

blocks in the district are considered surplus in banking coverage on population norms of 17,000 population per bank office in the rural and semi-urban areas in each development block.

#### **Assistance To Rajasthan for Development Programmes**

543. SHRI SHANTI DHARIWAL: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Expert Group of Planning Commission has given its report regarding the inclusion of Aravali Hills in Hill Area Development Programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to give special financial assistance to Rajasthan for its development programme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d), The Expert Group on Delineation of New Hill Areas in the country has since submitted its report. The report is being processed.

#### **Forest Cover In India**

544. SHRI. P.R. DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the area under forest cover in the different States as on 1 January, 1960 and 1 January, 1987;

(b) the percentage of forest area lost/gained during the above mentioned period due to diversion of forest land for development activities such as industries, rail/road, irrigation, other project and afforestation; and

(c) steps taken for development of more areas through afforestation and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) and (b). No. surveys to assess the area under forest cover as on 1st January, 1960 and as on 1st January, 1987 have been carried out, and, therefore, the percentage of forest area lost/gained during this period cannot be assessed.

(c) The National Westelands Development Board has been set up in 1985 with the object of bringing 5 million hectares of land every year under fuelwood and fodder plantations. A people's movement for afforestation is being developed.

#### **Deforestation by New Delhi Municipal Committee**

545. SHRI MATILAL HANSDA:  
SHRI PURAN CHANDRA MALIK:  
SHRI SYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN

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

(a) whether New Delhi Municipal Committee had recently destroyed the kikar forest around the Kushak nala belt in order to convert it into a parkland; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to stop further felling of trees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) and (b). The details are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Study in Weather Behavioural Pattern on Delayed Arrival of Monsoons in North India**

546. DR. B.L. SHAILESH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any expert studies have been or are proposed to be made into the recent trends in the delayed arrival of monsoons - both westerlies and easterlies in North India;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) if not, whether such a study in the weather behavioural pattern following the delayed arrival of monsoons in the north proposed to be conducted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN): (a) and (b). India Meteorological Department has been conducting expert studies by analysing data on the dates of onset of Monsoon for various places in the country for the last several decades. The analysis of the data did not reveal any decisive trend of early or delayed onset of monsoon.

(c) Does not arise.

#### **Expenditure by LIC on New Building in Cannaught Place**

547. DR. B.L. SHAILESH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has received strong objections from a Central Investigating agency regarding the Rs. 2 crore expenditure by the Life Insurance Corporation on the aluminium and glass facade of its 15 crore new building in Cannaught Place, New Delhi;

(b) whether his Ministry has examined the desirability of such an expenditure by the LIC; and

(c) if so, his Ministry's reaction to this expenditure by the LIC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) (a) Based on technical examination by the CTE organisation of the Central vigilance Commission, the Commission had brought to the notice of Govt. the work pertaining to the LIC Mega Centre in New Delhi so as to evolve systems and procedures for checking expenditure on Central Govt. projects. The Commission had *inter-alia* drawn attention to the glass facade with aluminium frame in this building.

(b) and (c). Govt. have examined the matter in detail. The building has been taken up by LIC as a commercially viable venture. Looking to the importance of the building and its location, the construction plans have been got designed by the well-known architect, Shri Charles Correa. Since the expenditure on various items has been incurred as per specifications laid down in the overall plan for the project, the expenditure incurred on glass and aluminium facade, is not considered unreasonable.

#### **Liberalisation of Gold Licensing Policy**

548. DR. B. L. SHAILESH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the high powered Working Group on Gold Control Machinery has recommended the liberalisation of the licensing policy under the Gold Control Act, 1968;

(b) if so, what are the other major recommendations made by this Group; and

(c) the action proposed thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The other major recommendations include increase in the limits of primary gold that may be held by goldsmiths; exclusion of components of ornaments from the scope of the term "Primary Gold", conversion of quarterly returns of the dealers into an annual return and several modifications in the registers prescribed for maintenance by gold dealers.

Relaxations of the provisions of the Gold Control Act recommended in respect of gold jewellery and articles manufactured for export market include permission to commence work in gold jewellery complexes and export processing zones without having to wait for the issue of a gold dealer licence; relaxation of the quantitative limits of primary gold that may be held by a manufacturer of