

(vii) Advising the States for combing forest floor to check snares/traps.

(viii) Bilateral co-operation with neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

(d) As per the information received by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau from the State Forest Departments and Police Authorities, the following are the details of number of persons arrested and cases registered during the last three years and the number of conviction in those cases:-

Year	Number of accused arrested	No. of Cases registered	No of cases resulted in Conviction
2015	1305	623	32
2016	723	405	37
2017	166	156	46
2018	75	40	11

Effect of tree felling on green coverage in Assam

525. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that unabated wanton tree felling in Assam has reduced green coverage to an alarming level particularly in Dima Hasao;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether efforts of the State Government to curb such illegal activities have failed to deliver the desired result;

(c) whether Government would like to intervene in the matter; and

(d) if not, how Government proposes to address the growing concern expressed by environmentalists and other in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) According to the India State of Forest Report, 2017 of Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, the forest cover of Assam has increased by 567 sq. km. compared to the forest cover of the State as assessed in 2015. As per the information received from the Government of Assam, the forest cover in Dhima Hasao District has decreased by 1.06% over the 2015 assessment of FSI, Dehradun. However, there are no reports of large scale tree felling in the state of Assam recently.

(c) and (d) The responsibility of Protection and Management of forests in the state lies primarily with the respective State/Union Territory Governments. The Forest Department of Assam deals with cases of illegal felling in accordance with the provisions of the extant acts, rules and regulations. The Ministry will intervene whenever specific case is referred to the Ministry by the State Government for assistance.

Menace of plastic carry bags and other items

526. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ban imposed on plastic carry bags and other items in the national capital and some States remain on paper and the menace of plastic garbage has increased manifold choking the drainage systems and even the land and sea;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons behind the helplessness of authorities responsible for implementing the ban; and

(c) comprehensive measures, Government proposes to take to make India a plastic free nation within a time frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Ministry notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 prohibiting the manufacture, sale, storage, and use of carry bags and sheets of less than 50 microns. However, till date 21 States/ Union Territories in the country have notified more stringent norms and imposed ban on plastic carry bags and other items in their States/UTs. Some states like Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Maharashtra have been successful more than others in implementing the regulations

The prime reasons for shortfall in implementation of these rules *inter alia* include rapid urbanization, increasing population, lack of public awareness, financial constraints and inadequate capacities of Urban Local Bodies.

(c) The Central Government has notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. As per the Rules, the generators of waste have been mandated to take steps to minimize generation of plastic waste, not to litter the plastic waste, ensure segregated storage of waste at source and handover segregated waste to local bodies or agencies authorised by the local bodies. The rules also mandate the responsibilities of local bodies, gram panchayats, waste generators, retailers and street vendors to manage