

#### **Afforestation of catchment area**

3217. SHRIMATI KUSUM RAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Jai Prakash Group's 330 MW Bapsa-II project is not releasing full amount under the Catchment Area Treatment Plan for afforestation of catchment area of its hydro plants;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard;

(c) whether unscientific approach of the construction company has caused serious damage to the fragile ecological balance in Kinnaur mountains in Himachal Pradesh;

(d) if so, the action taken by the Ministry in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) As per records available in the Ministry, Baspa Stage-II Hydroelectric Project (not Bapsa-II) was accorded Environmental Clearance (EC) on 17th December, 1993 for generation of 300 MW electricity. For the catchment area treatment, a total of Rs.20.10 crore was required to be deposited by the project proponent. So far an amount of Rs.18.96 crores has so been deposited.

The funds deposition, its disbursal and utilization, are handled and supervised by the Upper Sutlej Valley Watershed Development Society constituted in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

(c) During construction of the project, the scientists of the Regional Office at Chandigarh of Ministry of Environment and Forests visited the project site and observed that the project proponent was complying with the conditions stipulated in the EC letter in order to avoid any serious damage to the fragile ecological balance of the Kinnaur mountains in Himachal Pradesh.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of the reply to part (c).

#### **Pollution in metro cities**

3218. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that almost all the metropolitan cities in the country are accumulating higher levels of air pollution, etc.;

(b) whether one of the steps mentioned by the Supreme Court was to make the city buses in the national capital to run on CNG, thereby reducing pollution levels; if so, whether such facility needs to be extended to all the metropolitan cities with more than 10 lakh population; and

(c) whether Government is aware of the recent introduction of green vehicles, Eco friendly vehicles; if so, the advantages of these vehicles, compared to diesel/petrol vehicles and the concessions proposed for prospective buyers of vehicles?