

(1) The rhino is included in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thus giving the species maximum possible legal protection. Trading in its horns and other products is totally prohibited.

(2) Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) of which India is a signatory, there is a complete ban on international trade in rhino horns.

(3) Government of India have been extending assistance to the Government of Assam under the centrally sponsored scheme 'Conservation of Rhinos in Assam' to strengthen measures to conserve and protect the rhino in all its natural habitats in Assam.

(4) Under the Centrally sponsored Scheme 'Control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products' assistance is provided to the State Governments to protect endangered species like the rhino.

(5) Central assistance is provided to the State Governments under the Centrally sponsored schemes 'Project Tiger' and 'Assistance for the development of National Parks and Sanctuaries to conserve and develop the protected areas containing rhinos.

(6) A number of zoos in India have been successfully breeding the Indian rhino in captivity.

(7) A project has been implemented to translocate rhinos in the Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh, to develop an alternative home to the species for its propagation.

Pollution caused by Thermal Power Plants

208. SHRI JAGADISH JANI : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some thermal power plants are creating environmental problem;

(b) if so, the details of the thermal power plants which are polluting the air and water;

(c) what action has been taken against those thermal power plants; and

(d) by when these thermal power plants are expected to take anti-pollution measures ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to the available information out of 87 Thermal

Power plants in the country 22 are fully complying and 65 are partially complying with the prescribed emission standards.

(c) and (d) An action plan has been prepared by the State Governments to ensure that a polluting unit commissioned before 16th May, 1981 which has shown adequate proof of at least commencement of physical work for establishment of facilities to meet the specified standards is required to meet the standards within a time frame, latest by the 31st December, 1993. Those industries, commissioned after the 16th May, 1981 but before 31st December, 1991 shall meet the prescribed standards within a time frame, latest by 31st December, 1992.

Air Pollution in Bombay

209. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, it is a fact that Air Pollution has increased in Bombay to "sickening levels" with atleast 25 to 30 percent of school going children reported to be suffering from emphysema and bronchial asthma; and

(b) if so, what remedial steps have been taken to meet the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) The ambient air quality in the Bombay area is regularly being monitored by the Bombay Municipal Corporation. The average results indicate that the ambient air quality in Bombay is within the prescribed limits.

There is no conclusive scientific report available on the suffering of school going children from emphysema and bronchial asthma due to air pollution in Bombay.

(b) The steps taken by the Government to meet the situation include the following:—

(1) Emission standards have been prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(2) Ambient air quality standards have been evolved.

(3) A net-work of ambient air quality monitoring stations has been set up.

(4) Metropolitan cities have been notified as Air Pollution Control Areas.

(5) Environmental guidelines have been evolved for siting and operation of industries.