

**Protection of Western Ghats from damage**

232. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has constituted an Expert Group under Dr. Kasturirangan in 2012 for recommending measures to protect Western Ghats which is included in World Heritage List of UNESCO;
- (b) if so, the recommendations accepted for its implementation;
- (c) the action taken to stop unauthorized activities damaging the eco-system of Western Ghats; and
- (d) the details of funds released during last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (d) The Government constituted the High Level Working Group (HLWG) under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kasturirangan which has delineated the Western Ghats with an area of 164280 Square kms. extending over 1500 kms. in 188 talukas spread over six States (i) Kerala, (ii) Tamil Nadu, (iii) Goa, (iv) Karnataka, (v) Maharashtra, and (vi) Gujarat. HLWG has demarcated approximately 37% of the total geographical area of the Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA). The ESA represents the contiguous band of vegetation including Protected Areas and World Heritage sites.

To facilitate sustainable development in the region, HLWG recommended the Central Government to notify the ESA demarcated by HLWG in public interest. Accordingly, this Ministry had issued a Draft Notification on 10.03.2014 for declaring an area of 56,825 square kilometres spread over the six States as Ecologically Sensitive. Thereafter, addressing the concerns and apprehensions of the people living in the ESA of the Western Ghats region, subsequent Draft Notifications dated 04.09.2015 and 27.02.2017 were published for seeking stakeholder comments, including those of State Governments.

Further, HWLG recommended prohibitory and regulatory measures in ESA for the activities that may adversely impact the ecosystem. In line with the HLWG recommendation, this Ministry issued Statutory directions *vide* Order dated 13.11.2013 to respective State Governments of the Western Ghats regions to prohibit five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities in the ESA, namely (i) Mining, quarrying and sand mining, (ii) Thermal Power Plants, (iii) Building and construction projects of

20,000 square meters area and above, (iv) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 hectares and above and/or with built up area of 1,50,000 square meters and above, and (v) Red category of industries. This Ministry has not released any funds in this regard.

### **Quality and contents of advertisements**

233. SHRI VIVEK TANKHA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the advertisements of alcohol and tobacco brands are being shown on print and visual media, TV channels on the pretext of advertisements on Soda, music CD, mineral water and fashion tour despite the ban on advertisements on tobacco, alcohol etc.;

(b) if so, the details of tobacco, alcohol companies indulging in such advertisements, company-wise; and

(c) whether it would amount to violation of Section 7(2)(viii)(a) and Clause 6 of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Code of Conduct of Advertising Standards Council of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (COL. RAJYAVARDHAN SINGH RATHORE): (a) to (c) So far as Print media is concerned, Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 to preserve the freedom of the Press and to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India and also to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press. The Council has framed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' which cover principles and ethics with regard to journalism. Print Media is expected to adhere to these Norms. Norm 36 titled 'Advertisements' cover principles and ethics with regard to advertisements in print media including that of alcohol and tobacco brands. The Council has not reported any such incident.

In so far as private satellite TV channels are concerned, all advertisements telecast on such channels are regulated in accordance with the Advertising Code prescribed in Rule 7 of the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 enshrined in the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995. Section 6 of the said Act stipulates that no