

Consideration of artificial rainfall/cloud seeding programmes

912. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering artificial rainfall/cloud seeding programmes with the help of State Government and commercial firms after witnessing worst rainfall in June, 2014 in various parts of the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) No Sir.

(b) As things stand today, artificial rain making techniques involving cloud seeding cannot be used for bringing rain clouds to rainfall deficit/drought areas. Such efforts can only induce potential pre-existing clouds, already passing over a given place, to produce rain only if organized weather modification intervention becomes successful.

However Earth System Science Organisation - Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (ESSO-IITM) is putting its effort in understanding the rain formation in clouds through studying cloud microphysical characteristics through a research program Cloud Aerosol Interaction and Precipitation Enhancement Experiment (CAIPEEX).

Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) is in touch with ESSO-IITM in preparation of RFP for hiring services for cloud seeding operations. Similarly Karnataka State Agriculture Officials have also consulted ESSO-IITM for planning a possible cloud seeding program.

Environment clearances to power projects

913. DR. PRADEEPAKUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been fast-tracking the environmental clearances to thermal power projects establishment in the country, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the number of pending cases cleared so far, State-wise, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 governs the environmental clearance stipulations including that of time-limit. Thermal power projects are being accorded environmental clearance inline with all the stipulations of above Notification. The details of environmental clearances accorded to thermal power projects in the year 2014, till date are given in Statement.