

(d) Government keep a close watch on all developments having a bearing on our security with a view to taking appropriate measures to ensure full defence preparedness.

[Translation]

Tree Plantation

*629. DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRIPATHI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of tree planted throughout the country during the year 1984-85.

(b) the number of trees planted under the tree plantation programme during the last three years; and

(c) the number of trees out of them which are blossoming and which have withered away ?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : (a) 264 crores seedlings were planted under afforestation programmes in the country during the year 1984-85.

(b) The number of plants planted under afforestation during the last three years have been as under :

Year	1983-84	1984-85 (upto 31.12.1985)	1985-86
Number planted in Crores.	242	264	270

(c) Assessment of survivals has been made on a sporadic and not a very regular basis. It is felt that these evaluations are limited in their scope and hence do not point to any reliable conclusions.

[English]

Escape of Charles Sobhraj from Tihar Jail

*630. PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Charles Sobhraj, the notorious international criminal wanted by Interpol, was kept in the Tihar

Jail in a ward in which the murderer of the Former Prime Minister as well as other criminals were lodged;

(b) whether Charles Sobhraj had previously threatened the jail authorities to give him all the facilities he asked for or face exposure of their corrupt practices; and

(c) if so, in view of this dangerous background of Charles Sobhraj why no special security arrangements were made to prevent efforts by Charles Sobhraj to escape from the jail.

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) Charles Sobhraj was initially lodged in a ward in Jail No. 1 in a different cell and not along with either the assassin of late Prime Minister or the conspirators in the said case. There were other criminals lodged in the same ward but in different cells. Thereafter Charles Sobhraj was lodged in ward No. 4 of Jail No. 1 and shifted to ward No. 13 of Jail No. 3 on 18.1.1986.

(b) There is no such information. However, the terms of reference of the Inquiry Commission set up after the escape of Charles Sobhraj include, *Inter-alia*, determination and enquiry into the sequence of events and the circumstances leading to the escape of Charles Sobhraj and six other prisoners from the Central Jail No. 3, Tihar in the afternoon of 16th March, 1986.

(c) Ward No. 13 in which Charles Sobhraj was lodged is on the inner side of the jail and away from the outer walls of the prison. Personnel of the Tamil Nadu Special Police were posted in the Deori area as a special security precaution. The inquiry being held on the escape of Charles Sobhraj will examine all matters having a bearing on the security within the jail and also determine the short-comings and weaknesses in the jail administration.

Vacancies in Minorities Commission

*631. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :
SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state ;

(a) the present composition of the Minorities Commission;

(b) whether it is a fact that almost all the members of the Minorities Commission except its Chairman have retired and the vacancies have not been filled up;

(c) if so, the dates when each member retired;

(d) the reasons for delay in making the appointments; and

(e) by what time Government propose to reconstitute the Minorities Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI) : (a) to (e). The term of the present Chairman has been extended till further orders. The posts of other four members had fallen vacant because of the expiry of their tenure on 1-8-85, 5-8-85, 6-8-85 and 16-9-85. One new member namely Shri Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan has already joined the Commission on 16th Nov., 1985. While action is on hand to fill up the vacancies expeditiously, no definite time schedule can be indicated for filling up of the same.

Income Limit for Benefits to SCs and STs

*632. SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER :
DR. P. VALLAL PERUMAN :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the present limit of annual income fixed for parents of SC/ST students to get various benefits in Karnataka;

(b) whether Government of Karnataka have sent a proposal to raise the annual income limit of parents of SC/ST students for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI) : (a) to (c). The present limit of annual income

fixed for parents of SCs/STs students for the undermentioned schemes are given below—

(i) Post matric scholarships	Rs. 12,000 per annum
(ii) Pre-matric scholarships	Rs. 6,000 per annum
(iii) Coaching and allied scheme	Rs. 12,000 per annum
(iv) Girls hostels	} No income limit fixed.
(v) Book Banks	

A proposal to revise the income limit in respect of scheme No. (i) only i.e. Post matric scholarships has been received from the Government of Karnataka in response to Central Government's circular to all States/UTs asking for their comments. The proposal is under consideration in consultation with the Planning Commission.

Effect of Halley's Comet on Earth

*633. SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether study is being made on the astronomical and meteorological changes on the earth due to the appearance of Halley's Comet during the year 1986;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the Comet's effects on the Indian climate; and

(d) when Halley's Comet is expected to be in the earth's orbit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : (a) No perceptible effects on the earth's atmosphere are expected due to appearance of Halley's Comet and so no Meteorological studies are being conducted. Astronomical studies to understand the nature of the Comet and its interaction with the interplanetary space are being conducted by many institutions in the country.