

(a) whether forest land is kept as reserved area by Forest Department only for five years in the name of afforestation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to make an arrangement under which only local residents would be allowed the entry for grass cutting and the entry of cattle would be banned so as to save the saplings planted five years back; and

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to come into effect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) to (d) New plantations are normally protected for a period of 3-5 years to enable saplings to establish themselves. In this period the area may be fenced off and closed for grazing. Plantation schemes normally provide for some fencing costs. Local people may also be involved in the protection of the area through Villages Forest Protection Committees (VFPCs) under Joint Forest Management (JFM) and provision may be made locally to regulate the entry of cattle and to encourage stall feeding.

The existing plantation schemes of the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board provide for fencing costs of upto 5% of plantation cost and encourage JFM and the formation of VFPCs.

#### **Working of Telephones**

1752. SHRI SATNAM SINGH KAINTH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that telephone facilities made available in Punjab particularly in Nawan Shahr, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and Jalandhar districts are in a very poor state of affairs;

(b) whether most of the lines in these districts remain out of order and in spite of making complaints no action is taken to set the Telephone in order; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to remedy the situation in Punjab particularly in these districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The telephone facilities in Punjab including Nawan Shahr, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and Jalandhar are generally satisfactory.

(b) No, Sir. The complaints are attended as and when received. The districts of Nawan Shahr, Kapurthala and Jalandhar are part of Jalandhar SSA while Hoshiarpur is a separate SSA. The fault rate in Jalandhar stood at 11.7/100 stn./month as of 1.4.98 and for Hoshiarpur 13.9. Both these figures are below the Circle average of 15.7. However, these figures do increase during the Monsoon months or immediately after intense activity of new connections provisioning.

However, plans have been drawn up to further improve the network of Punjab Telecom Circle including these areas, which will help to reduce the faults and also clear them more expeditiously.

(c) Does not arise.

#### **Power Generation**

1753. SHRI K.P. NAIDU : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has agreed to grant any assistance to Kerala to increase its power generation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether agreements for power generation with Chinese assistance have been proposed in respect of other States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, the Government of Kerala/Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) has signed two MOUs with the International Network on Small Hydro Power (IN-SHP), an international organisation for the promotion of small hydro power worldwide, with its headquarters in China, for the demonstration of the Chinese methodology of integrated development of small hydro power in Kerala. IN-SHP has offered to mobilise export credit for equipment.

(c) and (d) The Chinese National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (a Chinese Government Undertaking under the Ministry of Foreign Trade) have offered implementation of Tenughat State-II (2 × 210 MW) in Bihar on turn-key basis through long term credit facility through Chinese Government. A similar offer has been made for implementation of Ib Valley Stage-II (2 × 210 MW) to Government of Orissa.