

There has been a long pending demand from socio-cultural organisations in the State to secure an independent and full-fledged status for the Centre's only Agricultural University in the State. I urge upon the Centre to redeem its commitment and accord an independent and full-fledged autonomous status to CAU at Kyrdemkulai, Meghalaya, early.

**Demand to protect forest rights given to the forest dwellers under
Forest Rights Act, 2006**

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Karnataka): Sir, the Parliament passed the historic Forest Rights Act thirteen years ago. Since then over 16 lakh individual rights have been settled. But a very large number of claims have also been rejected and lakhs of tribal and other traditional forest-dwelling families are now under the threat of eviction. It is incumbent upon the Central and State Governments to ensure that the due process of examination and verification of claims as stipulated in the legislation is followed strictly and transparently. There are widespread reports that such a process has not been followed and rejection has been done summarily. This only compounds historical injustices.

In addition, while the Forest Rights Act, 2006, has achieved much by way of recognizing individual forest rights, it has failed miserably in recognizing and settling community forest rights which is an essential pillar of the law. It is incumbent upon the Central and State Governments to now bring a sharp focus on the issue of community forest rights. This will also help financially empower the Gram Sabha.

It is also a matter of grave concern that there have been reports of amendments being proposed to the Indian Forest Act, 1927 that will completely destroy the pith and substance of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. I would urge that there be widespread and meaningful consultations on these changes not just with State Governments but also with various civil society organizations and activist networks. These amendments not only undercut the Forest Rights Act but are also possibly in conflict with PESA, that was passed by Parliament in 1996, and indeed the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution itself.

**Demand to take necessary action for funding the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project
by declaring it a National project**

डा. किरोड़ी लाल मीणा (राजस्थान): महोदय, पूर्वी राजस्थान के 13 जिलों यथा-झालावाड़, कोटा, बूंदी, बारां, सवाई माधोपुर, टोंक, अजमेर, जयपुर, करौली, अलवर, भरतपुर, दौसा एवं धौलपुर के क्षेत्र को पूर्वी राजस्थान नहर परियोजना से पेयजल एवं सिंचाई हेतु पानी उपलब्ध कराने के प्रावधान हैं। इस परियोजना की विस्तृत अभियांत्रिकी तैयार कर दिनांक 19-11-2017 को केन्द्रीय जल आयोग को प्रस्तुत कर दी गयी है। इस योजना से राजस्थान के पूर्वी क्षेत्रों में करीबन 2 लाख 10 हेक्टेयर अतिरिक्त खेती की सिंचाई की जा सकेगी तथा करीबन 13 जिलों के अधिकतर गांवों को पेयजल प्राप्त हो सकेगा। परियोजना की प्रथम फेज़ की अनुमानित लागत करीबन 37 हजार करोड़ है, जिसमें से 1436.22 MCM