

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

*Tuesday, December 3, 1991/ Agrahayana
12, 1913 (Saka)*

*The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Pending Developmental Projects

*164. SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE:
SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT
AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of development projects pending for approval with the Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, State-wise and project-wise;

(b) since when these are pending; and

(c) the measures taken for their early clearance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOR-
ESTS (SHRI KAMLA NATH): (a) and (b). A
statement is laid on the Table of the
House.

(c) Detailed guidelines have been issued by the Central Government to streamline processing of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980,

STATEMENT

Sl. No.	Name of States/ UTs	Category of Projects	No. of Projects & Period of Pendency (As on 31.10.91)						Total No. of Project
			0-1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-6 months	above 6 months		
1.	Andhra Pradesh	i) Transmission line				1		1	
		ii) Mining	1	1		1		3	
		iii) Irrigation		1				1	
2.	Maharashtra	i) Irrigation	7			1		9	
3.	Orissa	i) Mining	3		1			4	
		ii) Transmission Line				1		1	
		iii) Irrigation	2					2	
4.	Rajasthan	i) Road	2			1		3	
		ii) Military Cantonment	1					1	
		iii) Irrigation				1		1	
		iv) Establishment of Observatory			1			1	

Sl. No.	Name of States/ UTs	Category of Projects	No. of Projects & Period of Pendency (As on 31.10.91)						Total No. of Project
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
			0-1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-6 months	above 6 months		
5.	Gujarat	i) Road	2					2	
		ii) Irrigation	12			2		14	
		iii) Bridge	1					1	
		iv) Mining		1		1		2	
		v) Transmission Line		1				1	
		vi) Pipe Line	2		1			3	
6.	Arunachal Pradesh	i) Hydel Power	1			1		2	
		ii) Regularisation of encroachment	1					1	
7.	Assam	i) Railway Line	1					1	
		ii) Transmission Line		1				1	
		iii) Hydro Electric Project		1				1	

Sl. No.	Name of States/ UTs	Category of Projects	No. of Projects & Period of Pendency (As on 31.10.91)					Total No. of Project
			0-1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-6 months	above 6 months	
1	2	3	4					5
8.	Uttar Pradesh	i) Irrigation	1	1				2
		ii) Hydro Electric Project			1			1
		iii) Road		1	2	3		6
		iv) Transmission Line	2					2
		v) Health Centre	1					1
		vi) Exchange of land				1		1
		vii) Petrochemical Complex				1		1
		viii) Drinking Water Supply Scheme.		1				1
9.	West Bengal	i) Rail Link	1					1
		ii) Road	1					1
10.	Bihar	i) Mining		8		1		9
		ii) Bridge	1					1

Sl. No.	Name of States/ UTs	Category of Projects	No. of Projects & Period of Pendency (As on 31.10.91)					Total No. of Project
			0-1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-6 months	above 6 months	
1	2	3	4					5
11.	Haryana	i) Transmission Line ii) Road iii) Mining	1	1		1		1
12.	Punjab	i) Transmission Line	3	1				4
13.	Delhi	i) Transmission Line		1				1
14.	Madhya Pradesh	i) Irrigation ii) Railway Line iii) Cocoon Breeding Centre iv) Mining v) Transmission Line vi) Road vii) Conveyer Belt	53	10	2	7		72
			1			1		2
			1					1
			2	1		5	2	10
			1			1		2
			1					1
						1		1
15.	Karnataka	i) Irrigation	2			1		3

Sl. No.	Name of States/ UTs	Category of Projects	No. of Projects & Period of Pendency (As on 31.10.91)						Total No. of Project		
			1	2	3	4	1-2 months	2-3 months		3-6 months	above 6 months
1									5		
16.	Himachal Pradesh	i) Mining					2				4
		ii) Transmission Line					1		1		2
		iii) Hydro Electric Project							1		1
		iv) Road				1					1
		v) Transit Camp					1				1
17.	Kerala	i) Mining									2
		ii) Irrigation									1
		iii) Hydro Electric Project						1			1
		iv) Transmission Line						2			2
		v) School Building						1			1
18.	Tamil Nadu	i) Bridge								1	1
		ii) Transmission Line							1		1

Sl. No.	Name of States/ UTs	Category of Projects	No. of Projects & Period of Pendency (As on 31.10.91)						Total No. of Project
1	2	3	4						5
			0-1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-6 months	above 6 months		
		iii) Irrigation				3		3	
		iv) Mining				1		1	
		Total	112	38	11	42	3	205	

SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE: Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether the Chief Minister of Maharashtra has requested for relaxation of orders of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 so that several irrigation, power as well as development works are not obstructed.

Secondly, has the Bombay Environment Action Group is demanding that land recorded as 'Zudpi jungle' should be treated as forest? I would like to know through you about the Government's approach to this issue as far as Vidarbha area of Maharashtra State is concerned.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, from time to time, there have been requests from the Maharashtra Government and other State Governments also with regard to expeditious clearance. I have recently visited Bombay and held detailed discussions with the Forest Minister and Forest officials. A large number of proposals in Maharashtra State have been cleared in the last three months. I think, it was a fortnight ago. Only nine proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act are pending in Maharashtra State.

With regard to Zudpi jungle, this was also one of the points during the discussion which was held with the Maharashtra Government.

I also visited Nagpur in the Vidarbha area where this problem is very relevant. There is now some kind of solution in sight with regard to Zudpi jungle. I am waiting for a detailed proposal with regard to a solution of the Zudpi jungle problem in Maharashtra. As soon as I have the detailed proposal from the Maharashtra Government, we shall consider it.

SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE: My second supplementary is whether the national land use policy has been finalised. If not, when is it likely to be finalised?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Land use comes under the Ministry of Agriculture as per the Rules of Business.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, in his reply, has given the figures in a manner which reflects that his department is quite efficient. Only 112 projects for a period of month have been shown as pending for approval. But the total picture that has been depicted is not in consonance with the actual situation. I have got a document despatched by the Government of Gujarat to the Central Government on July 10, 1991 seeking approval for a project, but it has not been approved so far. This statement reflects that the project has been approved. People in Banaskantha district have been facing a great difficulty due to this.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: This is a question relating to the entire country as such. Please come to that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am doing nothing that asking question.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: That is not allowed (*Interruptions*).

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA: I would like to submit to the hon. Minister that I have got the paper having figures provided by them. It states that only 103 trees are there on 16 hectares of land and yet the project has not been approved so far due to which works

relating to construction of roads and irrigation projects could not be undertaken. The development works have come to a standstill.

MR. SPEAKER: Please come to the question, otherwise I will disallow it.

SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know as to when the approval was given in Banaskantha district and when the project of laying the drinking water pipe line passing through Radhanpur and Santalpur was approved and when the permission for cutting the trees on the road side plantation was given; if not, when the approval will be given? Sir, my second question is

MR. SPEAKER: Second question is not allowed.

[*English*]

If you have the information, give it. Otherwise, send it in writing to him.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I have already laid the details about the pending projects on the Table of the House. If there is any other detailed information that the Member likes to have, I would certainly give it to him.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: The hon. Minister's reply indicates that there are 206 projects which are pending clearance. It is revealing that most of the projects pertain either to mining or transmission lines, power projects and irrigation. What is the level of the body which clears them? What is its composition and what is the normal time taken to clear such projects?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: There is a procedure laid out in the Forest Conservation Act. As I have stated, the number of cases which are pending for over six months is only three; between three to six months, the number of

case if 42, between two and three months, the number is 11, between one and two months, the number is 38; and cases pending for less than one month are 112. As per the procedure there is an Advisory Committee and this is streamlined now. All forest cases involving forest land of less than 10 hectares are not referred to the Advisory Committee. For forest land of one hectare and below, which mainly relates to school buildings and minor things, these are settled at the regional office in the headquarters.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: My question is not answered Sir.

[*Translation*]

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir as the hon. Minister has stated, it is a separate thing that the irrigation project is not covered under the Forest (Conservation) Act, but there are a number of Zudpi jungles in Vidarbha region and the hon. Minister has stated that these are being removed. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want your protection that Zudpi jungles are only in Vidarbha region and not in any other state in the country and thus no project has been pending for approval due to Zudpi jungles. I would like to know as to why injustice is being done only to Vidarbha?

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: They are in Madhya Pradesh also.

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR: There are no Zudpi jungles in Madhya Pradesh. The hon. Minister has cleared the projects of that state. No project of this state has been pending for approval due to this. Why is then injustice being done only to Vidarbha region alone?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: This is a peculiar question. If you can answer, you may.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to assure the hon. Member that no injustice has been done to Vidarbha. He was present in the meeting that was called for the purpose.

SHRI SURYA NARYAN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how many projects have been sent by the Bihar Government in 1989-90 and 90-91 for seeking approval, and how many of them have been lying pending and whether the Government would approve them on priority basis?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter will be taken into consideration. I have given the information of all the cases of Bihar pending with the Central Government. If the hon. Member refers to a particular project, it would be considered at the earliest.

SHRI DIGVJAYA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit about the pendency shown by the hon. Minister that the general impression is that all the cases are kept pending for approval only here, whereas the reality is that the cases are not dispatched by the State Governments. Hence, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that since the cutting of trees does not matter much in construction of roads, digging of canals and laying of transmission lines of up to 11 KVA, will the hon. Minister think over it and issue orders for the decent-realisation of this work at regional office stage?

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: As I said just now, we have already taken a decision and it is on line that all cases involving less than one hectare land are handled at the regional office stage whereas the cases involving less than 10 hectares are not referred to the

Advisory Committee. According to a review done by me, nowhere there is delay. The delay is occurring because cases are not sent to Delhi and it has become a standard excuse, a standard practice to say that Forest Department's clearance has not been obtained. Whereas in reality, I would like to convey this, through you, to the House that cases do arrive here and they usually arrive with incomplete details and improper formulations.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Sir, the forest cover of India has now been depleted to only 23 per cent of what normally it should be. That is what the satellite picture has shown us. Will the hon. Minister be able to explain whether while examining the project under this Act, they actually find out whether there is any forest depth or is it only normally a forest land because that will considerably lighten their work and they will not be guilty of allowing trees to cut because there were no trees at all?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: The recorded forest area in the country is 75.18 million hectares which is 22.8 per cent; the forest cover is 64.01 million hectares which is 19 per cent. The good forest cover which has 40 per cent density and above is 37.8 million hectares which is roughly 11 per cent.

The rate of denudation has been reduced from 113 lakh hectares in 1975-82 to 47,000 hectares. The good forest cover with a crown density of 40 per cent has increased from 36.1 million hectare to 37.8 million hectares.

The satellite imagery comparisons which have been done between 1981-83 and 1985-87 have shown increase in the forest cover. This increase is not necessarily in the dense area. So, the picture is not as good as it should be but it is also not as bad as it is being made out to be.