

Regulatory authority to check illegal mining

*171. SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to set up an independent regulatory authority with powers to investigate and prosecute those indulging in illegal mining; and

(b) if so, the progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government is preparing a draft Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Bill, 2010 which provides for mechanism to control and prevent illegal mining.

A Group of Ministers has been constituted to finalise the provisions of the Bill. The Group of Ministers has held three meetings so far. Further action is being taken in accordance with the decisions taken in the meetings. Details regarding specific provisions of the Bill will be known only after the matter is finalised.

Declaration of bamboo as a grass

*172. SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to declare bamboo as a grass;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The proposal to declare bamboo as a grass has not been considered as it has been traditionally known as "poor man's timber", and is used as a timber substitute widely in the country, though taxonomically, bamboo belongs to grass family. It has a woody stem unlike other grasses and grows up to a height of 20 to 40 ft. Further, it has also been classified as "tree" under Section 2 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

WFP's report on malnutrition

*173. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: