

**Waiving of Excise Duty of Cotton Boxes for Fruit Packaging**

1563. SHRI MAHESHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Himachal Pradesh has made any request to the Union Government for waiving of Excise duty on cotton boxes used for fruit packaging to preserve the forests; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b). Government has not received any request from Himachal Pradesh State Government for waiving of excise duty on cotton boxes used for fruit packaging to preserve the forests.

[English]

**Preservation of Wildlife**

1564. SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have not so far been able to stop poaching, if so, the reasons therefore and the steps proposed to be taken to restore the wildlife habitats and build up wildlife population;

(b) whether the Government have worked out any strategy for the conservation and protection of wildlife, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether peacock feathers, porcupine quills, shed antlers of deer and captive bred exotic birds are permitted to be exported commercially;

(d) if so, the justification thereof; and

(e) the concrete steps taken for development of Natural parks and wildlife sanctu-

aries in areas inhabited by tribal people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b). Government is taking all steps to stop poaching. The step taken so far by the Government to restore the wild life habitats and build up wildlife populations include:

(i) A network of sanctuaries and national parks representing all the Zoo-geographical zones has been set up. There are at present 70 national park and 411 wildlife sanctuaries, extending over an area of 1,37,000 Sq. K.Ms.

(ii) Financial assistance is provided to State Governments for meeting the expenditure on development of national parks/sanctuaries.

(iii) Government of India has been assisting the States in their anti-poaching activities under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Control of poaching and illegal trade in Wildlife". An amount of Rs. 1.0 cores was provided as assistance under this scheme for strengthening anti-poaching infrastructure in the States during the VII Five Years Plan. During 1990-91, Rs. 15.4 lakhs has been sanctioned under this scheme so far.

(iv) Under the provisions of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, total protection is provided to rare and endangered species of wildlife particularly the Indian rhino, elephant, musk-deer, snakes, fur bearing animals and such other species which are seriously affected by poaching and trade. Hunting of the trade in other species are allowed only under a licence issued under the Act.

(v) Government of India is a party to the "Convention of International