

Pradesh and Haryana. Under the Plan so far an expenditure of Rs. 872.15 crore has been incurred and sewage treatment capacity of 753.25 million litres per day has been created.

Besides the YAP, the Government of NCT of Delhi has also taken up sewerage and sewage treatment works on Yamuna under other schemes. To ensure that only treated effluent is discharged to the river Yamuna, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has prepared schemes for laying of interceptor sewers along three major drains namely Najafgarh, Shahdara and Supplementary, augmentation of sewage treatment capacity, interception of drains, rehabilitation of trunk sewers, laying of sewerage system in unsewered colonies and rural areas and desilting of peripheral/internal sewers. As per information provided by DJB, these schemes are likely to be completed in a period of 4 years.

Changes in environmental clearance process

893. SHRI SUBHASH PRASAD YADAV: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has proposed any amendments in respect of environmental clearance process;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the Finance Ministry report that recommended severe dilution of environmental clearance process;
- (c) whether any demand has been raised for greater streamlining and rationalizing of approval and clearance process;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether any expert committee was set up in this regard;
- (f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the composition;
- (g) the steps taken/proposed to bring transparency in the clearance process; and
- (h) the benefits derived therefrom as of now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Ministry of Environment and Forests has proposed amendments in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, *vide* S.O. 195(E) dated 19th January, 2009 for obtaining comments/suggestions from all concerned.

(b) to (d) The proposed amendments are both clarificatory in nature and also to make the notification more comprehensive and rationalized, which *inter-alia* include: (i) enhancement of threshold limit for construction projects from 20,000 sq.m. to 50,000 sq.m, (ii) modernization and expansion projects without increase in pollution load to be exempt from the provision of EIA Notification, 2006, (iii) prospecting of minerals to be exempt from EIA Notification, 2006, (iv) biomass based power plants upto 50 MW to be exempt from EIA, (v) category 'B' projects to be exempt from scoping for three years, and (vi) proactive/voluntary disclosure of information relating to grant of environmental clearance for ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of environmental regulation through the creations of societal vigil. The comments/ suggestions on the

proposed draft amendments have since been received. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 provides a time limit of 365 days for finalization of the draft Notification from the date of its issue after taking into consideration the comments received.

An Expert Group constituted under the Chairpersonship of Smt. Sindhushree Khullar, Special Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs to examine the schemes of statutory clearances for industrial and infrastructure projects in India in its report dated November 10, 2008 made recommendations for rationalizing the procedure for environmental clearance which *inter-alia* included; (i) expeditious constitution of the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authorities for all the States / UTs, (ii) evolving of standardized Terms of Reference for undertaking detailed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) studies, (iii) wide publicity for the provision existing in the EIA Notification regarding appointment of alternate agency for timely completion of public hearing, (iv) exemption of certain category of expansion projects from the purview of EIA and (v) combined clearance under CRZ Notification of 1991 and EIA Notification, 2006.

(e) and (f) The Expert Group as referred to above was to examine the schemes of statutory clearances for industrial and infrastructure projects and suggest specific steps for removal of bottlenecks and speeding up the approval process of these projects. The other Members of the Group included; (i) Dr. Renu Singh Parmar, Advisor (Industry), Planning Commission, (ii) Shri N.N. Prasad, Joint Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, (iii) Shri Hari Sankaran, Managing Director, Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd., (iv) Dr. Rajiv Lall, Managing Director & CEO, Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd., (v) Shri S.S. Kohli, Chairman and Managing Director, India infrastructure Finance Company Ltd., (vi) Shri Shubendu Amitabh, Senior President (Corporate Affairs), Aditya Birla Management Corporation Ltd., Representative of ASSOCHAM, (vii) Shri Ravi Singh, CEO, World Wildlife Fund for Nature - India, Representative of CII, (viii) Shri Surendra Kumar, Advisor, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Representative of FICCI and (ix) Dr. Arvind Mayaram, Joint Secretary, Infrastructure, Department of Economic Affairs.

(g) The various steps taken to bring transparency in the clearance process *inter-alia* include, exhibiting the information in public domain on the website of the Ministry relating to (i) status of pending projects, (ii) schedule and agenda of the meeting of Expert Appraisal Committees, (iii) minutes of the meeting, (iv) clearance letters and (v) circulars and guidelines/instructions relating to Environmental Clearance.

(h) The environment clearance process is attempted to be implemented in a transparent manner and the information shared with all stakeholders.

Encroachment in forests

894. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is undertaking surveys to detect encroachment of quarries, mines, etc. into forests;