

### **Pending proposals of power and railway**

†2665. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

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

- (a) the number of proposals pertaining to power and railways pending with his Ministry received from Chhattisgarh and other States and since when, these are pending;
- (b) whether, while looking into environment related proposals, Government makes a delayed assessment of the harms to the national interests, in concerned projects; and
- (c) by when these projects are expected to get clearance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) A total of 34 projects including 4 projects from Chhattisgarh pertaining to power sector are pending with this Ministry for grant of Environmental Clearance. These projects are pending for a period ranging from 1 to 12 months primarily due to non submission of requisite information and non availability of confirmed fuel linkage. Railway projects do not require environmental clearance.

(b) No, Sir. The projects get delayed due to non-submission of requisite information, lack of water commitment and fuel linkage, land disputes, court cases, etc.

(c) As soon as the requisite information is received from the project proponents, the projects would be appraised from environmental angle as per the provisions of Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006.

### **Melting of Himalayan Glacier**

†2666. SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that there is a difference of opinion between UN climate change panel (IPCC) and the Ministry on the question of melting of Himalayan Glacier;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of Government study regarding melting of Himalayan glaciers and whether Government is going to set up a task force on this serious environmental issue; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) Different findings have been reported relating to melting of Himalayan glaciers. According to Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released in April 2007, the Himalayan Glaciers are receding faster than in any part of the world. Whereas the studies carried out by Geological Survey of India indicates that the majority of Himalayan glaciers are passing through a phase of recession, which is a worldwide phenomenon. The recession of glaciers is a part of the natural cyclic process of changes in size and other attributes of the glaciers. These changes could be attributed to various reasons including global warming.

A National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was launched in June 2008 which envisages the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system amongst its 8 National Missions. This Mission would seek to understand weather and the extent to which the Himalayan glaciers are in recession and how the problem could be addressed. A new research centre on Himalayan Glaciology has been established at Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun. Government has also prepared guidelines and best practices for sustaining Himalayan eco-system and has shared it with all State Governments in the Himalayan region.

Long-term comprehensive studies are required in order to conclusively establish the impact of global warming on recession of glaciers in Himalayan region.

#### **Damage to environment due to plastic pouches**

†2667. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the increasing production of small plastic pouches is damaging the environment;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is contemplating banning these pouches; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) The problem posed by the use of plastic pouches is primarily due to deficiencies in the waste management system. The Central Government has notified the "Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 (as amended in 2003)" to regulate the manufacture, sale and use and recycling of plastic bags. These Rules, inter alia, prohibit manufacture, sale and use of plastic carry bags less than 20 micron in thickness and less than 8 x12 inches in size. Some States have prescribed more stringent norms for thickness of plastic bags or have banned the use of plastic bags in tourist/public places.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.