

Deaths due to air pollution

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

(a) whether it is a fact that there are 20 most polluted cities in the country, where nearly 12 lakh deaths take place every year, due to air pollution and none of the 168 cities, assessed complies with air quality standards prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO);

(b) if so, Government's views and reaction thereto; and

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for controlling the air pollution in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) Greenpeace India, an NGO has published a report titled 'Airpocalypse' in January, 2017, based on secondary information on air quality collected through Right to Information (RTI), annual reports of SPCBs and literature review, in which a claim has been made that nearly 12 lakh deaths take place every year due to air pollution.

(b) There are no conclusive data available in the country to establish direct correlation of death exclusively with air pollution. Health effects of air pollution are synergistic manifestation of factors which include food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity, heredity etc. of the individuals. Air Pollution could be one of the triggering factors for respiratory associated ailments and diseases.

(c) Major steps taken by Government to curb air pollution in the country *inter alia* include notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards; formulation of environmental regulations/statutes; setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality; introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels like gaseous fuel (CNG, LPG etc.), ethanol blending; promotion of cleaner production processes; launching of National Air Quality Index; universalization of BS-IV by 2017; leap frogging from BS-IV to BS-VI fuel standards by 1st April, 2020; comprehensive amendments to various Waste Management Rules and notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules; banning of burning of leaves, biomass and municipal solid waste; promotion of public transport and network of metro, e-rickshaws, promotion of car pooling, Pollution Under Control Certificate, lane discipline, vehicle maintenance; regular co-ordination meetings at official and Ministerial level with Delhi and other

State Governments within the NCR; issuance of directions under Section 18(1)(b) of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring devices by major industries; collection of Environmental Protection Charge on more than 2000 CC diesel vehicles in Delhi; notification of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for different levels of air pollution in NCR.

Inventory of flora and fauna of Western Ghats

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

(a) whether Government would initiate complete documentation on the inventory of flora and fauna of the entire 1,500 km. stretch of Western Ghats so that its rich biological diversity can be preserved and protected; and

(b) whether Government would also initiate and collect exact specific data of the forest cover of Western Ghats to prevent its decline?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) and (b) Organisations such as the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the Forest Survey of India (FSI) undertake surveys for documenting flora and fauna and forest cover across the country including areas falling under Western Ghats. The Government of India has undertaken several steps for the conservation and protection of the biodiversity of Western Ghats, which includes establishment of Protected Areas (PAs) comprising 16 National Parks, 54 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 6 Conservation Reserves, 1 Community Reserves, 9 Tiger Reserves and 2 Elephant Reserves to provide stringent protection to both flora and fauna under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. In addition, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has issued a draft notification dated 04.09.2015 for declaring an area of 56,825 square kilometres as ecologically sensitive covering six States in the Western Ghats.

Environmental impact of cyclone Vardah

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

(a) whether Government has made any study to assess the environmental impact on Chennai city and its neighbouring areas, due to cyclone Vardah which devastated the whole area;