

(a) whether there is no regulatory mechanism for bio-safety of GM products in the country;

(b) whether Supreme Court has given an interim directions recently to Government to publish all results of trials on the safety of Genetically Modified food items in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any assessment of the impact of unregulated release of GM grains and vegetables on public health and environment, in the Indian environment has been made;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has formulated the 'Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import and Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro-Organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989', notified under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. These Rules cover the areas of research as well as activities involving manufacture, use, import, export, storage and large scale applications of Genetically Modified (GM) Organisms and products made therefrom throughout India. The Rules are supported by biosafety guidelines for evaluation environmental and health safety aspects of GM products. The guidelines and protocols are updated regularly and are in line with the international norms prescribed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, CODEX Alimentarius Commission and International Plant Protection Convention.

(b) and (c) The hon^{ble} Supreme Court of India has allowed the field trials of GM crops subject to compliance of stringent norms such as (i) maintaining a crop specific isolation distance as well as biological and physical barriers as per the 'Minimum Indian Seed Certification Standards' recommended by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research; (ii) submission of a validated event specific protocol to detect the level of contamination at 0.01% level of detection before initiating the field trials; and (iii) designating a lead scientist responsible for the field trials. The Ministry of Environment Forests has informed the Hon^{ble} Supreme Court that biosafety data on Bt cotton and BT brinjal are available at websites www.envfor.nic.in and www.dbtbiosafety.nic.in for public scrutiny. It has been further committed that biosafety data of other crops will also be posted on the websites as and when the studies are completed.

(d) The Ministry has not received any report regarding the release of unregulated grains and vegetables in the country.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

Problems at Sabarimala shrine

3220. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the major problems of human beings and ecology in the pilgrimage to the internationally famous shrine Sabarimala, attracting millions of pilgrims and devotees, as listed out after the Public Accounts Committee's cognizance;

(b) the stage of master plan envisaged in this connection;

(c) the major hurdles yet to be tackled; and

(d) whether there would be a time-frame for implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The major problems listed in the report of the Public Account Committee (PAC) are in the paras no. 66, 68 and 81 of the report. These, *inter alia*, include lack of clean drinking water, hygienic food, medical facilities, shelters, dormitories, toilets; absence of shelters for sleeping at nights along the hilly footpath and narrow tracts unable to contain massive flow of pilgrims on their journey uphill. Concerns have also been expressed by environmentalists for protection of the fragile eco-system while carrying out developmental works in the areas.

(b) The Master Plan prepared M/s IL and FS Ecosmart India Limited was approved by the State Government of Kerala on 3rd May, 2007. The Master Plan was prepared after examining the comments from all stake holders.

(c) and (d) M/s IL and FS Ecosmart India Limited has submitted a long term Master Plan incorporating all aspects of regional development in the context of Sabarimala pilgrims and detailing the developmental vision for the immediate requirements by November, 2007. A short term Plan till 2015 and a long term Plan till 2050 have also been envisaged. The State Government of Kerala has also constituted Working Level Committee and Apex Level Committee for the implementation of the Master Plan.

National Green Tribunal

†3221. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has placed any proposal to constitute the National Green Tribunal before Cabinet;

(b) whether it is proposed to include judges and experts in the field of environment and forests in the National Green Tribunal;

(c) whether public representatives would also be included in this Tribunal, apart from judges and experts;

(d) the number of proposals pending with the Ministry for No Objection Certificate, State-wise; and since when these proposals are pending; and

(e) whether developmental activities in forest areas in States are stalled, as these proposals from States are pending for many years?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.