

(a) by when the proposed composite and comprehensive Air Index would be ready to gauge the rising air pollution levels in India in a more efficacious manner, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether specific plans are being made to deal with the extremely high air pollution in New Delhi in the long and short term (since it has been declared as the most polluted city in the world by the WHO); and

(c) the projected expenses and realistic aims in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) to (c) National Air Quality Index(AQI) has been launched 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<sub>10</sub>, PM 2.5, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, CO, O<sub>3</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub> 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 are connected to AQI system which is available on the website of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board.

The Government has taken various measures to contain air pollution in New Delhi, 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 system for in-use vehicles, stringent source specific emission standards and their compliance, use of beneficiated coal in thermal power plants, strengthening public transport, expansion of metro train system, implementation of revised emission norms for gensets etc. At present no substantial expenditure is envisaged.

#### **Original research on GM banana**

768. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has seen the original research on GM banana done by the scientists of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre;

(b) if so, the reasons for contributing millions of dollar for developing genetically engineered banana enriched in iron by an Australian scientist; and

(c) the corrective steps taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government is aware of and has seen original research on GM Banana done by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) scientists. This work was at Laboratory level. However, the Australian scientists at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane have developed the Genetically modified Iron Rich Banana which have been tested in the field. Since this research was at an advanced stage, an agreement has been signed with Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia and five Indian partners including BARC. There is no overlap between the work carried out by BARC and the work which is being carried out in this Project. BARC has been involved in this project in view of the experience of the BARC scientists in GM banana research.

(c) As explained above, the question of corrective steps taken does not arise.

#### **Allocation of UID number for tigers**

769. SHRIMOHD. ALIKHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Tiger Conservation Authority has come forward to allot Unique Identification (UID) numbers for tigers in the reserve forests of the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR) : (a) and (b) Based on a decision taken in the 7th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority in October, 2011, detailed protocol for establishing a National Repository of Camera Trap Photographs of Tigers (NRCTPT) has been firmed up through a committee comprising of, *inter alia*, experts and scientists, which has been communicated to tiger States. The said protocol has provision for providing an ID to each individual tiger. Action was taken for building up the NRCTPT with the 635 camera trap photographs of individual tigers collected during the 2010 country level status assessment of tigers, done in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and tiger States. At present there are 2175 camera trap photographs of individual tigers in the country which includes 1540 individual tiger photographs collected during 2014 country level status assessment of tigers.

#### **Construction activities in eco-sensitive zones**

770. SHRI AMBETH RAJAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state: