THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Similipal Forest has been brought into the category of Tiger Reserves in 1973-74 and also subsequently declared as Biosphere Reserve to protect and conserve its flora and fauna including tiger and other rare species with total ecosystem approach. A massive Eco-Development programme is also being implemented in peripheral villages of Similipal Tiger Reserve to reduce the biotic pressure on its natural resources.

Subsidy on Solar Equipments

1733. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "how subsidy for solar equipment vanishes into thin air" appearing in the *Indian Express* dated February 1, 1999;

(b) the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether the Government have examined the reports published in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being considered to take action against those held responsible for this misuse?

THE MINISTER OF POWER MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The solar energy programme of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources is implemented through the renewable energy agencies in various States. In Delhi, the programme is implemented by the Delhi Energy Development Agency which functions under the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Ministry has examined this and earlier reports which appeared in the press and have obtained information from the Delhi Energy Development Agency.

Following examination by audit, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed out certain irregularities in the implementation of the programme by DEDA. This includes sale of solar lanterns whose genuiness could not be verified and expenditure on free supply of solar lanterns to Ministers and Government officials on demonstration basis.

DEDA has reported that one Project Officer has been placed under suspension following the observations regarding the bogus sales of solar lanterns. According to the Agency, the free supply of solar lanterns was for demonstration purpose only and the lanterns are still the property of the Agency. The matter is also being looked into by the Lokayukta and by the Deputy Commissioner (East), Delhi.

Revision of Voters' List in Karnataka

1734. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state the steps taken to revise the voters' list in view of ensuing Assembly elections in Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): The Election Commission has informed that it has ordered Special Revision of the electoral rolls in the State of Karnataka with 1.1.1999 as the qualifying date before the ensuing Assembly Elections due before December, 1999. The publication of draft rolls and final publication of rolls have been scheduled for 10.4.99 and 12.7.99 respectively.

[Translation]

Plantation on the National Highways by Private Sector

1735. SHRI TEJVEER SINGH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme for the plantation on either side of the National Highways by the private sector; and

(b) if so, the manner in which the plantation work would be undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Ministry has decided to permit public sector corporations/reputed private companies/Voluntary organisations to develop and maintain gardens/tree plantations/landscaping in vacant National Highway land on either side of the road/central verges/rotaries for beautification and prevention of encroachments. For this purpose strips of National Highway land can be allotted to reputed organisations under a Memorandum of Understanding. The salient features of the scheme are given in the statement enclosed.