

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS**Afforestation projects in West Bengal**

*101. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is implementing any afforestation projects in West Bengal and if so, the details of the projects; and

(b) to what extent the afforestation projects have achieved their objectives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) scheme which is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme for eco-restoration of degraded forests in the country through people's participation. The scheme is implemented through the State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at the state level, Forest Development Agency (FDA) at the forest division level and the Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at the village level. An amount of Rs. 62.11 crores has been released till date to the State of West Bengal for afforestation over an area of 45,103 ha. under NAP scheme.

(b) The objective of the National Afforestation Programme scheme is rehabilitation of degraded forest lands by institutionalizing decentralized/participatory forest management. The Scheme has been reviewed during 2008 which *inter alia* revealed that it has given thrust to the afforestation activity in the country and has been successful in mobilizing people's participation in forest management and development. The Scheme has also contributed in providing employment opportunity to the local people and reducing forest dependency among the vulnerable groups.

Steps taken to protect ocean and marine eco system

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

(a) the steps taken by Government to protect ocean and marine eco system by banning and reducing the use of practice that may cause irreversible damage to eco system and restoring the damage caused to eco system; and

(b) whether any steps in this regard would help in sustaining livelihood of

the fishing community especially women of that community and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) and (b) The Government seeks to protect, sustain, augment and restore ocean and marine ecosystems including mangroves and coral reefs in the country by both regulatory and promotional measures. Under the regulatory measures, the Government has issued the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification (2011) and the Island Protection Zone (IPZ) Notification 2011 in supersession of CRZ Notification, 1991. These Notifications recognize the mangrove areas as ecologically sensitive and categorize them as CRZ-I which implies that these areas are afforded protection of the highest order. As per para 8(v)(4)(a) of the CRZ 2011 Notification, Critically Vulnerable Coastal Area (CVCA), which include Sundarbans and other identified ecologically sensitive areas shall be managed with the involvement of the local coastal communities, including the fisher-folk.

The entire Sunderbans mangrove area and other identified ecologically important areas such as Gulf of Khambat and Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat, Malvan, Achra-Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, Karwar and Coondapur in Karnataka, Vembanad in Kerala, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu, Bhaitarkanika in Orissa, Coringa, East Godavari and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh have been identified as Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA) through a process of consultation with local fishermen and other communities inhabiting the area and depend on its resources for their livelihood with the objective of promoting conservation and sustainable use of coastal resources and habitats.

The Notification prohibits certain activities *viz.* setting up of new industries, expansion of existing industries, disposal of untreated wastes, ports and harbor projects in high eroding stretches of the coast, except strategic and defence projects.

The Notification permits port and harbor projects in the stretches classified as low and medium eroding based on comprehensive EIA with cumulative studies for projects. High, Medium, Low erosion stretches and stable coasts are delineated through the assessment of shore line change through National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management.

Destruction of mangroves, for activities other than those specified in the Notification, is prohibited and attracts punitive action under Environment (Protection)

Act, 1986. To enforce and implement the CRZ and IPZ Notifications, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has constituted the National and State/UT level Coastal Zone Management Authorities. The Coastal States/UT are also involving departments of forests, revenue and police for taking steps to evict unauthorized land grabbers from mangrove/mangrove forest areas.

Under promotional measures, the Ministry has a centrally sponsored scheme for 'Integrated Development of Wildlife habitats to provide financial and a technical assistance to the protected areas including Marine Protected Areas for protection and conservation of wildlife including corals and its habitats. Besides, the Ministry has another centrally sponsored scheme for Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs in the country. Under the Scheme, on a nation-wide basis, 38 sites for mangroves and 4 sites for corals have been identified for their conservation and restoration. 100% central assistance is extended to coastal States/ Union Territories for implementation of their approved Management Action Plans which comprise of components such as Survey and Demarcation, Afforestation and Restoration of Mangroves, protection and monitoring of coral reefs, restoration measures for coral reefs and Alternate and Supplementary Livelihoods, Education and Awareness etc. During the last three years, the Ministry has provided financial assistance to Coastal States/Union Territories to the tune of Rs.21.30 crore for the conservation and management of mangroves. The funds are released for 'Core' and 'Ancillary' activities in the ratio of 80:20.

As per the State of Forest Report 2011, published by Forest Survey of India, the mangrove cover in the country stands at 4662.56 km². Compared with 2009 assessment, there has been a net increase of 23.56 km² in the mangrove cover of the country. This can be attributed to increased plantations and regeneration of natural mangrove areas.

One successful example of such coral restoration is Gulf of Mannar. In 2002, the Ministry through Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI), standardized viable and low-tech reef restoration techniques for large-scale restoration using artificial substrates like concrete frames, fish houses and native coral species. The reef restoration in the degraded areas in Tuticorin coast of Gulf of Mannar was successful with over 85% survival rate using native branching, table, massive and cup corals (*Acropora cytherea*, *A. intermedia*, *A. nobilis*, *A. formosa*, *Montiopora foliosa*, *Favia sp.*, *Pontes sp.* and *Turbinaria sp.*). An increase of 21% of live coral cover was observed in the restored sites during 2002-2007 and

associated flora and fauna has increased 5.99% and 8.08% respectively during the period. Fish abundance also increased from 34 to 65 individuals per 100 sq. m.

Ranking of cities covered under UIG

*103. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1234 given in the Rajya Sabha on 22 August, 2012 and state the present status of ranking of the cities that have been covered under the Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) component, against the metrics outlined in the stated objectives of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission-I (JNNURM-I), considering the fact that JNNURM-I will end in 2014?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAMAL NATH): The Terms of Reference (TOR) for ranking of cities covered under Urban Infrastructure & Governance (UIG) Sub-Mission of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) has not been finalized.

Approaches to protection of Western Ghats

*104. SHRI C.P. NARAYANAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose for which Prof. Madhav Gadgil Committee was appointed to study Western Ghats and whether Government considers that its environment department will be able to protect the Ghats;

(b) whether Government has involved local bodies and people residing in the area in arriving at a programme to save the environment of Western Ghats;

(c) whether Gadgil Panel's and Kasturirangan Panel's reports present two contending approaches to the protection of Western Ghats; and

(d) whether Government is prepared to make protection of Western Ghats a multidisciplinary and people participatory endeavour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN): (a) The Ministry of Environment & Forests had constituted the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) under the Chairmanship of Prof. Madhav Gadgil on 4th March 2010 to *inter alia* demarcate ecologically sensitive areas in Western Ghats. Further, in order to examine the WGEEP