

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) to (c): The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Bidding of Power Projects

4684. SHRI SADASHIV RAO D. MANDLIK :
SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to invite bidding for 15 power projects totalling 75,000 MW within the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria adopted for bidding these projects; and

(d) the time by which these projects would be accorded clearance?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) to (d): Action has been initiated for setting up large capacity power generation projects. Selection of the developer to take up these projects, would be generally done by inviting competitive offers. The modalities for setting up these projects are being finalised.

Degradation of Ecology in Mines

4685. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the open cast mines have degraded the ecology of the mining area;

(b) if so, whether a large number of trees have been uprooted in the region; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to check the degradation of ecology of the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) to (c): Opencast mining activities are generally associated with environmental degradation. Tree felling is kept to minimum number in order to check degradation of the ecology in the mining areas. Environmental management plans are prepared wherein mitigative measures like compensatory afforestation in case of forest lands, intensive plantation within the lease areas, reclamation and rehabilitation of mined out areas, construction of garland drains/check dams to protect run-offs from dumps are incorporated.

System to Regulate Airwaves

4686. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court of India had directed to set up a system to regulate airwaves in 1993 and the same has not been established till date;

(b) if so, the reasons for ignoring the directions of the Supreme Court and losses suffered by Government thereby; and

(c) the details of the other directions of Supreme Court of India not implemented so far?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) to (c): Government have not received any direction from the Supreme Court in the year 1993 for regulating airwaves. However, the Supreme Court of India in their judgement dated 9.2.95 in the case of Union of India Versus Cricket Association of Bengal had directed the UOI to set up an autonomous body for regulating the use of airwaves. Accordingly a Broadcasting Bill, 1997 was drafted and introduced in Lok Sabha on 16.5.97. However, with the dissolution of the 11th Lok Sabha the Bill got lapsed.

Telephone Connections

4687. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have assessed the demand *vis-a-vis* the existing capacity of telephone exchange of each Taluqua in Kutch District in Gujarat for telephone connections;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of waiting list pending for telephone connections in the district;

(d) whether the Government have any plan for upgradation of telephone exchanges in the district;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government for the speedy allotment of telephone connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c): Yes, Sir. The details of existing capacity of