

Diverse pressure on rivers due to human activities, including pollution, is generally considered to impact biodiversity of river ecosystem. Dolphins are part of river ecosystem also.

(c) The following are the important steps taken for conservation of Dolphins:

- (i) All fresh water, brackish water and marine Dolphins (*Cetaceans*) are listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according them the highest degree of protection against hunting.
- (ii) Gangetic Dolphin is one of the 17 species identified for taking up 'Recovery programme of Critically Endangered Species, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat'.
- (iii) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated Gangetic Dolphins as 'National Aquatic Animal.
- (iv) Wildlife Sanctuaries covering important Dolphin habitats have been created in the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve their habitats. These include Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands), National Chambal Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh), Saranath Turtle Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh), Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary (Bihar).
- (v) The National CAMPA Advisory Council in its 6th meeting held on 8th July, 2015 has approved an amount of ₹ 23.00 crores in duration of 5 years for recovery programme of Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*). This project is to be coordinated by Wildlife Institute of India. The amount of ₹ 4.60 crores has been released during the first year, 2015-16.
- (vi) National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has initiated dolphin conservation programme in 2016 to ensure long term survival of dolphin and other river fauna.

#### **Scrapping of section 2 of Forest Act, 1980**

2348. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal is pending with Government to scrap Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 which empowers it to divert forest lands for non forest activity;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In view of reply to part (a) above, reply to part (b) does not arise

(c) Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is its key operative Section. The scrapping of the said Section will defeat the very purpose of the enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

#### **Setting up of breeding centre for Great Indian Bustard**

†2349. SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government proposes to approve the setting up of Great Indian Bustard breeding centre at Jaisalmer area in Rajasthan and to release funds therefor and if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether the Rajasthan Government has sent the proposal regarding State action plan for protection of the bird to the Central Government for approval and if so, by when it would be approved and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) Ministry has taken up an initiative on conservation breeding of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) in Rajasthan. In this regard, Ministry has sanctioned an outlay of ₹ 33.85 crores for the duration of five years for the programme 'Habitat Improvement and Conservation Breeding of Great Indian Bustard-an integrated approach'. An amount of ₹ 9.95 crores have been released to Wildlife Institute of India (WII) as the first instalment for the program, funded from the Central component of CAMPA.

(b) Ministry has not received any State Action Plan from Rajasthan Government for the protection of GIB. However, Annual Plan of Operation (APO) for GIB for the year 2015-16 for financial assistance under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme- 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats-(Components-Recovery Programme for Saving Critically Endangered Species and Habitats)-Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) in Rajasthan' was received in the Ministry which the Ministry after examining approved ₹ 81.70 lakh (Central share of the plan) and release 80% of the Central share i.e. ₹ 65.36 lakh as first instalment to the State Government.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.