

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the pollution is on rise in other cities of the country including Delhi;

(c) if so, whether Government is contemplating to take any step to check the pollution; and

(d) if so, the steps Government would take and by when, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The ambient air quality is regularly monitored in 240 cities, towns and industrial areas including Delhi under National Air Monitoring Programme (NAMP) by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with concerned State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) in terms of Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) and PM_{10} (particulate matter having size equal to or less than 10 micron) across the country. The National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) also monitor ambient air in Delhi.

(b) The levels of SO_2 (annual average) are within the prescribed norms across the country. However, levels of PM_{10} exceed the norms in a majority of cities whereas NO_2 are exceeding the norms in 24 cities including Delhi. NO_2 is showing an increasing trend.

(c) and (d) The Government has taken various measures to check pollution in cities which *inter alia* include, supply of cleaner fuels as per auto fuel policy, use of gaseous fuel for public transport, pollution under control (PUC) certificate for in use vehicles, stringent source specific emission standards, strict compliance of source specific emission standards, use of beneficiated coal in thermal power plants, strengthening public transport, expansion of metro train system, implementation of revised emission norms for gensets, implementation of city specific action plan in 16 cities, etc.

Pending application for clearance

1685. SHRI TARUN VIJAY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending for clearance and have been cleared in last one year for making roads and public utility purposes in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Sikkim and North Eastern States; and

(b) whether Government is of the view that in critical and sensitive border areas, development work must not be halted due to the forest and environmental clearance conditions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) 56 proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and 11 projects under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 for roads and public utility sectors were granted clearance during the last one year in the States of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern States. As on date, 55 projects for Forest clearance and one project for environmental clearance are pending from these States.

(b) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is aware of the importance of developmental works in critical and sensitive border areas. Accordingly, it has taken following steps to simplify and expedite the process for grant of clearance.

Under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980:

- Grant of general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for construction and widening of two lane roads by the Border Roads Organization (BRO) and other road construction agencies entrusted with the job by the Ministry of Defence, in the area falling within 100 kilometres aerial distance from the LAC;
- Grant of general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for widening of roads (by the BRO and other road construction agencies) which are identified by the Ministry of Defence as link roads, between Border Roads in the area within 100 kilometer aerial distance from the LAC and National Highways/State Highways/other State Roads;
- Relaxation given to strategic projects in the border areas, being taken up in the area falling within 100 km aerial distance from the LAC by any user agency identified by the Ministry of Defence, to raise and maintain compensatory afforestation (CA) over an equivalent degraded forest land instead of double the degraded forest land;
- Constitution of Working Group to review forest, wildlife and environment clearances;
- Exemption of BRO roads from compliance to the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006;

- Combined format for forest and wildlife clearance; and
- General approval to 13 categories of public utility projects, including construction of bridges, involving forest land not more than 1 ha. and felling of not more than 50 trees.

Under Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006:

- Process of obtaining Terms of Reference (ToRs) for widening of National Highways has been waived. Environmental Impact Assessment studies for Highway widening projects can now be carried out by the project proponents as per the model ToRs.
- National Highway widening projects up to 100 km with additional Right of Way/ land acquisition of 40 m in main alignment and 60 m in bye pass alignments are exempted from getting prior Environmental clearance.
- De-linking of Environmental clearance and Forests clearances.
- Dispensation of separate clearance for borrow areas for soil and earth for Highway projects. Such projects can be considered along with the Environmental clearance for Highway projects.

Environmental clearance for Singaji Thermal Power Project

†1686. SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Madhya Pradesh's Singaji Thermal Power Project has received the Ministry's proposal for forest clearance; and
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor and by when it will be approved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) Central Government on 18th May, 2012 has already accorded final approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 130.30 hectares of forest land in favour of M.P. Power Generating Company Limited for setting up of Malwa Thermal Power Project in District Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh.

As per the information provided by the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Land Management) and the Nodal Officer, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, name of the said project has subsequently been changed as Singaji Power Project.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.