

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:81
ANSWERED ON:12.07.2004
SIMPLIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE PROCEDURE
Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan;Mollah Shri Hannan

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the inordinate delay in granting environmental clearance to various projects;
- (b) if so, the reasons for the delay;
- (c) whether the Government has now simplified the procedure for granting environmental clearance;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether still a large number of projects are pending with the Government for environmental clearance; and
- (f) if so, the extent to which simplification in the procedure for granting environmental clearance is going to clear the pending projects?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 81 FOR 12.7.2004 REGARDING SIMPLIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE PROCEDURE

(a)&(b) Environmental clearance for project proposals is granted usually within the mandated time frame of 120 days from the date of receipt of complete information from the project authorities. However, environmental clearance for many of the projects gets protracted beyond the prescribed time frame due to non-submission of the requisite information.

(c)&(d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has undertaken various measures to streamline and simplify the environmental clearance procedure with a view to promote time-bound and transparent decision making, by making amendments to the Environmental Impact Assessment and Coastal Regulation Zone Notifications, and by bringing procedural changes. These measures include:

- Time limit of 90 days for completing appraisals, 30 days for communicating decision, and 60 days for completing the public hearing by State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs).
- Investment limit raised from Rs. 50 crores to Rs. 100 crores for new projects.
- Dispensed with the requirement of public hearing for Small Scale Industries (SSIs) located in industrial areas / estates, widening and strengthening of highways, offshore exploration activities beyond 10 kms. from the nearest habitat, mining projects of major minerals with lease upto 20 ha, modernization of existing irrigation projects, and units to be located in Export Processing Zone (EPZ) and Special Economic Zone (SEZ);
- Dispensed with the requirement of EIA report for pipeline projects.
- No Objection Certificate (NOC) / consent to establish not insisted upon at the time of receipt of the application for environmental clearance.
- Industrial projects costing less than Rs. 5.0 crores are examined in-house and decision taken.
- Powers have been delegated to the State Governments for granting environmental clearance of certain categories of thermal power projects.

(e)&(f) A total number of 250 projects in different sectors are pending for environmental clearance as on 30.6.2004.

The simplification of environmental clearance procedures already brought forth has helped in expediting the process for grant of environmental clearance. In order to further improve and expedite the environmental clearance process and make it more effective, time bound and transparent, the Ministry of Environment & Forests has taken up a comprehensive review of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 1994.