

Protection to marine environment

545. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that United Nations chose the World Environment Day, 2004 to focus attention on Marine Environment;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India's Marine Environment has become vulnerable; and

(c) if so, what measures Government have taken or envisages to take to protect marine environment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The marine environment throughout the world including India is facing challenges. The Government of India has taken following steps for protection of the Marine Environment:

- * A National Committee has been constituted to advise the Government on policy guidelines for implementing programmes on conservation and management of wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs. 30 mangrove areas and 4 coral reefs have been identified for intensive conservation and preparation of management action plans.
- * Coral reefs have been included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- * All India Co-ordinated Project on Coastal and Marine Biodiversity launched during the year 1999-2000 envisages Survey and Inventorisation, Training and Capacity Building in Taxonomy and Establishment of Database Network.
- * A notification was issued in 1991 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, regulating developmental activities in coastal areas falling in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ). As per this notification, all the coastal States/Union Territories have prepared Coastal Zone Management Plans and are

required to regulate development activities as per the provisions of this notification as amended from time to time.

- * Coastal Zone Management Authorities (CZMAs) have been constituted in all the coastal States/Union Territories to ensure implementation of the provisions of the CRZ Notification, 1991. Similarly, National Coastal Zone Management Authority has been constituted to develop guidelines and review the progress of implementation of CRZ Notification, 1991.
- * A national contingency plan to deal with oil spill disasters has been prepared. India has ratified Marpol 73/78 and adopted the provisions in the Merchant Shipping Act.
- * The concept of Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management (ICMAM) Programme has been launched to ensure the sustainable development of the coastal areas, rational utilization of marine resources, and proper management of the marine environment to prevent its degradation from developmental, commercial, or other activities.
- * The Coastal Shelterbelt Plantation Projects under Integrated Afforestation and Eco-development Project Scheme (IAEPS) envisage plantation in rows along the coastline to create a shelterbelt for checking soil erosion and sand ingress for protection of agricultural fields, roads etc.
- * Sunderbans in West Bengal, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu and Nicobar Islands have been designated as Biosphere Reserves.
- * The coastal stretches which are subjected to the pollution have been identified under Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Prediction System (COMAPS) study conducted by the Department of Ocean Development in the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and West Bengal and Government of India has stipulated limits for discharge of wastes and also imposing zero discharge policies.