

Regulatory Boards

1663. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of people serving on regulatory boards of the Ministry are also directors of companies whose projects the boards, they are serving on, have appraised;

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

(c) what action Government has contemplated against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise, in view of reply to parts (a) & (b) above.

Environmental clearance to projects

1664. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:

SHRI PARSHOTTAM KHODABHAI RUPALA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has prescribed any time limit for according environmental clearance to industrial projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether applications of a number of SEZ developers from Gujarat are pending before the Ministry for clearance; and

(d) if so, by when these applications are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The Environmental Impact Assessment Notification of September, 2006 provides a time limit of 60 days for conveying Terms of Reference to the developmental activities including industrial projects to the applicant on receipt of application with all necessary documents. Further, a time limit of 105 days, after the receipt of the complete application with all necessary documents, has been provided for the appraisal and conveying the decision.

(c) and (d) There are two Special Economic Zone (SEZ) projects awaiting environment clearance from Gujarat. For the first project of SEZ at Dahej, site map indicating areas falling under Coastal Regulation Zone is awaited from the project proponent. In the case of the second "PhaEZ Park" SEZ project, requisite information has been received recently from the project proponent and the proposal is included for discussion in its Expert Appraisal Committee for New Construction Projects and Industrial Estates meeting scheduled to be held in August, 2009.

Water Pollution in Ganga

†1665. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that basin water of the Ganges is getting increasingly polluted over the years;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and reasons for this basin water getting increasingly polluted;

(c) whether the Government are working on a plan to consider the measures for redressal of the reasons; and

(d) if so, details of the plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Water quality monitoring carried out by reputed institutions such as, IIT, Kanpur, BHEL, Patna University, etc. indicates that, water quality of the river Ganga conforms to the prescribed standards in terms of key indicators, namely, Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Dissolved Oxygen (DO) at most of the locations, except in the stretch between Kannauj and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. However, the levels of fecal coliforms are reported to be exceeding the maximum permissible limit at a number of monitoring stations along the river Ganga.

The pollution load has increased over the years due to industrialization and urbanisation. Abstraction of water for irrigation, drinking, industrial use, power and other purposes compound the challenge.

(c) and (d) Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase I was launched as a centrally funded scheme in 1985 with the objective of improving the water quality of the Ganga to acceptable standards. Various pollution abatement schemes including Interception & Diversion of sewage and setting up of sewage treatment plants were taken up. GAP Phase - II which covered the tributaries of Ganga namely, Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar and Mahananda, besides Ganga, was approved in stages from 1993-1996. GAP Phase II was merged with the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) in December, 1996. The total expenditure incurred on conservation of river Ganga under the GAP Phase -I & II so far, is Rs. 816.47 crore.

River conservation is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and the State Governments, Sewage treatment capacity of 1007 million liters per day (mild) has been created so far under the GAP. Some treatment capacity has also been created under other central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as State schemes. But there is still a large gap that remains to be bridged.

The Central Government has also set up the 'National Ganga River Basin Authority' on 20.2.2009 to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a holistic approach with the river basin as the unit of planning. The functions of the Authority include all measures necessary for planning and execution of programmes for abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga.