

schools etc. are partly constructed and are held up for the last few years for want of forest land in Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Union Government thereon and whether Union Government have given directive to clear small projects at the State level only ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) and (b) Only four proposals for diversion of forest lands under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for Maharashtra are pending with the Central Government. Two proposal relate to stone quarrying, one to transmission line, and one to construction of a waste weir. Apart from pending proposals, 49 proposals related to various schemes, received from the State Government of Maharashtra are being treated as closed in the Government of India on account of non submission of essential information by the State Government. The decision on pending as well as on closed cases will be taken on receipt of complete information by the State Government. The Government of India have not given directive that diversion of forest lands for small projects be allowed at the State level.

#### Afforestation of Chambal ravines

3561. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any programme for the afforestation of the Chambal ravines in Rajasthan has been undertaken by the Government; and

(b) if so, details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Details are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### Deforestation of tropical islands of India

3562. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any attempts have been made by Government to assess the extent of deforestation and encroachment in the tropical islands of India;

(b) if so, the percentage of destruction taken place over the past decade; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for conservation of tropical forests and islands ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The National Remote Sensing Agency analysis does not indicate any decrease in forest area in the tropical islands of the country.

(c) The steps taken or proposed to be taken are :

(i) to reduce the diversion of such forests to non-forests use to a bare minimum, under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(ii) to control shifting cultivation.

(iii) to close a percentage of such forests from all forestry operations and to protect them from grazing and fire.

(iv) to reduce biotic pressures on these forests by promoting use of alternative fuels and developing new fodder and pasture lands.

(v) to control functioning of existing