

Assessment on impact of pollution

2905. SHRI SANJAY SETH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken by the Central Government to solve the problem of air pollution in NCR due to burning of crop residue in adjoining States;

(b) whether Government has set up any institutional mechanism to discount annual recurrence of this phenomenon and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has assessed any adverse impact of pollution on the health of children and people; and

(d) if so, what punitive measures have been taken against the people and agencies, polluting the environment during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) The Government has taken several steps to control the air pollution due to burning of crop residue which, *inter alia*, include finalisation of National Policy for Management of Crop Residues in 2014, which envisages adoption of technical measures and extending Central financial assistance; issuance of directions under Section 18 (1) (b) of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and under section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to the NCR States/UT including Punjab for ensuring strict enforcement of ban on burning of agricultural waste; issuing advisory in multimedia mode for curbing stubble burning in Northern States of India; creating awareness amongst farmers; subsidizing cost of agriculture machineries; ban on open burning of agriculture residue by NCR States including Punjab; conducting regular co-ordination meetings at official and Ministerial level in addition to regular meetings by Central Pollution Control Board; setting up of bio-mass power plants by Governments of Punjab and Haryana; constitution of Centralised Monitoring Committee etc.

(b) The Government has set up mechanisms at the level of Minister as well as Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at Union level and at the level of Chief Secretary at State level to review steps taken for control of burning of crop residue.

(c) The Central Pollution Control Board has conducted a study through Chittranjan National Cancer Institute, Kolkata to assess the impact of air pollution on human health, including children. Air pollution is known to be one of the aggravating factors for many respiratory ailments and cardio-vascular diseases besides other factors such as lifestyle, obesity, hypertension, smoking, food habits etc.

(d) The Government has taken various punitive measures against people and agencies polluting environment which, *inter alia*, include filing of FIRs against open burning of agriculture residue; impounding of visibly polluting vehicles; challaning of defaulters of Pollution Under Control; impounding of overloaded vehicles; filing of prosecution against vehicles carrying building material without proper covering under Motor Vehicle Act; imposing fine on construction projects not following pollution control norms etc..

Side effects of GM crops

2906. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal for getting approval for cultivating GM crops in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government is aware of the side effects of GM crops and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is strong resentment among public on approving the cultivation of GM mustard and a dharna has also been staged before the Ministry to stop the approval of its cultivation and all other such crops, in view of their adverse effects on the environment and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) Yes, Sir. Proposals include Genetically Modified (GM) Mustard for hybrid production technology, insect resistance and/or herbicide tolerant maize, brinjal, pigeonpea and chickpea crops.

(b) The Government is aware of potential side effects and has established due procedure for assessment of risks and benefits of GM crop varieties.

(c) The Government has noted the issues raised with regard to apprehension regarding GM crop varieties.

(d) Introduction of any Genetically Modified (GM) crop variety requires due consideration of environmental and health aspects in view of various concerns. The Government has laid down due procedure for assessment of risks and benefits under Rules for the manufacture, use/import/export and storage of hazardous micro organisms/genetically engineered organisms or cells under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Any clearance to GM crops is accorded as per rules, which takes into account of representations from stakeholders.