

Clear the air on green clearances

The new government needs to bring in second-generation reforms for environment which can strike a balance between the need for economic development and rights of a local community. This is a tough job, but necessary. At present, green issues are being handled both at the central and state levels. This needs to be streamlined. The top priorities for the environment ministry are:

- Set up a 'national environmental regulator' that carries out appraisal of projects and provide clearances in a transparent and time-bound manner. Government is bound by a Supreme Court order to set up such a national regulator.

- The target of increasing forest cover from 21% to 33% of the geographical area must be met

ENVIRONMENT

under the 'Green India Mission'.

- The level of air pollution in cities is alarming. Measures like reducing consumption of fossil fuels, monitoring vehicular pollution and improving public transport are essential.

- Build sewage treatment plants across the country to deal with river and groundwater pollution. 'Waste to Energy' concept must be popularized through incentives to private players.

- Bring strict effluent control laws in line with the 'polluter pays' principle and ensure rigor-



CLEAN AND GREEN EXERCISE

MODI TO TOI

“ We can take care of environment concerns while sanctioning projects. Problems arise when the procedure for clearance is used in a mala fide manner. This leads to project delays. I am convinced we can move towards a win-win situation where all environment concerns are addressed. All decisions, even rejection of proposals, should be transparent and time-bound

ous enforcement.

- Focus on renewable (solar and wind) energy through incentives and investment under a national energy policy which may reduce the dependence on fossil fuels. This will cut India's import bills as well as reduce air pollution.