

Protection of wildlife and prevention of wildlife offences are the mandate of the State Forest Departments. The government has also set up the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for, *inter alia*, collecting intelligence related to organised wildlife crime activities and to disseminate the same to State and other enforcement agencies.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Air and water quality in six metros

2339. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that air and water quality has worsened in all six metros in the country as per report of TERI Environmental survey;

(b) if so, the details thereof, *inter-alia* indicating the status of Delhi; and

(c) whether Government has worked out an action plan to address the above issue, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has published a report titled 'TERI Environment Survey 2013' for Delhi-NCR. Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata. The report is based on public survey, newspaper reports, etc. The opinion of public based on individual perception is indicative rather than conclusive. The quality of ambient air, surface water and groundwater in above mentioned cities is regularly monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with concerned State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs).

(b) As per report, the perceptions on air quality and drinking water quality and availability in Delhi are found to be divided with more or less similar percentages stating contrary views.

(c) The CPCB and SPCBs have taken various steps to contain air and water pollution which, *inter-alia*, include strict implementation of emission and effluent norms in polluting industries, supply of improved diesel and gasoline, promotion of mass rapid transport, implementation of city-specific ambient air improvement programme for 17 identified cities, monitoring of area specific action plan for 43

critically polluted areas, monitoring of common effluent treatment plants to treat effluent from SSI units, implementation of river specific action plans, monitoring of treated sewage quality arising from sewage treatment plants, etc.

New panel to study Western Ghats

2340. DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to appoint a new panel to study Western Ghats, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government has made it clear that the States concerned should appoint Committees respectively to assess the kind of activities that could be allowed in the tract, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) There is no such proposal by the Government to appoint a new panel to study Western Ghats.

(b) The Ministry has not asked the concerned State Governments to appoint Committees to assess the kind of activities that could be allowed in the Ecologically Sensitive Area of Western Ghats as identified by the High Level Working Group (HLWG). However, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has written on 16th January, 2014 to the Chief Ministers of all six states in the Western Ghats region seeking their views on the HLWG recommendations.

In order to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity, the Ministry had issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 dated 13th November, 2013. As per the Directions, the following five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems would not be considered for granting Environmental Clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), as identified by the High Level Working Group, in the Western Ghats from 17th April, 2013:

- (a) Mining, quarrying and sand mining
- (b) Thermal Power Plants
- (c) Building and construction projects of 20,000 sq. m. area and above