

Progress of Green Visakha Project

1252. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of Green Visakha project for implementation of 40 lakh saplings in Visakhapatnam in five-year plan;

(b) the areas identified and the agencies and public sector undertakings involved in the implementation; and

(c) the schedule of target and achievements and the steps taken to achieve the target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) to (c) The Green Visakha Project is exclusively implemented by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has no role in funding or implementation or monitoring of this project and does not collate/maintain information in this regard.

Steps to strengthen the monitoring infrastructure

1253. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has a time frame within which National Air Quality Index would be made operational in other cities of the country, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government has taken steps to strengthen the monitoring infrastructure essential for the establishment of these centres and collecting data; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) to (c) National Air Quality Index (AQI) has been launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 6th April, 2015 to disseminate air quality information. The AQI has six categories of air quality, viz. Good, Satisfactory, Moderately polluted, Poor, Very Poor and Severe with distinct colour scheme. Each of these categories is associated with likely health impacts. AQI considers eight pollutants (PM_{10} , $PM_{2.5}$, NO_2 , SO_2 , CO, O_3 , NH_3 and Pb) for which short-term (upto 24-hourly averaging period) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed. Presently, air quality data for 10 cities viz. Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Faridabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Chennai

and Hyderabad are connected to AQI system which is available on the website of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board. AQI is calculated when data for minimum three including PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} of these eight pollutants are available. The air quality monitoring station is also proposed to be expanded to cover 46 million-plus population cities and 20 State Capitals.

Ban on bull-fighting and cock-fighting

1254. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government has banned some traditions and cultures of rural people in our country including bull-fighting and cock-fighting in festivals;

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

(c) the steps being taken to revoke such ban to protect their tradition and culture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Parliament has enacted the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960 and *vide* Section 11(1)(m) (ii) of the Act it is mandated that if any person incites any animal to fight or bait any other animal, the same is cruelty and is a punishable offence under the Act. Therefore, some traditions are banned by law. They are opposed to the fundamental duty cast upon every citizen of India by Article 51A (g) of the Constitution of India to show compassion to all living creatures.

Forest land cleared for developmental projects

1255. SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 2.5 lakh hectare of forest land has been cleared for industrial and development projects between 2004 and 2013;

(b) whether it is also a fact that 3.3 lakh hectares of forest land is under consideration before the Central and State Governments;

(c) the details of the impact on the forest cover in the country; and

(d) in what manner the Ministry, in coordination with States, planning to increase the forest cover in the country?

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