

(b) whether several species of birds have been forced to flee to forests due to loss of habitat;

(c) whether it is because the local people are dumping debris and plastic waste into such bodies that gives a rise to pollution; and

(d) the action plan of Government to address this serious issue?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) A few water bodies in and around Delhi region have reportedly been impacted due to rapid urbanization, various developmental activities, pollution problems and other anthropogenic pressures.

(b) There are no reports received in this regard.

(c) and (d) As per studies undertaken by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in the capital during 2001-02, water bodies in Delhi were facing environmental threats, also due to dumping of municipal and other wastes. Based on the findings, CPCB has made certain recommendations to the Government of NCT of Delhi for protection and development of these water bodies. These include regular de-silting, de-weeding, bank protection, development of green areas, diversion of sewage, reclamation for rain water harvesting and ground water recharge etc. To check dumping of debris and other wastes in the water bodies, regular field visits and monitoring are undertaken by Government of NCT of Delhi for corrective actions accordingly.

Protection of forest owlets

2352. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has allowed capture of critically endangered forest owlets (*Heteroglaux Blewitti*) around Melaghat Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra for a research project;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor; and

(c) the corrective steps taken by Government for protection of forest owlets?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) The Central Government, Ministry of Environment and Forests,

has granted permission in January, 2013 to Wildlife Research and Conservation Society, Pune, under Section 12 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for capture of 20 Forest Owlet from outside Protected Areas of East and West Melghat Forest Division in the state of Maharashtra for the purpose of research, and subject to certain conditions. These birds are to be ringed with coloured bands around the legs and thereafter to be released for study of the ecological aspects. The permission was granted after duly considering the recommendation of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra.

(c) The Forest Spotted Owlet has been included in the Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby granting it the highest degree of protection.

Further, the important general steps taken by the Government for protection of endangered animals and birds including forest owlet 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 provides stringent punishment for offences under the Act. 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 birds, animals and their habitats.
- iv. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' for providing better protection to wildlife and improvement of its habitat.
- v. Financial support is provided to the research institutions for undertaking studies which help better management and conservation of species.
- 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 Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to strengthen the intelligence gathering and enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.
- viii. Strict vigil is maintained by the officials of State Departments of Forests and wildlife.

Environmental clearance for new airports

†2353. SHRI BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the criteria and norms for giving environmental clearance for building new airports in the country; and
- (b) the details of the new airports which have been given environmental clearance by Government during the last three years and the current year, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) Airports are category 'A' projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 which require prior Environmental Clearance (EC) from Central Government. As per the procedure prescribed under the EIA Notification, 2006, Project Proponents (PP) are required to obtain Terms of Reference (ToR) for carrying out EIA studies. . Based upon the draft EIA report, Public Hearing (PH) is conducted for the project through the concerned State Pollution Control Board. Thereafter, PP has to finalise the EIA report after addressing the issues raised during PH and submit for consideration for grant of EC.

The finalisation of ToRs and appraisal of the project proposal are carried out by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC). Grant/rejection of EC is decided based upon the recommendations of EAC.

- (b) State-wise details of new airports granted EC during the last three years are enclosed as Statement. So far, no clearance has been issued to any new airport project during the current year.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.