

[18 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

(b) whether due to heavy increase in number of vehicles in the capital, there is an urgent need to develop Air Quality Index System in the capital; and

(c) whether the air quality in the capital is also becoming bad to worse; if so, the steps taken by the Government to check such rising trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The air quality in the capital is being monitored through a network of automatic and manual monitoring stations. A project has also been taken up for development of air quality index for urban situations.

(c) No, Sir. The increasing trend of air pollution has been checked due to various steps taken which include the following:

- Ban on plying of buses more than 8 year old and pre-1990 autos and taxies from 1st April, 2000.
- Ban on sale and supply of loose 2-T Oil in petrol retail outlets in Delhi effective from 31.12.1998.
- Progressive tightening of emission norms for motor vehicles.
- Supply of better quality of fuel having low sulphur content.
- Adoption of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as auto fuel.
- Strengthening of air quality monitoring and surveillance system.
- Shifting of industrial units in conforming industrial areas.
- Closing of hazardous industrial units.

Safeguarding the Environment

2808. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state the planning made to safeguard the environment and make villages and cities clean, green and safe for living?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): Policy documents on National Conservation Strategy and Abatement of Pollution have been evolved. Environmental laws and regulatory mechanisms have been put in place for

protection of the environment. Environmental standards and guidelines have been notified for different industries. Area specific environmental action plans for critically polluted areas have been prepared and are under implementation. Emphasis has also been made on control of vehicular pollution in metropolitan cities. Preparation of Zoning Atlas for siting of industries based upon environmental considerations in various districts of the country has been taken up. Mandatory environmental impact assessment and clearance is required for major developmental projects. The Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemical Rules, 1989 and the Chemical Accident (Emergency, Planning, Preparedness and Response) Rules, 1996 have been notified. Disaster management plans have also been prepared in respect of major industrial complexes. Rules for management of bio-medical wastes emanating from hospitals and nursing homes have also been notified. A joint forest management scheme has been launched for ecological regeneration of village and community development for producing fuel wood, fodder, small timber and pastures.

Haryana and Punjab becoming drought prone

2809. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to a recent report from environmentalists, Haryana and Punjab are heading towards becoming the country's least productive and drought prone areas;

(b) whether erosion, salinity, inappropriate cropping pattern, deforestation, urban sprawl and over-exploitation of natural resources are now posing a threat to the green revolution; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) In Haryana and Punjab, due to intensive cropping, there is more mining of micro and macro nutrients and withdrawal of excessive water leading to declining productivity. Although the growth rate of productivity has declined in Punjab recently, the productivity per hectare has not declined. The present wheat yield in Punjab still compares favourably with many countries in the world. The falling of water table relates specifically to sweet water zone due to early transplantation of rice. However, there is no report of drought in Haryana and Punjab. The problem of secondary salinisation particularly in canal irrigated areas is increasing due to more seepage.