

lands through afforestation including :

- in-situ soil and moisture conservation
- plantation
- maintenance of plantation
- protection

The force consists of 300 ex-servicemen under the command of Territorial Army and the Core Group of 15 Army/Territorial Army personnel. The Force has been deployed specifically for the development of the ravines of Chambal in the State of Madhya Pradesh with a target of development of 1170 hectares area with the financial outlay of about 3.81 crores. No such Wastelands Development Task Force has been constituted in any other State/Union Territory.

Reserved Fund of JRY for SC/ST

*328. SHRI ARJUN SETHI : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the schemes of Community Irrigation Projects and Water Harvesting Structures have been implemented by some of the States in lieu of Million Wells scheme and 22.5 per cent of funds from Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) reserved for the direct benefits of SCs/STs in individual beneficiary schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise ;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the Central guidelines on rights over the possession of land in the name of SC/ST beneficiaries are being violated in revenue districts of Balasore and Bhadrak of Orissa; and

(d) if so, the remedial steps proposed to be taken to set the matter right ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL) : (a) and (b) The funds under the Million Wells Scheme (MWS) which is primarily intended for open irrigation wells can also be utilised for the other schemes of minor irrigation like irrigation tanks, water harvesting structures and also for the development of lands belonging to small and marginal farmers, if construction of wells is not feasible due to geological factors. At least two-thirds of the funds utilised under the scheme in any year are to be spent on poor small and marginal farmers belonging to SCs and STs. Similarly under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), 22.5% of the funds earmarked at all three levels of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) i.e. Zilla Parishad /DRDA, Intermediate Panchayat and Village Panchayat must be spent on individual beneficiary schemes for SCs and STs. These guidelines have generally been followed and no major deviation has been reported. The State-wise information, however, is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d) Information is being collected from State Government of Orissa and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Air Link to Buddha Pilgrimage Centres

*329. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether any scheme for connecting Buddha Pilgrimage Centres by air services in order to boost tourism in the country is under consideration of the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether there is also a scheme for connecting Saarnath, Kushinagar and Lumbini in Uttar Pradesh by air services; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However, the needs of the pilgrims visiting Saarnath, Kushinagar and Lumbini (Nepal) are being met by Varanasi Airport which is in close proximity to these places and connected with Mumbai, Delhi, Agra, Khajuraho, Kathmandu and Lucknow.

[English]

Sanitation Programme

*330. SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL :
SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL :

Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any centrally sponsored rural sanitation programme for construction of individual latrine is being undertaken in the country;

(b) if so, the per unit cost prescribed in the scheme alongwith the Central share to be made available to State Governments;

(c) whether due to increase in the cost of building material the State Governments are facing difficulty in the construction of such latrines at the rate of prescribed limit;

(d) if so, whether the State Governments particularly Maharashtra Government have written to the Union Government to raise the prescribed per unit cost limit and also to raise the Central share;