

(a) whether Government have received any request for environment clearance to set up a Hydel Power Station at Mananthavady in Wyanad District, Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto;

(c) whether any study has been made to determine the effects of such a project on the ecology and environment of the district, submerging large extent of virgin forest which is the habitat of elephants and the great Asian Tigers; and

(d) if so, the findings of the study ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Expansion of Rajkot-Ahmedabad National Highway

3559. SHRI DINSHA PATEL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Rajkot-Ahmedabad National Highway has been identified as accident-prone zone on the 200 kms stretch;

(b) if so, the details of action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to avoid such incidents;

(c) whether the Government have plans to expand this stretch in the near future; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Certain stretches having a length of 19.4 km are already having 4-lane carriageway of the road in question in the Gujarat State, and 10.00 km length has been included in the current (1998-99) Annual Plan for 4-laning. In addition, stretches having a length of 29.8 km are in progress for 4-laning and about 121.9 km are planned for widening to 4-lane from State Funds.

Restructuring of Tution Fees

3560. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to restructure the tution fees charged in the Indian Institutes of Technology;

(b) if so, whether any loan scheme to allow student to get loans and repay after graduation is being worked out;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government propose to impose special fees on those graduates of IITs, going abroad immediately after passing out; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) To meet a certain percentage of cost of educaiton, which has been going up substantially year after year, the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) (the central body to co-ordinate all activities of IITs) in its 34th meeting held on 7.11.1996, approved the enhancement of the total fees including tution fees per year of Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses from academic year 1997-98.

(b) and (c) Loan schemes for education are available to the students of Indian Institutes of Technology from some banks.

(d) and (e) No such proposal is under consideration at present.

National Power Grid

3561. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of POWER be plesed to state :

(a) whether a National Power Grid is proposed to be established;

(b) if so, the amount allocated for the purpose; and

(c) the mechanism envisaged to regulate the dealings between State Electricity Boards and other private companies ?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARA-MANGALAM) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Powergrid has prepared a perspective plan to establish a national power grid to be implemented in phases by the end of XIth Plan. Powergrid has envisaged interconnecting the regions by HVDC back-to-back links in the first phase. Powergrid has already commissioned a back-to-back link between Northern and Western Region at Vindhychal and between Sourthern and Western Region at Chandrapur. Powergrid is completing HVDC back-to-back link between Southern and Eastern Region at Gazuwaka at a cost of Rs. 659.98 Crores and another link at Sasaram between Northern and Eastern Region is envisaged at a cost of Rs. 671.56 Crores. The grid will be further strengthened with large inter-regional links planned with mega size multi State Projects. In addition, small schemes providing vital links are also being taken up. The resources will be allocated as and when the projects are taken up.

(c) Government of India has already set up the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) under the

Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 1998. State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC) have been set up in Orissa and Haryana. Many other States are in the process of setting up of SERCs. The dealings between the SEBs and the private companies will be within the purview of the SERCs, once they are set up.

Bus Service between Delhi and Lahore

3562. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI :
SHRI K.L. SHARMA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have commenced bus service between Delhi and Lahore recently;

(b) if so, the response to the new service launched by the Government;

(c) the steps being taken to promote the tourism between the two countries;

(d) whether according to security experts such a service providing three halts enroute in a day's journey, are likely to provide an opportunity of smuggling arms and ammunition in the country; and

(e) if so, whether Government have ensured against such smuggling ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) to (e) No, Sir. However, a proposal to introduce a bus service between New Delhi and Lahore has been under consideration of this Ministry in consultation with all concerned Ministries/ Departments/State Governments. Negotiations are also being held with the Government of Pakistan to work out the modalities through a bilateral agreement for introduction of such a bus service.

Operation Black Board Scheme

3563. SHRI A.C. JOS : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have any machinery to review/evaluate Operation Black Board Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any monitoring system exists to supervise the grants allocated to States under the scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) to (d) In pursuance of

the National Policy on Education 1986, the scheme of Operation Blackboard was launched in 1987-88. The three main components of the scheme are : (a) provision of an additional teacher to single teacher primary schools; (b) provision of at least two classrooms in each primary school; and (c) provision of teaching learning equipment to all primary schools. The scheme was revised in 1993 by expanding its scope to provide third classroom and third teacher to primary schools where enrolment exceeds 100 and extended to cover upper primary schools. The scheme of Operation Blackboard is regularly monitored at State and Central Government levels. Quarterly Progress Reports have been the basis for monitoring, besides review meetings and regional meetings/consultations.

In addition, the scheme of Operation Blackboard has also been evaluated by NCERT and other external agencies including Operation Research Group (ORG), New Delhi; G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad; National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad and Sandhan, Jaipur. States covered under these evaluation studies are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

A review of the scheme is also undertaken at the end of the Five Year Plans. Based on such reviews the schemes are modified/revised or expanded with a view to achieve the objectives set for the scheme.

The unspent balance with State Governments are regularly monitored and are taken into account while releasing funds to States during subsequent years.

[Translation]

Power Projects in Bihar

3564. SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether any scheme have been formulated to increase power generation capacity in Bihar during the current financial year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b) The details of thermal and hydro-electric power projects under execution in Bihar are as follows :

Sl. No.	Name of Project/ Executing Agency	Capacity (MW)	Expected date of Commissioning
1	2	3	4
Thermal			
1.	Tenughat TPP St. II (TVNL)	3 x 210	.
2.	Muzaffarpur TPP (BSEB)	2 x 250	.