

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have initiated any steps to check the piracy of our traditional knowledge and biological resources; and

(d) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI) : (a) and (b) The Government encourages public participation in conservation and sustainable use of biological resources. For example, the ecodevelopment programmes around national parks, sanctuaries and other reserve forest areas provide for the participation of local communities in the conservation of these areas and protection of wildlife. The Joint Forest Management approach for regeneration of degraded forest lands is based on the participation of the local communities.

(c) and (d) After having broad based consultations with Ministries/Departments, academic and technical institutions, experts, NGOs and other stakeholders on protecting biological resources and indigenous knowledge associated with them and securing equitable benefits arising out of the use of these resources, the Government had constituted an expert Committee to suggest a draft legislation on Biological Diversity.

The Committee gave a draft outline of an Act on Biological Diversity in October, 1997. The Government is now further considering the proposal to enact a law on Biological Diversity. The proposal *inter alia* includes the issue of regulating access to biological resources and indigenous knowledge associated with them with the purpose of ensuring equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of such resources.

#### Anta Gas Thermal Power Project, Stage-II

709. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether NTPC has earlier planned gas power station of 413 MW capacity at Anta and no head way on it was made as the Union Government has not provided gas linkage for Anta Gas Thermal Power Project, Stage-II;

(b) If so, whether the Government of India allocated gas to power stations in Delhi and Gujarat after the Anta Stage-II was conceived;

(c) If so, the considerations on which it was done;

(d) the likely time by which the Anta Stage-II gas based thermal station of NTPC is likely to get gas allocation and the Union Government sanction;

(e) whether the gas allocation for the existing Anta GTPS is adequate to operate it as base load station as per policy of the Government;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) If not, the time by which the additional allocation of gas is likely to be made for stage-I and also for Stage-II;

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) had originally formulated a proposal for expansion of Anta Gas Power Project Stage-II (430 MW) in 1988 considering gas as the main fuel to be supplied from HBJ pipeline. However, because of non-availability of gas, the proposal could not be processed further, the expansion project was reformulated in 1997 with a capacity of 650 MW with naphtha as a primary fuel.

(b) and (c) The allocation of gas to the Power stations in Delhi, Gujarat and Anta were made at the same time.

(d) to (g) Lineage of naphtha at 80% FLF for Anta expansion project has been provided in November, 1997. Anta gas power plant stage-I is supplied gas from HBJ pipeline. The capacity of HBJ Pipeline is 33.40 MCMD has already been made. Since the allocation has already succeeded the projected availability of gas by ONGC, additional allocation of gas to Anta gas power project is not possible at this stage. The expansion proposal is presently under appraisal by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for techno-economic clearance.

#### Vacancies in High Courts and Supreme Court

710. SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN  
PROF. P.J. KURIEN :  
SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT :  
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE :  
SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK :

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of sanctioned strength of the permanent and additional judges of various High Courts and Supreme Court of India;

(b) the total number of posts of Judges lying vacant in various High Courts as well as in the Supreme Court of India and the percentage that such vacancies constitute with respect to the total number of sanctioned posts of judges as on April 30, 1998;

(c) the time from which these posts are lying vacant; and

(d) the steps taken to fill up the posts and the time by which these are likely to be filled?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) to (d) As 1.5.1998, against the sanctioned strength of 26 Judges, 21 Judges were in position in the Supreme Court of India, leaving 5

vacancies of Judges to be filled up. These vacancies arose on 12.6.1997, 13.7.1997, 21.12.1997, 18.1.1998 and 1.5. 1998.

In the High Court, as on 1.5.1998, against the sanctioned strength of 585 Judges/Additional Judges, 481 Judges/Additional Judges were in position, leaving 104 vacancies of Judges/Additional Judges to be filled up. These posts became vacant, from time to time, due to retirement and transfer etc. of the Judges.

The procedure for such appointments involves consultations among several constitutional authorities. Every effort is being made to fill existing vacancies at the earliest.

[Translation]

#### Telephone Facility in Uttar Pradesh

711. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA  
SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether thousands of villages in Uttar Pradesh have been denied the modern telephone facilities in spite of the loan sanctioned by the Asian Development Bank;

(b) if so, the number of villages involved and the reasons for depriving them of modern telephone facilities; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to implement this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA) : (a) to (c) A loan was negotiated with the Asian Development Bank to cover 36773 villages of Uttar Pradesh (East). A tender was called for supply of equipment, but the equipment did not meet our technical requirement and as such the tender was cancelled.

We are going ahead with our programme of covering all the villages with telephones during Ninth plan period. A combination of technologies like Under ground cables, overhead line, MARR systems, opening of new exchanges and Wireless in local loop for Macro areas etc. will be used during this period.

[English]

#### Shortage of Cables

712. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that there is acute shortage of basic materials like cables etc. in Panskura telephone exchange in West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with reasons therefor; and

(c) the measure taken by the Government to step up the supply of the cables and release of necessary funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA) : (a) There is no shortage.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Supply of funds and Cables is made from time to time based on the development and operational requirements.

#### Power Generation in the Country

713. SHRI KAMAL NATH : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the total power generation during the last three years in the country;

(b) projected power requirement in the year 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01; and

(c) the steps the Government propose to take to meet the shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) The total energy generation in the country during the years 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 are given as under:

1995-96	379.877 Billion Units (BU)
1996-97	394.488 BU
1997-98	420.622 BU respectively.

(b) As per the 15th Electric Power Survey report the project energy requirement for the years 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01 are given as under:

1998-1999	469.507 Billion Units (BU)
1999-2000	502.254 BU
2000-2001	535.93 BU respectively.

(c) To meet the projected demand. Government have initiated various steps which *inter-alia* include addition in capacity, encouraging private sector participation in power generation, better demand side management, energy conservation measures, renovation and modernisation of existing plants, reduction of transmission and distribution losses and effective utilisation of generation capacity by transfer of power from surplus regions to deficit regions through inter-regional links.

#### High Court Bench in Kolhapur, Maharashtra

714. SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADOBHA MANDLIK : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether no high court bench exists in Kolhapur region of Maharashtra;