

hectares of land gets degraded every year or the forests are denuded. Two years ago, about 13 lakh hectares of forest land used to be degraded. Thereafter, we studied the causes of degradation in depth. The Prime Minister as well as I have written to the States and as a result of our efforts, the area of land degradation has come down to 10 lakh hectares from 13 lakh hectares. Our endeavour is to ensure that deforestation is kept to the minimum. You know that complaints are received from different places to the effect that the officials of the Forest Department harass the people a lot and clearance of the project is either delayed or it is not at all given to a number of projects. On the one hand, you say that the forests are being felled and on the other hand, you say that your projects are pending which should be cleared.

MR. SPEAKER : He is not asking about deforestation. He is asking about something else.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : He has said that so much of forest land is being degraded.

MR. SPEAKER : He is asking about erosion.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Sir, his second supplementary was about degradation of land. As you know, there are some areas which do have forests but these forests are not qualitatively as good as they should be, because the soil in those areas is not good. The land is uneven. It is our earnest endeavour to get it levelled. In this connection, I would like to inform you that an amount of Rs. 692 crores was spent for this purpose during the Sixth Five Year Plan. The outlay for the Seventh Plan is Rs. 1800 crores, i.e., a three fold increase. This has been done to grow more and more forests on wasteland. We shall grow firewood saplings on such land if it is possible to do; so that the poor could meet their fuel needs to some extent. All these aspects are before us. Thus, we shall try to improve the quality of forests wherever these forests are not of good quality.

[English]

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : Sir, I would like to ask a specific question on the tree

patta system. We all know that the success of the wasteland development effort will be on how effectively we promote the tree patta system. The tree patta system can be divided into four sectors—Firstly, what kind of land are you giving for the tree patta? Is it revenue land or panchayat land? What priority are you giving to the tree patta system? First is the type of land and second aspect is about priorities, as to whom to give. Next, for how much duration are you giving? And lastly what are the legalities? Do you lose the land by giving these tree patta? Taking into account these four aspects, has the Department interacted with every State to ascertain as to how they would implement the tree patta system in their States with these four criteria? If they have done it what has been the result of interaction from the States?

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Sir, the Patta Scheme is still under consideration of the Government and has not yet been given effect to. We think that one or two hectares of land should be allotted to such persons who are poor, Harijans, or Adivasis and have no other means of livelihood. The type of land is the same wasteland, but they can grow fire-wood trees, fodder for cattle or fruit bearing trees and can, thus, make use of this land to some extent. A few States have introduced the Patta System. These are Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and to some extent Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu also. But this scheme has not been fully implemented as yet. There is need to give it a thorough consideration. If we implement this scheme as it is, there is likelihood of the big people also availing of this benefit. Different States have different problems in its implementation. It is receiving our utmost attention and we shall do whatever is right so that this land is not misused.

[English]

Thorium Plant at Orissa Sands Complex

*396. **SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA† :**
SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH
MALIK :

Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up a thorium plant at Orissa Sands Complex and fast breeder reactor fuel reprocessing plant at Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research in consultation with the Department of Space and Ministry of Energy;

(b) if so, the broad outlines of the project;

(c) the funds allocated for the purpose; and

(d) when the project will be completed and start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN) : (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) The Government propose to set up a thorium plant at Orissa Sands Complex and a Fast Reactor Reprocessing Plant at Kalpakkam.

(b) The Thorium Plant at Orissa Sands Complex is being set up by Indian Rare Earths Ltd. for production of 150 MT per annum of Thorium Nitrate which is required mainly for use by the Gas Mantle Manufacturers in the country. The technology of production will be the solvent extraction process developed by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. Besides production of Thorium Nitrate, Thorium Oxide required for nuclear use will also be produced.

The Fast Reactor Reprocessing Plant will be located at Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) at Kalpakkam. This facility will reprocess spent fuel from the Fast Breeder Test Reactor at Kalpakkam. This plant will adopt process equipment and maintenance concepts which

are being developed in a Research Laboratory already set up at IGCAR.

(c) The capital cost of the Thorium Project at the Orissa Sands Complex is estimated at Rs. 2.98 crores, of which Rs. 2.18 crores has been allocated for 1987-88. The total estimated cost of the Fast Reactor Reprocessing Plant is Rs. 35 crores, of which about Rs. 6 crores is proposed to be spent during the VII Plan period.

(d) The Thorium Project at the Orissa Sands Complex is expected to be completed by June 1989 and will start functioning thereafter. The Reprocessing Plant at Kalpakkam is scheduled to be commissioned by middle of 1993.

SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA : I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how much thorium metal is actually available in India. Is it true that the Indian Rare Earths Limited a Government of India undertaking and the Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited, a Kerala Government undertaking are trying to recover thorium from other processing plants in India, other than the Orissa Sands Complex? If so, what are the names of the plants and what is the actual position of the recovery of this thorium metal?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : Both in Kerala and Tamilnadu—particularly in Kerala—there are Indian Rare Earths plants to extract monazite concentrates from the thorium sand. These concentrates are not processed there but sent to Trombay for processing into thorium nitrates and thorium oxides.

SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA : I have asked the hon. Minister about the total availability of this metal in India.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : There are 3,60,000 tonnes of thorium deposits in India, as per the known resources.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that instead of setting up an additional thorium plant in Orissa, you are

shifting the plant from Bombay to Orissa. If so, what is the logic behind it? This thorium factory of M/s Indian Rare Earths Limited is there at Trombay since 1st August 1955. Then all these consumers of the end products of this plant are also from Bombay. All chemicals required are also available at Bombay. Then, a huge adjacent plot for the expansion was also acquired and foundation stone was also laid in March, 1982. Even recently, an additional expense of Rs. 33 lakhs has been incurred for setting up an effluent treatment facility for Trombay's Thorium plant to safeguarded the existing plant against pollution. So, after making all these investments, what is the logic of shifting this plant from Bombay to Orissa, rather than giving additional plant to Orissa?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : Sir, as the hon. Member has pointed out, the plant in Bombay was set up in 1955. It is an old plant built out of lower technology and the plant is not efficient at the moment because of aging. That is the reason why, this is being shifted and expanded and also because the capacity is being expanded in Orissa to 150 tonnes. It is a higher technology. The plant in Trombay is much too old and it is no longer efficiently usable.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I will ask a supplementary on Mr. Dighe's question.

MR. SPEAKER : A supplementary to the supplementary.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Something like ruling over the ruling.

MR. SPEAKER : But that cannot happen.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister in the light of what hon. Shri Dighe has asked, that since you have been saying that it is an old plant and rather than having an additional plant at Orissa, you would like to dismantle that plant and shift it to Orissa and develop it further there : Is it not a fact that even the Scientists, the Technologists and the Environmentalists had

given you the advice that on the adjacent site of the existing plot where the plant is located in Bombay, further expansion can be brought about very effectively? Is it a fact that because of this shift to Orissa, probably the services of a large number of workers will be terminated? Will you assure that some facilities will be made available to them and some aspects of the operation of the existing plant will be retained so that there will be no disturbance to the job of the present team of workers who are working there. In addition to that, if you want, you can have a Complex in Orissa, I have no conflict with Orissa at all? I think, both Bombay and Orissa can be complementary; they need not oppose each other.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : As far as the scientific advice is concerned, we had set up a Site Selection Committee for this new plant, under the Chairmanship of Dr. S.K. Kelkar and consisting of two or three well-known scientists. They had investigated various sites including Trombay, Orissa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They came to the conclusion that the best site for the location of this plant would be in Orissa.

Secondly, regarding the old equipment, all that cannot be transported because all of them are not usable. Some of them are obsolete. A part of the equipment will be transported to Orissa. As I told you earlier, it is a more than thirty year old plant and it is not usable efficiently at present except certain equipments which may be usable.

As regards labour, there are at present about 215 people who are working in Trombay and the new plant will employ about 117 people and they could be re-located. Others could be re-located elsewhere in other Departments of the Atomic Energy Agency and some of them who have reached the age of retirement will be retired by giving proper compensation.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : That is different. That way, those who die will also disappear; but that is different. As far as the present strength is concerned, will you assure us that none of those who are not retired will be displaced, and some jobs will be given?

MR. SPEAKER : That is what he said.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : We are trying, and we will ensure that labour is re-located and employed.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH : The fact is that a very good infrastructure has already been created by the Indian Rare Earths Ltd. in Orissa at Gopalpur-on-Sea, and there are enough inputs. The raw material available in Orissa is of the highest quality in the country. So, I would request the hon. Minister not to mix up the construction of this project in Orissa at Gopalpur-on-Sea, with shifting from another State. Let it not be mixed up.

I would like to know specifically from the hon. Minister : will this project be completed in 1989 as envisaged, and will production start ?

MR. SPEAKER : That is what he has said.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : As I said earlier, the site in Orissa was chosen because certain infrastructural facilities existing there are not available elsewhere. I can assure the hon Member that we will make every effort to complete the construction of the plant according to schedule.

May I also say one more thing : about Trombay, scientists have advised us that further industrial construction and activity there itself may not be desirable.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO : This Gopalpur-on-Sea is in my constituency. Large deposits of monazite sand are there. That was the main reason why the plant was located there. The survey was undertaken in 1964. The plant has gone into production, and I know that concentrates are being shipped from Kakinada minor port. I wrote to the Minister recently that this export of concentrates should be from Gopalpur minor port, and not from Kakinada,

May I know from the hon. Minister whether production is likely to go up, what is the rated capacity and what is the production today ?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : Production today is 120 metric tonnes, and the envisaged capacity for OSCOM is 150 tonnes, which will meet our requirements.

[*Translation*]

Ban on Collaboration with Foreign Companies in T.V. Production

*397. SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to ban foreign collaborations in colour Television manufacture;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether such collaboration affects indigenous units; and

(d) if so, how the loss to the Indian T.V. industry is proposed to be made good ?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN) : (a) Foreign technical collaborations for manufacture of Colour TV (CTV) sets are generally not permitted. However, with effect from 1.1.1986, companies with foreign equity not exceeding 40% were allowed to participate in the TV industry. Government does not propose to reverse this decision.

(b) This was done to bring TV policy in line with the general policy under which a company with foreign equity of 40% or less is eligible for participation in manufacture of products open to the organised private sector.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for giving a categorical answer to my question. As has been stated by the hon. Minister in his reply, only those companies which have foreign equity not exceeding 40%