Delhi Police has recently caught a number of persons who were involved in such thefts

(e) if so, the details thereof, and

(f) the steps being taken to check such incidents?

[English]

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (P V
RANGAYYA NAIDU)** (a) Yes, Sir

(b) The number of such incidents from April 1991 to March, 1992 was one hundred sixty eight

(c) The loss suffered on account of material cost in the above incidents of thefts is Rs 19 82 662

(d) Yes Sir

(e) The details are given in the State ment below

(f) The following steps are being taken to check such incidents

(1) Patrolling of important cable routes

(2) Double locking of manhole covers and external chain, putting external chain and lock arrangement on PCM cabinets

(3) Laying of cables in concrete in open culverts

(4) Close coordination with police authority