

Pollution by dead bodies at Ganga Ghats

1666. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:

SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware that thousands of dead bodies are cremated at the Ghats of holy river Ganges, causing a huge pollution in the river;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has any plan to incorporate construction of electric crematorium at the Ghats at Brajghat (Ghaziabad), Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, etc. under the National River Conservation Programme (NRCP);
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether representations from some Members of Parliament have been received in this regard; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (f) Disposal of half and unburnt dead bodies into the river is one of the non-point sources of pollution of Ganga. To address this problem, three electric crematoria at Bhairon, Ghat, Bhagwat Das Ghat and Shuklaganj in Kanpur, two electric crematoria at Shankar Ghat and Daraganj Ghat in Allahabad and one electric crematorium at Harishchandra Ghat in Varanasi have already been set-up either from State Government funds or under the Ganga Action Plan.

Pollution abatement works under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) are sanctioned by the Ministry based on proposals received from the State Governments. No proposal from Hon'ble Members of Parliament/State Government for setting up of electric crematoria at Brajghat (Ghaziabad), Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi under the NRCP is pending in the Ministry.

Environmental impact assessments

1667. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA:

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:

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

- (a) whether Government is considering revisiting the provisions existing under the Environmental Impact Assessments carried out for major and minor projects in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether concerns of wildlife and natural eco-systems are not being given proper attention while carrying out EIAs; and
- (c) the details of steps being taken to take these issues into consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Ministry of Environment & Forests has proposed amendments in the

Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, *vide* S.O. 195(E) dated 19th January, 2009 for obtaining comments / suggestions from all concerned. The proposed amendments, which are both clarificatory in nature and also to make the notification more comprehensive and rationalized, *inter-alia* include: (i) enhancement of threshold limit for construction projects from 20,000 sq.m. to 50,000 sq.m, (ii) modernization and expansion projects without increase in pollution load to be exempt from the provision of EIA Notification, 2006, (iii) prospecting of minerals to be exempt from EIA Notification, 2006, (iv) biomass based power plants upto 50 MW to be exempt from EIA, (v) category 'B' projects to be exempt from scoping for three years, and (vi) proactive / voluntary disclosure of information relating to grant of environmental clearance for ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of environmental regulation through the creations of societal vigil.

(b) and (c) The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) reports prepared for obtaining environmental clearance comprehensively address various issues relating to different components of environment including wildlife and natural eco-systems. The terms of reference for undertaking detailed EIA studies are prescribed by the respective sectoral multi-disciplinary Expert Appraisal Committees taking into account the project location, the proposed developmental activity and the anticipated impacts thereof.

Wild buffaloes

1668.SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are only 5-6 wild buffaloes in the Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve;

(b) the details of wildlife census reports, including those of wild buffaloes, since 2000;

(c) the reasons is why Government failed to conserve wild buffaloes;

(d) whether it is also a fact that all the remaining Wild Buffaloes in the Udanti area have now been kept inside enclosures and if so, under plan of action prepared; and

(e) the details of the action plan alongwith the necessary reports relating thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) As per information received from the Government of Chhattisgarh, presently there are seven wild buffaloes (five adult male, one sub adult male and one adult female) in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary. However, there are no wild buffaloes in Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary.

(b) The estimated population of wildlife in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary since 2001, including wild buffaloes, is given in the Statement (*See below*).

(c) The reasons for the decline in the population of wild buffalo are mainly attributed to habitat loss, biotic pressure and human-animal conflict.

(d) and (e) No, Sir, As informed by the State Government, only one female wild buffalo with her sub adult calf and one adult male are presently kept inside the enclosure for breeding purpose. The