

Guidelines for development in hilly areas

483. DR. KANWARDEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the aftermath of the Uttarakhand floods, Government is planning to come up with new guidelines for sustainable development in hilly areas; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) The environment and forest clearance for various developmental projects, including those in hilly areas in the State of Uttarakhand, are granted after following statutory procedures. The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 as amended from time to time, prescribes the procedure to be adopted for the grant of prior environment clearance in respect of developmental projects or activities stated in the Schedule to the Notification. Similarly, the diversion of forest land for non-forest activities is only allowed as per the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the rules framed thereunder.

In addition to the regular environment regulatory regime, the Ministry of Environment & Forests has notified *vide* S.O. NO. 2930 (E) dated 18th December, 2012, the entire watershed of about 100 kilometers stretch of the river Bhagirathi from Gaumukh to Uttarkashi covering an area of 4,179.59 square kilometers in the State of Uttarakhand as Eco-sensitive Zone thereby *inter-alia* prohibiting and regulating certain activities within the Zone.

Special programme for recovery of critically endangered species

484. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has launched a Special Programme for recovery of critically endangered species; if so, the progress of work done under the programme so far;

(b) the reasons for ineffective implementation of the programme; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for conservation of 132 species of flora

and fauna of the country that are tagged as critically endangered in the Red List of Threatened Species drawn by the International Union for Conservation of Nature especially in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) This Ministry provides financial and technical assistance to the State/Union Territory Governments for protection and conservation of wildlife life and its habitats under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', which *inter alia* includes a component "Recovery Programmes for Critically Endangered Species".

An amount of Rs. 2280.278 lakh has been released for recovery programme of eight critically endangered species including Snow Leopard, Hangul, Dugongs, Edible-nest Swiftlets, Asian Wild Buffalo, Manipur Brow-antlered deer, Vultures and Asiatic Lion as per the proposals received from various State/Union Territory Governments during the last five years.

(c) The steps taken by the Government for conservation of endangered species of wild flora and fauna including in the country include:

- i. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ii. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment for offences under the Act have been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).
- iii. Protected Areas, *viz.*, National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats.
- iv. The Government had launched two programmes, namely, Project Tiger and Project Elephant aimed at protection of endangered species with specific focus on tigers and elephants respectively. As a result of the efforts made in these two programmes, tiger population in the country has shown increasing trend and elephant population has remained steady during last few years.

- v. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for providing better protection to wildlife, and improvement of its habitat.
- vi. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.
- vii. The State/Union Territory Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around the Protected Areas.
- viii. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to strengthen the enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.
- ix. Strict vigil is maintained by the officials of State Departments of Forests and Wildlife.

Pollution level of the National Capital

485. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Capital is one of the most polluted cities in the country; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the pollution level of the Capital is being further aggravated by the ruthless felling of large number of fully grown up trees by PWD and other agencies; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial measures that Government proposes to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) The level of pollution with respect to ambient air is regularly monitored at 550 locations in 234 cities, towns and industrial areas across the country including Delhi by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with various state pollution control boards, pollution control committees for Union Territories and NEERI, Nagpur in terms of