

[Translation]

Stone Quarrying on Forest Land

875. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether stone quarrying in the mines under the Forest Department has been stopped by the Forest Department in some parts of the country on the pretext of protecting environment;

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

(c) whether it is possible to plant trees on or near these mines by the Forest Department for protecting the environment;

(d) if so, whether the same could be done; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) There is no ban on stone quarrying in forest areas under the control of the State Forest Department. However, for such a non-forest activity, prior approval of the Central Government is required to be obtained under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 by the concerned State Government. While examining any such proposal under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, it is to be ascertained that why stone quarrying cannot be done in the non-forest area and whether or not the proposed site of quarrying is sensitive from ecological point of view. Every proposal is, therefore decided on its merit. It would not be desirable to permit stone quarrying activities when alternatives are available on non-forest areas or the proposed site is located deep inside the forest or on steep slopes or other such sites which are sensitive from ecological and biodiversity point of view.

(c) to (e) Reclamation of mining areas by afforestation, soil conservation and other vegetative methods concurrently as well as after completion of mining is possible by using suitable techniques. But these measures cannot act as a replacement of the original vegetational cover of biodiversity of the area. These can at best help to some extent in mitigating adverse environmental effects of mining in forest areas.

[English]

Pakawal Dul H.E. Project

876. VAIDYA VISHNU DATT: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Hydro Power Corporation has spent a large amount on the first phase for Pakawal Dul H.E. project;

(b) if so, whether the work on the project has not commenced by NHPC so far;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the remedial steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (d) Pakawal Dul H.E. project is not under execution by National Hydro-electric Power Corporation (NHPC) and NHPC have not spent any amount on this project.

Oil Exploration under NELP

877. SHRI LAKSHMAN CHANDRA SETH:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:
SHRI K.P. NAIDU:
SHRI RAMSHAKAL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have already identified the potential places for exploration of oil blocks under new exploration licensing policy (NELP);

(b) if so, the details of areas identified in the country particularly in the West Bengal for carrying out exploration activities;

(c) whether the Government have set any time-frame for completion of this project;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the ONGC has also recently located any new reserves; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy Govt. has offered 48 blocks for bidding, of which 10 are onland blocks, 26 are shallow water blocks and 12 are deep water blocks.

Of these 2 onland blocks fall in West Bengal and 3 offshore blocks fall in the West Bengal/North East Coast areas.

(c) and (d) The last date for submission of bids is fixed as 18th May, 1999.

(e) and (f) Since 1.4.97 ONGC has located Hydrocarbon finds in Cauvery, Krishna-Godawari, Cambay and Bombay Offshore Basins of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and West Coast.

During the year 1997-98 six new Hydrocarbon finds were made by ONGC resulting in accretion of 3.31 MMT in place volume of Hydrocarbons. Four new finds have also been made during the current year.

Local Call Facility

878. SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to provide local call facility between Akola district and adjoining districts of Yeotmal Amravati, Washim and Buldana in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which this facility is likely to be made available; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) As per policy Local Call facility at 180 sec. pulse rate (i.e. inter dialling without STD code) has been provided from SDCAs (short distance charging areas) of Akola District to adjacent SDCAs in Yeotmal, Amravati, Washim and Buldana district.

(b) the details are given in the attached statement.

(c) The present policy envisages provision of local call facility at 180 sec. pulse rate (i.e. inter dialling facility without STD Code) only.

1. Between two adjacent short distance charging Areas (SDCAs)
2. When the Radial distance between short distance charging centres of two short distance charging Area is upto 20 kms. (30 kms. in special case)

As such other areas cannot be covered by the policy.

Statement

Sl.No.	Name of District	Name of SDCA	Adjacent SDCA	Name of District
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Akola	Akpla	Akot Balapur Barshitakli Daryapur Malegaon Murtizapur	Akola Akola Akola Amravati Washim Akola
2.	Akola	Akot	Akola Balapur Chikhaldara Daryapur Dharani Jalgaon-Jamod	Akola Akola Amravati Amravati Amravati Buldhana