

Faster clearance for less-polluting power plants

2518. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether power plants using less-polluting washed coal with ash content not exceeding 34 per cent and gross calorific value not less than 4000 kcal/kg are getting faster environmental clearance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this move which benefits power plants of more than 100 mw comes in the wake of recent nationwide power outages for which the Ministry is keen to speed up the clearance process; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : (a) to (d) The use of beneficiated coal (not containing ash more than 34%) has been made mandatory w.e.f. 1st June, 2002 by the power plants located beyond 1000 kms from pit head or any thermal power plants located in urban areas or sensitive areas or any critically polluted areas notified by the Central Government or critically industrial polluted cluster or area irrespective of its distance from pit head except any pit-head power plant. However, the issue of faster environmental clearance is not related with the use of beneficiated coal in power plants.

Conservation of sacred groves

2519. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to State:

(a) whether Government has any records of the sacred groves situated in and around metropolitan cities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a fact that Government has no clear cut policy to declare the surrounding areas around sacred groves as conservation zone and put restriction on the usage of land surrounding the sacred groves for commercial purposes as this may disturb the ecological balance of the sacred groves?