

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The State of Forest Report 1997 reports a decline of 237 sq. km. of forest cover in Assam and 70 sq. km. of forest cover in Nagaland as compared to 1995 assessment. Recently, based on the information received by Central Government 50 wagons allegedly containing illegal timber mixed with legal timber have been seized in Assam.

(c) Basic responsibility of taking action under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 lies with the state governments. Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Nagaland Forest Protection and Development Authority has been constituted. Regular review and monitoring of implementation of Hon'ble Supreme Court's Order issued in writ petition No. 202/95 regarding illegal felling of trees, transit of timber, shifting of wood based industries to industrial estates etc. has been ensured. Issue of felling permits to individuals and industrialists has been suspended as per Supreme Court orders.

Unqualified Lab. Technicians in Safdarjung Hospital

441. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, one hall of a hospital, appearing in the HT City dated 15th October, 1999;

(b) if so, the facts brought out therein;

(c) the Government's reaction thereto;

(d) whether the court has warned the Safdarjung Hospital about violations committed in enrolment of lab. technicians who are 9th standard drop-outs, etc.; and

(e) if so, the number of lab. technicians who are not fully qualified and the action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item refers to an advertisement of 1986 inserted by Safdarjung Hospital and highlights, inter-alia that the In-service training course in Medical Lab. Technology falls far short of the academic requirements set out for Lab. technicians; 9th standard drop out are becoming Lab. Technicians; and that trolley pushers and sweepers are becoming Lab-Technicians.

(c) The in-service training in Laboratory of one year duration is a course approved by Director General of Health Services. The in-service candidate having minimum qualification S.S.C. with science or Matriculation without science with Laboratory experience are eligible. For external candidates advertisement is given in the News Papers. No external candidate having qualification of matric with Science having less than 60% of marks is given admission. The selection of the candidate for admission to the course is done by a constituted Committee.

(d) and (e) No candidate who is 9th standard drop out has ever been admitted in the course.

Increase in AIDS cases

442. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware of the increase in the AIDS cases in the country;
- (b) if so, the State and Union Territory-wise position, as on date; and
- (c) the remedial action taken in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Statement is enclosed. (See below)

(c) In order to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in India, a comprehensive Programme is currently under implementation throughout the country as a centrally sponsored scheme. The main strategy consists of:—

- Strengthening programme management capabilities at central and state level.
- Creation of awareness amongst high risk behaviour groups and general public about HIV/AIDS.
- Control of Sexually transmitted diseases and condom promotion.
- Promoting blood safety and rational use of blood through proper licensing of blood banks and encouraging voluntary blood donations.
- Strengthening capacity for surveillance and diagnosis; and
- Extending training in clinical Management of HIV/AIDS cases.

Statement

*National AIDS Control Programme, India AIDS cases in India (Reported to NACO)
(As on 31st October, 1999)*

| S.No. | STATE/UNION TERRITORY | AIDS CASES |
|-------|--------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 48 |
| 2. | Assam | 32 |
| 3. | Arunachal Pradesh | 0 |
| 4. | Andaman & Nicobar Island | 0 |
| 5. | Bihar | 3 |
| 6. | Chandigarh (U.T.) | — |
| 7. | Punjab | 100 |
| 8. | Delhi | 219 |