

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government had in 2015 notified the new standards and set the deadline of December, 2017 in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Directions have been issued by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to all Thermal Power plants (other than captive power plants) for compliance with laid down norms by 2022, besides consideration of phasing out of some old plants.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified new emission standards for Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) *vide* S.O.3305 (E) dated 07.12.2015 with respect to Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx), and Particulate Matter (PM) etc.

Changes in forest cover

†1335. MS. SAROJ PANDEY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any change in the forest cover of the country has been recorded during last three years as compared to earlier position;

(b) if so, whether forest cover has increased or decreased, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts being made by Government to establish environmental balance in case the forest cover has decreased?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per the latest report *i.e.* ISFR- 2017, the total forest and tree cover in the country is 8,02,088 square kilometers which is 24.39% of the geographical area of the country. There is an increase of 8021 square kilometer of total forest and tree cover compared to that of ISFR-2015.

(c) To further increase the forest cover in the country, afforestation programmes are being taken up under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as National Afforestation Programme (NAP) and Green India Mission (GIM) being implemented

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes/funding sources such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and Compensatory Afforestation Fund.

Implementation of ban on plastics

1336. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the States in the country have banned the use of plastics but the implementation is very poor and the ban exists only on papers;

(b) if so, the States that have banned the use of plastics and the extent to which the ban has been successful in these States; and

(c) the reasons for failure in implementing the ban order in the States strictly and further action proposed to be taken to reduce the generation of this toxic waste in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Ministry notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 prohibiting the manufacture, sale, storage, and use of carry bags and sheets of less than 50 microns. Further, 21 States/Union Territories in the country has notified more stringent norms and imposed ban on plastic carry bags and other items in their States/UTs. Some States particularly Sikkim, Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh have reportedly achieved considerable success. Maharashtra/Tamil Nadu/Uttar Pradesh have introduced measures recently and their efficacy is yet to be established. The prime reasons for ineffective implementation of these Rules *inter alia* include rapid urbanization, increasing population, lack of public awareness, financial constraints and inadequate capacities of Urban Local Bodies.

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 plastic waste. Further, it is mandated that the producers, importers and brand owners to work out modalities for waste collection system based on the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility.