

these canals for higher agricultural productions; and

(d) the reasons for delay, if any, and the time by which the clearances are expected to be given?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) to (d) The Government of Odisha applied for environmental clearance (EC) for execution of Left Bank Canal (LBC) and Right Bank Canal (RBC) including a barrage in Odisha under the Rengali Irrigation Project in April, 1996 and the Government had granted necessary EC vide dated 4.12.1996. Stage-I approval for 2107 ha of forest land was granted by the Ministry vide letter 21.11.1996 and State-II clearance for 812 ha forest land vide letter 14.5.2003 in the first Phase involving entire reservoir and portions of LBC and RBC systems of the project. For the construction of remaining portions of LBC and RBC system in the 2nd Phase, Stage-II Clearance is required for the balance 1295 ha of forest land. For this purpose, complete compliance reports on the stipulations imposed in the Stage-I and Stage-II (part) approval are to be submitted by the Government of Odisha.

Indiscriminate felling of trees in Delhi

182. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various agencies are engaged in indiscriminate felling of trees on the pretext of development in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether some agencies have cut trees in Delhi recently without any prior permission from the Ministry; and

(d) if so, the action taken against such agencies to further check on the cutting of trees in Delhi and other parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) No reports regarding indiscriminate felling of trees on the pretext of development by various agencies have been received in the Ministry. However, sporadic incidents of tree felling do

take place wherein action is taken by the respective State /UT Governments as per the law.

(c) and (d) The Ministry has received no such reports, wherein the agencies concerned have cut trees in Delhi without permission of the Competent Authority, Permission for cutting of trees is given by the respective State/UT Governments.

Appeal against demerger of telecom company

183. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Commissioner of Income Tax has filed an appeal before the Hon'ble High Court in the matter of demerger of a leading Telecom Company with its Tower Division.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the demerger scheme was undertaken by the company to evade tax; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Some of the leading telecom companies had filed petitions under provisions of Companies Act before jurisdictional High Courts seeking sanction of scheme of arrangements for demerger/transfer of their Passive Infrastructure Assets. In one of the cases where the said scheme was sanctioned by the division bench of High Court of Gujarat, the Income tax department has filed a Special leave petition before the Supreme Court in which a notice has been issued to the respondents. In some other cases, a single judge bench of the Delhi High Court sanctioned the scheme and the Commissioners of Income Tax concerned have filed appeals before the division bench, which are pending.

(c) and (d) It has been the stand of the Income Tax department before the Courts that the demerger schemes were undertaken by the companies to evade tax. The matter is sub-judice.

Indirect Tax collections