

**Oil Exploration Proposals of ONGC**

1034. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering the proposals of ONGC for exploration of same blocks which were deferred in bidding for private participation; and

(b) if so, the time by which the contracts for these blocks are likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Whenever blocks which have been offered, are not bid for by private companies, ONGC is free to apply for Petroleum Exploration Lease for these blocks, and in order to expedite exploration, Govt. considers such applications.

[Translation]

**Power Projects in North Eastern Region**

1035. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether permission has been granted to some foreign companies for investment in power projects in North-Eastern states;

(b) if so, whether any policy has been framed by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) The Government has recently reviewed the existing guidelines for automatic approval for foreign equity for electric generation, transmission and distribution projects, and has decided to enlarge the provisions for automatic approval for such projects. Accordingly, projects for electric generation, transmission and distribution will be permitted foreign equity participation up to 100% on the automatic approval route provided the foreign equity in any such project does not exceed Rs. 1500 crore. These guidelines apply equally to the whole of the country including Assam and the North-Eastern States. As per information available, no proposal has been received for investing for power

projects in Assam and the North-Eastern States of the country nor has any such proposal been cleared by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board.

[English]

**Delimitation of Constituencies and Criminalisation in Politics**

1036. DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD:  
SHRI NARESH PUGLIA:  
PROF. P.J. KURIEN:

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

(a) whether the Election Commission have urged the Government to take up issues of delimitation of constituencies and criminalisation of politics with appropriate amendments in the law;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto;

(c) whether conference of State ECs was held recently; and

(d) if so, the details of discussions held in the conference and outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) and (b) The Election Commission, while favouring the proposal of rotation of seats reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates, which is one of the proposals on electoral reforms currently under discussion with political parties, has also suggested that the work of delimitation of the Constituencies be assigned to it. The Election Commission has also proposed strengthening of Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 by providing that any person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for six months or more should be debarred from contesting elections for a period totalling the sentence imposed plus an additional six years. The Commission has further suggested that any person accused of any offence punishable with imprisonment for five years or more should be disqualified after the competent court has framed charges against him. The views/proposals of the Commission would be discussed with political parties.

(c) and (d) A Statement containing the gist of discussions held during the Second Annual Meeting of the Election Commission with the State Election Commissioners (SECs) on 11.1.99 at New Delhi is attached.

**Statement**

*Gist of Discussions held during the Second Annual Meeting of the Election Commission with the State Election Commissioners (SECs) on 11.1.1999 at New Delhi*

1. Stress was laid by the Election Commission of India on Annual Meeting with SECs.
2. Stress was laid by the Commission on improving the inter-relations with SECs.
3. Need was felt for coordination between all Electoral Registration Authorities to avoid duplication of efforts, labour and expenditure in respect of preparation and revision of Electoral Rolls.
4. The SECs held different views with respect to the proposal of the Commission for indicating Ward Numbers in the Assembly Electoral Rolls.
5. The benefits of the Scheme of Computerisation of Electoral Rolls and having a common data base in this respect were discussed.
6. The Commission and the SECs assured each other on sharing of electoral material between them on approved rates.
7. Use of EVMs in recent Assembly Elections was appreciated and need was felt for amending State Laws to include enabling provisions for the use of these machines in relation to local bodies' elections.
8. Utility of Photo Identity Cards in local bodies' elections was discussed.
9. The SECs welcomed the offer of Commission for imparting training to their officers and staff on various Electoral Laws, Procedures and related matters.
10. The need for insisting on an affidavit/declaration from candidates regarding their antecedents in respect of criminal activities was felt.
11. The Commission's proposal for disqualifying candidates who had been chargesheeted by appropriate Courts for an offence leading to a

sentence of five years or more, during pendency of trial, found favour among participants.

12. Need was felt to entrust the job of delimitation of Wards to SECs in view of the fact that some of the State Governments have reserved this power on-to themselves.
13. Need to harmonise the terms and conditions of appointment of SECs giving them the same status, salaries and other service benefits as available to High Court Judges was discussed.
14. Need for making the expenses of the SECs 'Charged' on the Consolidated Fund of the States was discussed.
15. Debarring delinquent officers from election related duties, mutual coordination between Election Commission and SECs in this regard and need for having disciplinary jurisdiction over the officers deputed on election duties was also discussed.
16. Some SECs desired that the Election Law Reports and Annual Reports of the Commission should be revived.

**Power Generation by NHPC during Ninth Plan**

1037. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) propose to enhance power generation during the Ninth plan;

(b) if so, the number of new power projects proposed to be constructed by NHPC in the said plan period;

(c) whether NHPC also proposes to expand its existing power projects during this period; and

(d) if so, the target fixed therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Rangit Hydro-electric Project (3x20 MW) in Sikkim and the Dulhasti Hydro-electric project (3X130 MW) in Jammu and Kashmir are under construction by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC). Both these projects are