

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has established a network of 2500 water quality monitoring stations on rivers, lakes, tanks, ponds, creeks/seawater, canals, drains, wells and water treatment plants. The water quality monitoring data indicate that the rivers are polluted downstream of major urban and industrial centres due to large scale water abstraction and discharge of untreated/partially treated/treated wastewater not meeting the water quality criteria. The pollution in rivers is increasing due to rapid increase in population and resultant wastewater generation and lean flow in rivers further aggravates the problem. The development of wastewater treatment facility is also not commensurate with the increasing wastewater generation in urban centres. On the basis of long-term data collected, CPCB has indentified 150 polluted river stretches on 121 rivers. The State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) have been asked to prepare and implement action plans to restore the ambient water quality in the water bodies.

Failure of Bio-diversity Authority

2364. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Bio-diversity Authority has failed to draw up a list of endangered medicinal plants; if not, the number of such plants and the steps taken by Government to protect such species;

(b) the number of local bodies under which Bio-diversity Management Committees have been set up the time by when such Bio-diversity Committees are likely to be set up under all local bodies; and

(c) the functions of such Bio-diversity Management Committees?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act empowers the Central Government in consultation with the concerned State Government to notify from time to time any species which are on the verge of extinction or likely to become extinct in the near future as threatened species, and prohibit or regulate their collection, and also to take appropriate steps to rehabilitate and preserve those species. Accordingly, a State-wise list of such species, which includes medicinal plants, was got prepared and sent to the State Governments. Following responses received, the

Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued notifications for 15 States and 1 Union Territory so far.

The Government has taken several steps to protect biodiversity, including medicinal plants. The Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), which is a Centre of Excellence in Medicinal Plant & Traditional Knowledge of the Ministry of Environment and Forests has prepared a list of 335 Red Listed Medicinal Plant species.

(b) and (c) As per Section 41 of the Biological Diversity Act, every local body is required to constitute a Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC). So far, 33,348 BMCs have been constituted in 24 States. All States have been requested to establish BMCs at the local level.

As per Biological Diversity Rule 22, the main function of BMCs is to prepare People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) in consultation with local people. The Register shall contain comprehensive information on availability and knowledge of local biological resources, their medicinal or any other use and traditional knowledge associated with them. The other function of BMC are to advise on any matter referred to it by the State Biodiversity Board or National Biodiversity Authority for granting approval, to maintain data about the local vendors and practitioners using the biological resources. As per Section 41 of the Biological Diversity Act, the BMC may levy charges by way of collection fees from any person for accessing or collecting any biological resource for commercial purposes for areas falling within its territorial jurisdiction.

Environmental reforms regarding emission cut

2365. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any norms have been laid down for environmental reforms regarding emission cut in the country; if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government has received reports of violation of such norms; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to strengthen the environmental norms?