

securing 500 scholarships for Sri Lankan students to pursue under-graduate and post-graduate studies in India. The request has been made in view of universities in Sri Lanka remaining closed for some time because of disturbed conditions. The Government has decided to offer 500 scholarships to students from Sri Lanka—400 for under-graduate and 100 for post-graduate studies. The University Grants Commission would arrange for admission of these students during the academic session 1990-91.

[English]

#### **Talks about Tehri Dam Project**

2074. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:  
SHRI P.M. SAYEED:  
SHRI PARASRAM BHARD-  
WAJ:  
SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether talks were held under his Chairmanship between representatives of Environmentalists and other interests to discuss the various objections against the construction of Tehri Dam Project; and

(b) if so, the decisions taken in the light thereof to carry out the various items of work under the project, including the Coffer Dam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b). The Minister of State for Environment and Forests held a meeting of all concerned to discuss the environmental issues of the Tehri Dam Project. It was decided that the work on the clearance of river bed may be resumed without blasting operations, but no construction work on the Coffer Dam is to

be undertaken till a final decision is taken.

#### **Reconsideration of Hydel Projects**

2075. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some major Hydel Projects are being reconsidered on the basis of ecological and environmental protection;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Tehri dam project is reported to be located in a seismic zone,

(d) if so, the implications thereof; and

(e) the final decision of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI):

(a) and (b). No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). Because of the weak geological formations and high seismicity of the region, the Tehri Dam Project is being designed as a rockfill structure. The dam has, therefore, to be designed for a maximum credible earthquake likely to occur in the region. These aspects have been examined by the standing Environmental Appraisal Committee for River Valley Projects of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and a final decision will be taken shortly.

#### **Operation Blackboard**

2076. SHRI G.S. BASAVARAJ: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the number of blocks covered under the