

under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for regulation and control of ground water management and Development and circulation of a 'Model Bill' to all the States and UTs to enable them to enact suitable legislation for regulation and control of ground water development and management including provision for rain water harvesting.

Chinese projects in neighbouring countries

*238. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of projects being developed by China in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives;

(b) whether China is investing in the strategic projects in infrastructure and defence; and

(c) the steps Government of India is contemplating to increase its presence in the surrounding areas?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID): (a) to (c) Government is aware that China is involved in the construction of or assistance to infrastructure projects in our neighborhood including in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar; hydroelectric and IT projects in Nepal; IT and housing construction projects in Maldives; hydroelectric and nuclear projects, highways, motorways, export processing zones and economic corridors in Pakistan. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it. India is an active development partner of its neighbours and is involved in various projects in these countries. India's relations with other countries stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries.

Cognizance of recent judgements by NGT

*239. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India was ranked at 126 out of 132 countries in a report by World Bank on environmental status, if so, the details and the reaction of Government thereto;

(b) whether Government has taken cognizance of the various recent judgements by National Green Tribunal (NGT) and steps taken to restructure the environmental laws for environmentally sustainable future, if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government is planning to amend the NGT rules to curtail the powers and functioning of the tribunal, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) World Economic Forum (WEF) and Joint Research Centre (JRC) of European Commission (EC) has carried out a study for evolving Environmental Performance Index (EPI)-Ranking and Scores (2012) of 132 countries. The EPI evaluates countries on 22 performance indicators spanning 10 policy categories that reflect facets of both environmental public health and eco-system vitality. India ranked 125th position on EPI and 95th position on Trend EPI for 132 countries.

(b) As per the information available:—

- (i) The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Delhi *vide* Judgment dated 11.10.2011, in the matter of Application 2 of 2011 (Gram Panchayat Totu (Majthai) and Ors. *Vs.* State of Himachal Pradesh and others) has directed the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to critically review the existing Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000. In compliance with directions of NGT, the Ministry has published notification of the draft Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2013 for public comments.
- (ii) During the hearing of Appeal No. 63 of 2012, NGT, Delhi Bench has examined the issue of requirement of environmental clearance for establishment and operation of common bio-medical waste treatment and disposal facilities and given a judgment on 28.11.2013. The NGT has held that bio-medical waste treatment plants are required to obtain environmental clearance in terms of entry 7(d) of the EIA Notification, 2006. The requisite amendment is still at proposal stage.
- (iii) The NGT in Appeal No: 22/2011, Mahesh Chandulal Solanki *Vs* Union of India and Ors., M/s Jindal Saw Limited has passed a judgment on 12.8.2013 directing the Ministry of Environment and Forests as a nodal agency for preparing a draft scheme for establishment of Environment Protection Fund whereby the units which operate without compliance(s) to the norms of environmental laws shall be made liable to contribute to Environment Protection Fund, appropriately, depending upon the nature of the industry/unit, the production capacity, etc. The proposal is under process.
- (iv) In compliance of the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 27.02.2012 in I.A. No. 12-13 of 2011 in SLP(C) No. 19628-19629 of 2009 titled Deepak Kumar etc. *Vs* State of Haryana and Ors., the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued an O.M. No. L-11011/47/2011-IA.II(M) dated 18.05.2012 stating *inter-alia* that all mining projects of minor minerals including their

renewal, irrespective of the size of the lease would henceforth require prior Environmental clearance and that projects of minor minerals with lease area less than 5 hectare would be treated as Category “B” as defined in EIA Notification, 2006 and will be considered by the respective State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs) notified by MoEF and following the procedure prescribed under the EIA Notification, 2006. NGT. Delhi Bench, *vide* order dated 05.08.2013, in Application no. 171/2013 in the matter of NGT Bar Association *Vs* MoEF and Ors., has reiterated the judgment of Supreme Court that all mining projects of minor minerals including their renewal, irrespective of the size of the lease would henceforth require prior Environmental Clearance. MoEF has also issued an amendment to EIA Notification *vide* S.O. 2731(E) dated 09.09.2013. Accordingly the minor mineral mining projects having less than 5 hectare of lease area are required to be appraised by the SEIAA/SEAC of respective State for granting environment clearance.

(c) No, Sir.

Visa Bond Scheme by UK

*240. SHRI C.M. RAMESH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that “Visa Bond Scheme” introduced by Britain for some “High Risk” overseas visitors to UK is applicable to India also; and

(b) if so, the details and the steps taken by Government in this regard to safeguard the Indian visitors going to UK?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Agreement for Atomic Energy

†1649. SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of advantages and disadvantages of the agreement regarding atomic energy signed between India and USA so far;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.