

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the other developing countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Government is not aware of any Environmental Panel in the World Bank. Question of limiting the scope thereof does not arise.

Threat to Coral Reef

945. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Marine life is dying in man-fouled seas" appearing in the *Times of India*, dated January 24, 1999;

(b) if so, whether the tourists are increasingly diving in our coral rich waters at various beaches of Lakshadweep Islands;

(c) if so, whether Government have identified the beaches visited most and made a study to ascertain the extent of damage caused thereby;

(d) if so, details thereof in this regard;

(e) whether any cases of pilferage, theft or smuggling of coral have come to the notice of the Government;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the preventive measures taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the examples quoted relate to experiments conducted along the coasts of North America particularly near Florida, New York and Gulf of Mexico.

(b) No Sir. Diving is allowed in very limited numbers and only on 2-3 Islands.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) In order to ensure that no damage is caused to the coral reefs of Lakshadweep through excessive diving by tourists the following measures have been adopted.

(i) Local Islanders and Scientists are being trained by professionally qualified diving instructors to maintain a strict vigil on the quality and variety of marine life.

(ii) Careful monitoring is done by the local Science, Technology and Environment Department.

(iii) Ecology and Environment are the basic parameters Governing all policy decisions in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

Dealership of Gas, Diesel and Petrol in Karnataka

946. SHRI BASWARAJ PATIL SEDAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for the allotment of LPG, Petrol and Diesel outlets in Karnataka pending as on date;

(b) whether delay in selecting dealership is causing hardship to consumers; and

(c) if so, the likely time by which these are to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) In order to mitigate the hardship being faced by the consumers on account of non-selection of dealers/distributors, which has been pending for more than two years, Government constituted two Dealer Selection Boards for Karnataka in October, 1998. Oil Companies have already issued large number of advertisements and selection process is in progress. It generally takes about 6 to 12 months for commissioning of the dealerships/distributorships from the date of interview.