

(c) A final decision is usually taken within ninety days of receipt of complete information from project authorities. However, the projects detailed above are pending for clearance due to reasons which *inter alia* include :

- Project are recently received.
- Supplementary information has been recently received.
- Additional data on risk analysis, air pollution are yet to be submitted by the promoters.
- Change in scope of the project.
- Comments from Chief Wildlife Warden are awaited.

#### **Establishment of Benches of High Courts**

\*164. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the present policy of the Government in the matter of establishment of new benches of the High Courts;

(b) the manner in which Government propose to make justice available at the door-steps of the litigants without establishing more High Court benches;

(c) whether any proposal to amend S. 51(2) the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 is pending consideration of the Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) and (b): The present policy of the Government of India is to consider the question of establishment of a High Court Bench in the light of broad principles and criteria recommended by the Jaswant Singh Commission, after a proposal has been received from the concerned State Government, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

#### **Development of Forests**

\*168. SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the progress made so far in the development of forests in the country;

(b) the amount incurred so far thereon; and

(c) the States where the percentages of forest area is still very small and forests are depleting?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) A statement is enclosed.

(b) A sum of about Rs. 7,000 crores has been spent on conservation and development of forests till the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan.

(c) As per the State of Forest Report, 1997, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan have forest cover less than 10% of their respective geographical area. Decline in forest cover during the period 1993 to 1995 has been noticed in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Orissa.

#### **Statement**

##### *Development of Forests*

1. The subject "Forests" was moved from the state list to concurrent list by the Constitution (42nd amendment) Act, 1976.

2. Forest (Conservation) Act was enacted in 1980 to regulate indiscriminate diversion of forest lands for non-forestry purposes. As a result, average annual rate of diversion has come down from around 1.43 million ha. to less than 26,000 ha.

3. National Forest Policy, 1952 was revised in the year 1988. It envisages maintenance of environmental stability and restoration of ecological balance; preservation of natural forests including biological diversity and genetic resources; association of local people in protection and development of forests; and to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forests/tree cover through massive afforestation programme.

4. Ministry has issued guidelines on 1.6.1990 for promoting involvement of village communities in the protection and regeneration of degraded forests. Until now, 20 states have issued Joint Forest Management resolutions and it is estimated that around 20,000 Forest Protection Communities are involved in the protection and regeneration of about 2 million ha. of degraded forest land.

5. About 28 million ha. has been brought under afforestation so far under various schemes. As per latest

assessment, forest cover in the country is 19.27% of the geographical area.

6. Wildlife (Protection) Act was enacted in 1972 (amended 1991), to protect wild flora and fauna.

7. A network of 447 wildlife sanctuaries and 84 National Parks covering about 1,50,000 sq. km. has been developed for conservation of wild flora and fauna.

#### **Pollution Caused by Leaded Petrol**

\*170. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE :  
SHRI PRABHASH CHANDRA TIWARI :

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

(a) whether the leaded petrol is one of the main causes of vehicular pollution in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Government have conducted or propose to conduct any test regarding the pollution caused by the leaded petrol in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Union Government to check the pollution caused by the leaded petrol?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) Yes sir.

(b) and (c): The Central Pollution Control Board is carrying out a study on measurements of lead in ambient air. The study is being carried out with the assistance of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Nagpur. Four metro cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta, have been covered. The selection was based on the fact that the number of vehicles in these cities is higher than other cities. Lead levels in ambient air of Delhi have shown that levels of lead are showing a reducing trend.

(d) The Government in order to check pollution caused by leaded petrol introduced low leaded petrol (0.15 gm/l), as against the prevailing specification of 0.56 gm/l, in the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta in June 1994, and in the entire country in December 1996. Unleaded petrol (0.013 gm/l) has been introduced in the four metro cities from April 1995. Unleaded petrol is also available in the Taj Trapezium and at some selected retail outlets on the radial routes

emerging out from the metros to important cities/tourist destinations. Unleaded petrol was proposed to be introduced at all the State/UT capitals and towns with population of 10 lakh and above from December, 1998 but has been advanced to August 1998. Further it is proposed to introduce unleaded petrol throughout the country from April, 2000.

[English]

#### **Financial Crisis in Major Ports**

\*171. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether some major ports have been facing financial crisis;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve their financial position, port-wise; and

(c) the details of the Central assistance sought by Paradeep Port to take up its development projects during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Paradip Port has been financing all its development projects from their own internal resources except for one Externally Aided ADB Project for creating mechanised coal handling facilities. During the last 3 years, following amounts of loan has been disbursed to Paradip Port for this Project:—

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Amount released
1995-96	7.22
1996-97	16.39
1997-98	44.68

#### **Pollution Control Measures**

\*172. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN :  
SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :

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