

Limited, Palakad. As per the report, the sludge generated during the operation of the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) contained Cadmium and other heavy metals. The concentration of Cadmium in ETP sludge was reported to be 201.8 mg/kg. against the prescribed standards of 50 mg/kg. while, the concentration of Lead as 319.0 mg/kg. The plant is not functioning since March, 2004 as reported by KSPCB.

(c) Two press releases were issued by KSPCB during the year 2003 on this matter. As per the press release issued by the then Chairman, KSPCB, the ETP sludge should be treated as 'hazardous waste' because of high concentration of Cadmium. As a matter of abundant precaution, KSPCB instructed the company not to let the sludge out of the factory premises or use it as a manure even within its premises.

Apprehension over National Green Tribunal Act

670. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the Kerala Forest Minister, Mr. Binoy Viswam has expressed apprehension that the National Green Tribunal Act would lead to dilution of the Forest (Conservation) Act and has called upon the Minister to convene a conference of the State Ministers of forests and environment to discuss issues related to the Act; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

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

(b) Does not arise.

Report on GM foods

671. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:
SHRI D. RAJA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the committee appointed by the Ministry on GM crops has submitted its report and has recommended immediate release of Bt. brinjal for commercial cultivation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir; the three Indian Academy of Sciences and the Academies of Engineering, Agricultural Sciences and Medical Sciences were requested by the Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forests to provide him and the Planning Commission with a report on the subject of biotechnology in food crops with focus on transgenic crops and on the Biotechnology Regulatory Bill presently under discussion in the government. On Bt Brinjal, the

'Inter-Academy Report on GM Crops States' that there does not seem to exist any reasonable doubt on the biosafety of Bt brinjal. However, particularly to address public concerns as well as to doubly ensure biosafety, a group of experts or/and institutions should be constituted for conducting post market surveillance study of short, medium or long term health hazards, if any, of Bt brinjal and other genetically modified food items. This group should regularly submit its follow up report to the Government/Regulatory Body.

(b) The Government has imposed moratorium only on commercial release of Bt brinjal event-EE-I till such time (i) independent scientific studies establish that Bt brinjal is safe for the human health and environment from the point of view of its long term impacts; (ii) credible independent regulatory system is in place; and (iii) consensus on the acceptance of GM technology in agriculture by all State Governments.

Death of elephants by goods train in Banarhat

672. SHRI RANJITSINH VIJAYSINH MOHITE-PATIL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a herd of seven elephants died after being hit by a goods train in the Banarhat area of Jalpaiguri district;

(b) whether incidents of collision have increased over the past four years ever since the conversion from metre to broad gauge of tracts that pass through the national sanctuaries in the region; and

(c) whether any speed limit has been fixed on the movement of the trains along the elephant corridor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The entire railway tract of about 160 km. from Siliguri to Alipurduar passes through elephant habitat and as per Ministry of Railways it is not possible to implement speed limit in the entire tract. However, Ministry of Railways have introduced speed limit of 50 km per hour in the two vulnerable sections falling in Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary and Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary respectively.

Destruction of mangroves by Navi Mumbai Airport

673. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is not a fact that the proposed Navi Mumbai Airport would destroy more than 400 acres of mangroves and two rivers have also to be diverted;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Maharashtra has given thousands of acres of land adjacent to the proposed airport for SEZ;

(c) if so, the details thereof and what problems the State Government has to take back some of the land from SEZ rather than destroying mangroves;

(d) whether the proposed Navi Mumbai Airport violates the CRZ notification of 1991; and