

(b) and (c) Higher volume of extraction of water on account of irrigation, industrial use, drinking purpose, etc. from the rivers has reduced perennial flows and decreases the assimilative capacity in the large river segments. Ecological approach towards environmental protection of flows in rivers *inter alia* include provisions for enhanced flow of fresh water by releases from the dams and barrages towards ecological purposes, conservation of rain water during the monsoon period all along the watersheds through harvesting, promotion of water efficient crop cultivation, minimisation of loss of water for irrigation, etc. Central Pollution Control Board has communicated State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees for persuading Urban Local Bodies for setting up of sewage treatment facilities and directed municipal authorities for setting up adequate sewage treatment facilities based on stringent discharge standards to abate pollution of water bodies.

The Central Government has issued a notification under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 *vide* Notification No. S.O. 3187 (E) dated 7th October, 2016 and has constituted authorities at Central, State and District level to take measures for prevention, control and abatement of pollution in river Ganga by ensuring continuous adequate flow of water for rejuvenation of the river Ganga. Also, with a view to ensure continuity and uninterrupted flows in river Ganga, the Central Government *vide* Notification No. S.O. 5195 (E) dated 9.10.2018 published in the Gazette of India, has notified minimum environmental flows to be maintained at locations downstream of existing and proposed structure on river Ganga in stretch extending upto Unnao (Uttar Pradesh).

Exemption in ESA limit in the Western Ghats

2782. SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has exempted 3,115 square kilometres of land in the Western Ghats in the State of Kerala, from regulations that are binding on Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) set by Kasturirangan panel;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government has received any appeal to revise the ESA limit in the State of Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) The High Level

Working Group (HLWG) constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, identified a contiguous area of 59,940 square kilometre as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) of the Western Ghats, covering six States namely, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat, requiring specific measures for conservation. Keeping in view the recommendations of the HLWG, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) had issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November, 2013, prohibiting and regulating certain activities that have maximum interventionist and destructive impacts on the natural ecosystems in the ESA of the Western Ghats. Based on the HLWG report, MoEF & CC had invited suggestions/comments from all State Governments of the Western Ghats region for modification of boundary of the ESA as delineated by the HLWG. The Government of Kerala had undertaken the exercise of physically demarcating ESA in the State through Panchayat Level Committee and interaction with various stakeholders and recommended to reduce the ESA area from 13,108.7 square kilometre to 9993.70 square kilometre. MoEF & CC had accepted the revised area of Kerala to form part of ESA while issuing the Draft Notification *vide* S.O. 733 (E) dated 10.03.2014. The Draft Notification was subsequently re-published *vide* S.O. 2435 (E) dated 04.09.2015, S.O. 667(E) dated 27.02.2017 and S.O. 5135 (E) dated 03.10.2018 with the same area of 9993.70 square kilometre for the State of Kerala. Also, considering the request of the State Government of Kerala to rationalise the ESA area appearing in the Draft Notification and in the Directions issued under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, MoEF & CC has recently amended the earlier Directions issued under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 03.12.2018.

(c) Yes, Sir. MoEF&CC has received a proposal from the State Government of Kerala for considering the ESA area in the State as 8656.46 square kilometre.

Policy for recycling batteries

2783. DR. KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated a policy in order to decrease environmental impact of the product wherein manufacturers are required to recycle batteries of various kinds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;