

Evaluation of transgenic crops

1075. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether objective of the R&D institutions is to train a cadre of scientists on bio-safety assessment including the socio-economic dimension to do a competent evaluation of transgenic crops;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in collaboration with the R & D institutions has been regularly undertaking capacity building activities for enhancing biosafety awareness and regulatory compliance, since 2002. Training of scientists of 19 State Agricultural Universities with respect to use of new guidelines for confined field trials, safe operation practices, formats for monitoring and recording of data, etc, has been completed during 2008-09. The training was funded jointly by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and MoEF. Further on behalf of MoEF, DBT, Ministry of Agriculture and Indian Council of Medical Research, the Biotech Consortium India Limited has organized 79 awareness workshops on Genetically Modified (GM) crops with a focus on post-release monitoring in all major Cotton growing States during 2006-07 to 2008-09. Global Environment Facility (GEF) Phase I Project on biosafety was completed in June 2007 by the MoEF with GEF-World Bank assistance of one million US \$, of which approximately 60% was utilized for capacity building. MoEF is developing the GEF phase-II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety which would include (i) Risk Assessment and Management; (ii) Handling, Packaging and Transportation of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs); (iii) Institutional Strengthening for LMO Detection; (iv) Socio Economic Assessment; (v) Public Awareness; and (vi) Training of Trainers.

Decrease in population of wild animals

†1076. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether percentage of wild animals including tigers has declined;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government is contemplating to make new scheme to increase the number of wild animals; and
- (d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) There is no decline in population of major species like Rhinoceros, Elephants and Lions. In fact, their population has increased.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

As per the last All India tiger estimation done in the year 2008, the population of the tigers in the country (excluding Sunderbans) is 1411 (mid value); the lower and upper limits being 1165 and 1657 respectively. This estimation is not comparable to earlier estimates, as previously different methodology was used for estimation.

(b) Poaching is the main reason for tiger killing because tiger products are in high demand in the international clandestine trade.

(c) and (d) There are several existing Centrally Sponsored Schemes like 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Elephant', and 'Project Tiger' for protection and conservation of wild animals in the country.

The 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' scheme was modified in 2008 to accord better protection and conservation to wildlife in the country by adding following two new components to the existing components:

- (i) Protection of wildlife outside protected areas and
- (ii) Recovery programme for saving critically endangered species and their habitats.

Pollution in industrial clusters

1077. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a nation wide Comprehensive Environmental Assessment has found that a large number of industrial clusters are critically polluted;
- (b) if so, the facts and details thereof;
- (c) whether Government proposes to take drastic and tough measures against such industrial clusters which are running units without any clearance from Government; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has developed a Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI). CPCB has done a nation wide environmental assessment of Industrial Clusters based on CEPI and 43 such industrial clusters having CEPI greater than 70, on a scale of 0 to 100, have been identified as critically polluted. The State-wise list of critically polluted areas is given in Statement (*See below*).

(c) and (d) The Government has imposed a temporary moratorium on 13.01.2010 on consideration of developmental projects in critically polluted industrial cluster/areas including the projects in pipeline for clearance with immediate effect till August 2010. However, some specific projects relating to public interest and national interest such as pollution control, defence and security and renewal of mining will continue to be appraised and decision will be taken on merits. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has also undertaken the task of preparation of Action Plans to improve the environmental quality in these critically polluted-areas.