

44. Process underway for providing enabling provisions in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, to strengthen our implementation of the CITES and towards enhancement of penalties for contravention of provisions of the Act.

45. Kawal (Telangana), Sathyamangalam (Tamil Nadu), Mukandra Hills (Rajasthan), Nawegaon-Nagzira (Maharashtra), Nagarjunasagar Srisaïlam (Telangana) and Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh) have been notified by the State Governments as Tiger Reserve.

46. The next round (2014) of country level status assessment of tiger, co-predators, prey and habitat, using the refined methodology, in collaboration with tiger States and the Wildlife Institute of India has been initiated.

47. The next round (2014) of Independent Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Tiger Reserves has been initiated.

48. Economic Valuation of some tiger reserves initiated in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Forest Management.

49. Trial of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle for monitoring done in the Panna Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India.

50. Assessment of Status, Density and Change in Forest Cover in and around tiger reserves of the Shivalik Gangetic Plain Landscape initiated in collaboration with the Forest Survey of India.

#### **EPI rank of India**

2330. DR. K.V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to a report on Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2014 produced jointly by a team of experts in Yale University and Columbia University which ranks countries on the basis of their environment performance, India's EPI rank is 155; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) Government's comments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR):

(a) and (b) Yes, sir. A report on Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2014 has been produced jointly by a team of experts in Yale University and Columbia University which ranks countries on the basis of their environment performance. The report has ranked 178 countries based on 20 indicators tracked across nine areas. One of these areas is air quality considering PM 2.5. India's EPI rank is 155.

The report has taken only PM 2.5 as the pollutant for its analysis and not all the pollutants covered under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) notified by the Government of India. The report relies on Satellite data in place of actual monitored data and it has also not been peer reviewed.

#### **Review of system of environmental clearance**

2331. SHRI AJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the present system of environmental clearances for developmental and industrial projects need review;
- (b) if so, the reasons for this review; and
- (c) the changes proposed by Government to cut delays in providing environmental clearances for these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) to (c) The project proposals for environment clearance are considered as per the procedure prescribed in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification (EIA), 2006, as amended from time to time, which *inter-alia* provides timelines for various stages of clearance process. EIA Notification has been issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The improvement in systems and rationalization of procedures is a continuous process. Some of the recent decisions taken in this regard include mandating online submission of applications for Terms of Reference (ToRs) and Environment Clearance (EC) *w.e.f.* 1st July 2014 with a view to increasing transparency and facilitating expediting the decision making process; and issuing notification S.O. No.1599 (E) dated 25.06.2014 amending the EIA Notification 2006, thereby delegating more powers to the State level Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs) for granting EC and further streamlining the processes.

#### **Steps taken to restore the wetlands**

2332. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that some wetlands in the country have reportedly been impacted due to rapid urbanization, various developmental activities, pollution problems and other anthropogenic pressures, if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) the steps being taken to restore the wetlands?