

(b) if so, by what time such a control room is likely to be set up;

(c) whether the control room will have direct link with the various State capitals only; and

(d) if so, how the incidents of atrocities on Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes which may take place in rural areas would be monitored effectively ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE
(SRI N. SITARAM KESRI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The modalities are being worked out.

THREAT OF ENVIRONMENT POLLUTION

103. SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the threat of environmental pollution is constantly getting more and more acute due to felling of trees;

(b) the extent of forest cover being depleted for the purpose of fuel each year; and

(c) if so, the corrective action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND
FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Trees play a vital role in purification of air by absorbing carbon dioxide and release of oxygen. Felling of trees, therefore, affects the environment adversely.

(b) Since tops and stems of trees are utilized as fuelwood, there is no precise estimate of the forest cover being depleted each year on this account.

(c) Following measures have been taken to check depletion of forest cover :

(i) guidelines have been issued to State Governments/U.Ts. banning green felling on mountains/hills above 1000 metres;

(ii) assistance is provided to State/U.Ts. for development of infrastructure for protection of forests from biotic interference;

(iii) enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to check diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes;

(iv) various programmes of afforestations under State Plans and Centrally Sponsored Schemes including plantations under the 20-Point programmes are carried out.

BAN ON FELLING OF TREES

104. SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to ban felling of trees for Railway Sleepers; and

(b) if so, the step being taken to meet the demand of Railways in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND
FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Government propose to phase out use of wooden railway sleepers and consequently, the intake of sleepers has come down from 30 lakh track sleepers in 1984-85 to 2 lakh sleepers in 1990-91.

(b) The Government has already made sufficient provision for replacement of wooden track sleepers with concrete sleepers.

POLLUTION FREE RIVERS

105. SHRI ASHOK ANANDRAO
DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of rivers included in the programme for making them pollution free besides the Ganga and Yamuna;

(b) whether the Government propose to include Betwa, Godawari, Narmada, Krishna and Kaveri rivers under this programme;

(c) if so, the time by which the work is likely to start on this programme; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) and (b) Besides the Ganga and Yamuna, the rivers to be included in the programme for making them pollution free have not been finalised so far.

(c) and (d) An Approach Paper on the National River Action Plan is under preparation which would be finalised after consultation with the concerned agencies at the Centre and in the States. Work would start only after finalisation of the approach outlined in the Approach Paper. No time schedule has been fixed for starting the work so far.

[English]

MINORITY COMMISSION

106. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to grant statutory status to the Minority Commission;

(b) if so, when legislation in this regard is likely to be introduced;

(c) the present composition of the Commission, with the dates of appointment and dates of completion of terms in respect of each member; and

(d) whether there are any vacancies and if so, when the vacancies, are likely to be filled up ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is likely to be introduced in the Winter Session.

(c) and (d) At present the Commission has one Chairman and six Members. The requisite information about the present incumbents of Chairman/Members of the Commission is given below :

Name	Date of appointment	Date of completion of term
Chairman		
Sh. S.M.H. Burney	1-4-88	31-3-92
Members		
S/Shri		
B.S. Ramoowalia	11-5-90	10-5-93
Ven. Dhammaviriya	5-11-90	4-11-93
Bakin Pertin	5-11-90	4-11-93
M. Varadarajan	19-4-91	18-4-94
Javed Habib	Yet to join.	
K.F. Rustamji	Yet to join.	

[Translation]

NON-ALLOTMENT OF DDA FLATS

107. SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA : Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether many flats/shops have not been allotted due to non-availability of "peripheral services" like sewer, water and electricity;

(b) if so, the number of such flats/shops and the time since when they have not been allotted;

(c) the estimated cost of these flats/shops and;

(d) the steps being taken by DDA to allot these flats/shops by providing peripheral services ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of such flats/shops are given in the attached statements I & II.

(c) The cost of flats will be determined on completion of services including external electrification.