

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1683
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.02.2023

Ecological Sensitive Zones in the Himalayas

1683. SHRI RITESH PANDEY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the total number of ecologically sensitive zones in the Himalayas where infrastructure development is currently taking place;
- (b) whether the Government was already aware of and took action against those who were responsible for Joshimath's ground slipping and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that there are other places too in the Himalayan States where ground slipping incidents are occurring and if so, the details and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government is preparing a corrective course of action against the construction activities in the Himalayas and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the number of families so far relocated in Joshimath to safer locations and whether the Government is preparing a national-level relief plan for people who have to relocate due to environmental or climate-borne disasters and if so, the details of the plan indicating the proposed relief measures?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (e) A total of five Eco-sensitive Zones in respect of the Protected Areas of Nanda Devi National Park, Gangotri National Park and the Wildlife Sanctuaries of Nandhar, Binsar and Askot have been notified in the State of Uttarakhand. In addition, the Bhagirathi Eco-sensitive Zone and Doon Valley Eco-sensitive Area have also been notified in the state. As per National Policy on Disaster Management, the primary responsibility of disaster management including disbursement of relief and the rehabilitation of the people affected due to disaster rests with the State Government concerned. The Central Government provides necessary financial and logistics support as per established procedure. As per information provided by the State Government of Uttarakhand, Joshimath is located on a thick cover of very old landslides material. Large boulders of gneiss and fragments of basic schist rocks are observed to be embedded in grey colored silty sandy matrix.

Land subsidence incidents were reported recently at various places around Joshimath in Chamoli District of Uttarakhand. After the incidence, all construction activities have been

stayed by the State Government in the entire Joshimath area, including Tapovan-Vishnugad power project and Helong Marwari By-Pass Road. The situation is being continuously monitored at various levels in the State and Central Government. Further, the Central Government and State Government are working in close coordination with all the agencies concerned for mitigating the effect of land subsidence in Joshimath area. Due to land-subsidence, many structures have been reported to have moderate to major damages. As reported by the State Government, cracks have been observed in 863 buildings and after taking into consideration safety of people, 296 families with 995 members have been shifted to safer places.

The State Government has issued orders for payment of Rs. 1,00,000/- as an advance for rehabilitation and Rs. 50,000/- as displacement allowance to each affected family and for this purpose, Rs. 45 crores have been released. As on 30.01.2023, it is reported that a total of 235 affected families have been distributed Rs. 3.50 Crores as relief assistance. The State Government has arranged temporary accommodation for the affected families, for which Rs.950/-per room per day and Rs. 450/- per person for meals is being provided. For those not availing these temporary accommodations, an allowance of Rs. 5,000/- per month is being provided to affected families for six months. Free medical check-ups and free medicines are also being provided to the affected people in the relief camps.
