

for the country are as below :—

(Rs. in lakhs)

Scheme	VIII Plan	IX Plan
IAEPS	20312.00	18853.65
AOFFP	15419.00	20004.46
NTFP	5648.00	5984.67
ASTRP	736.00	*

\* Projects received under the ASTRP for IX Plan are under consideration for sanction in the current year.

(c) to (e) All projects are monitored by the Forest Departments of the State Governments. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Forests also has projects evaluated by independent agencies and the shortcomings reported in the evaluations are brought to the notice of the State Governments/implementing agencies for appropriate remedial action.

Some of the agencies which are engaged in the evaluation are :-

1. Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay.
2. Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, New Delhi.
3. National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi.
4. National Centre for Human Settlement and Environment, Bhopal.
5. Indian Institute of Public Opinion, New Delhi, etc.

[English]

#### Education Cess Tax on Companies

116. SHRI K.S. RAO :  
SHRI SURESH WARPUDKAR :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to levy education cess/tax on companies hiring graduates from Government funded institutions including IITs and IIMs; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) As of now, there is no such proposal to levy education cess on companies hiring graduates from Government institutions funded by the Ministry of

Human Resource Development including Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management.

[Translation]

#### Purchase of Power from Pakistan

117. SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARI :  
SHRI G. GANGA REDDY :  
SHRI JANARDAN PRASAD MISRA :  
SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH :  
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY :  
SHRI BHAGWAN QSHANKAR RAWAT :  
SHRI M. RAJIAH :  
SHRI C.D. GAMIT :  
SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHRY :  
SHRI AJAY KUMAR S. SARNAIK :  
SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :  
SHRI MADAN PATIL :  
SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADODA MANDLIK:  
SHRI S.S. OWAI SI :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistan has offered to sell India 2000 MW power;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any committee has been constituted to go into the details of the proposal;

(d) if so, the details in this regard and the time by which the committee is likely to give its final report on the proposal; and

(e) the details of cost negotiated and infrastructures needed for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) to (e) Pakistan High Commission in a note verbale dated 12 May, 1997 to Ministry of Commerce stated that Government of Pakistan was considering a proposal for export of electricity to India. Government of India conveyed its serious interest to the proposal stating that commercial and technical details could be discussed by experts. The matter came up for discussions at the bilateral talks with Pakistan on Economic and Commercial Cooperation in New Delhi on 10.11.1998 when the Pakistani delegation expressed its willingness to receive a delegation from India for discussion on technical and commercial aspects of the proposal. Subsequently, the Government of Pakistan has sent a formal invitation for the visit of

a technical team from India. The Government of India has accepted the invitation and a seven member technical team led by Shri Pradip Baijal, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Power has been deputed to hold discussion in Pakistan from November 24-27, 1998.

[English]

#### **Destruction of Forests In Gujarat**

118. SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is growing destruction of forests in Gujarat; and

(b) if so, the details of the steps taken to stop the valuable forest resources and wild animals from the destruction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) As per the State of Forest Report 1997 published by Forest Survey of India, 1997 assessment indicates a marginal increase of 258 sq. kms. in the forest cover as compared to 1995 assessment. However a marginal decrease of 32 sq. kms. of dense forest and 12 sq. kms. of open forest has been noted. The forest area under mangroves has increased by 302 sq. kms.

(b) Major steps being taken by the Government to stop the valuable forest resources and wild animals from the destruction are as under :—

1. Afforestation programmes are being undertaken.
2. Guidelines have been issued to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests through Joint Forest Management.
3. Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate diversion of forest land.
4. A centrally sponsored scheme "Modern Forest Fire Control Methods" is being implemented to protect and conserve the forest from fire.
5. Hunting of wild animals included in Schedules I to IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been banned.
6. Special measures for protection and conservation of lions and their habitat are being implemented.

7. A network of 21 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 4 National Parks has been set up for conservation of wild flora and fauna.

8. Raids are carried out by the wildlife authorities, whenever information of illegal trading in wildlife animals reaches them.

9. International Trade in Endangered Species of animals and articles made thereof is regulated under the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

#### **Declaration of Roads as National Highways**

119. SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE :  
SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the criteria adopted for declaring a road as national highway;

(b) whether it is a fact that some village roads have been declared as national highways recently in some States;

(c) if so, whether it is a total violation of norms set down for declaring a stretch as national highway; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and action taken by the Government to strictly adhere to the established norms for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) The details are given in the statement enclosed.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

#### **Statement**

The declaration of new roads as new National Highways is dependent on certain factors, which *inter-alia* includes the criteria prescribed for the purpose. The details of the criteria for selection of new National Highways are as under :

- (i) Roads which run through the length and breadth of the country.
- (ii) Roads connecting adjacent countries.