

### Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

5065. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Governments have to take prior clearance for the development projects and programmes from the Union Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(b) whether it is a fact that the State Governments cannot undertake the work of road construction, installation of electric transmission lines, laying of pipe lines for water supply etc. due to inordinate delay involved in taking off such projects and programmes because of sending them for prior approval to the Union Government;

(c) whether the State Governments have to bear the financial burden caused by cost escalation due to the delay caused by the above procedure;

(d) if so, whether the Union Government propose to provide powers to the State Governments as per the prescribed terms and conditions for undertaking development projects and programmes;

(e) if so, the details of these powers; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (f). As per provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, prior approval of the Central Government is necessary for diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. Proposals received under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are examined expeditiously for decision. In order to further decentralise and streamline examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, revised consolidated guidelines were issued by the Ministry on 25.10.92. These guidelines *inter alia* include delegation of powers to Regional Chief Conservators of Forest to finally decide proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 5 ha., excluding proposals for regularisation of encroachments and mining, and initial examination of all proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 20 ha. in consultation with State Advisory Groups consisting of representatives of the State Governments.

### Grant-in-aid to Laboratories

5066. SHRI SWAMI SURESHANAND : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether grants-in-aid provided to Universities for the maintenance of Chemistry laboratories is adequate in view of the escalating prices of chemicals; and

(b) if not, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to enhance the grants-in-aid for the upgradation of Chemistry laboratories?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

### Palm Oil Centres

5067. SHRI JITENDRA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have any proposal to set up Palm oil centres in various parts of the country particularly in the State of Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof; location-wise; and

(c) the time by which the proposal is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) to (c). Oil Palm Development Programme (OPDP) for bringing 80,000 hectares under Oil Palm during the Eighth Plan with an outlay of Rs. 94.55 crores (Government of India share) is being implemented on 75:25 sharing basis between Government of India and concerned State Governments in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujarat, Goa, Orissa, Assam and Tripura.

In Assam, Oil Palm Development Programme is being implemented by State Department of Soil Conservation through Assam Plantation Crops Development Corporation Limited. One oil palm nursery is being set up at Harmoti in Karbi-Anglong District. An area of 500 hectares will be brought under oil palm cultivation during the Eighth Plan in Assam.

Palm Oil processing mills are being established in all States including Assam under joint sector/public sector/cooperative sector/private sector.

### Gauge Conversion

5068. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether in the Budget of 1994-95 funds were allotted for fine work programme for Gorakhpur-Anand Nagar-Gonda and Anand Nagar-Nautanwa project of North East Railway;

(b) whether the Railway Board itself postponed the above project;

(c) if so, whether the General Manager of North-Eastern Railway has given suggestion of phase-wise implementation of this project; and

