

Field trial of transgenic crops

3121. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has permitted private companies to conduct field trials of GM crops such as cotton, corn and maize in Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has also received representation from various farmer organization sectors requesting Government to stop all open field trials of transgenic crops until it develops a better system of monitoring and oversight; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), apex body notified under Rules 1989 has permitted private companies to conduct experimental field trials in respect of GM crops such as cotton and maize/corn and others in various States which include Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat subject to NOC from the respective State Governments. Currently, however, there are no ongoing field trials with GM crops.

(c) and (d) This Ministry has not received any representation from farmer organization/s requesting the Government to stop all open field trials of transgenic crops.

Recommendations of Western Ghat Ecology Expert Panel

3122. SHRI JOY ABRAHAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the recommendations of Western Ghat Ecology Expert Panel led by Prof. Madhav Gadgil has evoked widespread apprehension and criticism among the people of affected States;

(b) if so, the details of measures proposed by Government to address genuine fears and apprehensions of affected States, especially Kerala;

(c) whether the Government has taken any decision regarding clearance to Gundia hydro-electric project in Karnataka and Athirappally hydro-electric project in Kerala in the light of recommendations of Prof. Madhav Gadgil Panel; and

(d) the details of terms of reference of Kasturi Rangan Committee and its scope in relation to Madhav Gadgil Panel recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (c) Considering the large number of comments/responses received from the stakeholders, concerned State Governments and Central Ministries on the recommendations given in Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel report including those for Gundia hydro-electric project in Karnataka and the Athirappilly hydro-electric project in Kerala, the Ministry of Environment and Forests had constituted a High Level Working Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. K Kasturirangan, Member, Planning Commission *vide* office order dated 17.8.2012.

(d) The terms of reference of the High Level Working Group *inter alia* include to examine the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Report in a holistic and multidisciplinary fashion keeping in view the comments received from the concerned State Governments/Central Ministries/Stakeholders and other related important aspects such as preservation of precious biodiversity, needs and aspirations of the local and indigenous people, sustainable development and environmental integrity of the region, climate change and constitutional implications of centre-state relations and to recommend further course of action to the Government with respect to the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Report. The High Level Working Group has submitted its report to the Ministry and the same has been uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Forests for wider dissemination.

Environment clearance to mining projects

3123. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals pending for mining projects received by the Ministry from 2006 till date, State-wise;

(b) the details of projects which were rejected environmental clearance, the projects for which the clearance process is ongoing and the projects which were granted the clearance during the last five years in West Bengal;