

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not received any comments on the said advisory in this regard.

Reduction in forest cover in districts of Madhya Pradesh

3254. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether forest cover in Bhopal, Vidisha and Sehore districts of Madhya Pradesh has registered twenty five per cent to forty six per cent decrease as per India State of Forest Report, 2019;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government has any immediate plans to contain the downward trend in forest cover to maintain ecosystem and to take up large scale plantation to compensate the loss in forest cover to help reduce environmental pollution which remains between 'Very Poor' to 'Poor' as per the Air Quality Index?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) and (b) As per India State of Forest Report (ISFR)2019 there is an overall increase in forest cover of Madhya Pradesh. However, forest cover in Bhopal, Vidisha & Sehore districts has registered a decrease of 25.33%, 25.54% and 46.10% respectively compared to previous assessment *i.e.* ISFR-2017 which is attributed to developmental activities, approved felling of trees on private lands and encroachment on forest land as informed by the State Government.

(c) The Ministry has taken several initiatives for increasing forest cover in the country including Madhya Pradesh. These include ongoing Centrally Sponsored Schemes of the Ministry such as National Afforestation Programme, National Mission for a Green India and Development of Wildlife Habitats. Compensatory Afforestation Fund Rules, 2018 also contain provisions for taking up assisted natural regeneration, artificial regeneration and silvicultural operations in forests which contribute to increase in forest cover.

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes/funding sources such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana and under the schemes/plans of States/UTs.

Further, the Ministry has launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as a national level strategy for pan India implementation to reduce air pollution levels across the country through strategies for local, city and regional levels. City specific action plans are being formulated for 102 non-attainment cities including Bhopal. This includes control of air pollution from sources like vehicular pollution, industrial pollution, road dust, construction activities, biomass burning, and other city specific sources. NCAP also includes actions for extensive plantation drive for increasing green cover.

Conservation of vulture

†3255. SHRI RAMKUMAR VERMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the species of vultures are heading towards extinction in the country;
- (b) if so, the measures Government is taking to save vultures;
- (c) the details of the species of birds which have become extinct or are on the verge of extinction; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the plan being formulated by Government to save the endangered species of birds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) to (d) No species of vulture has become extinct recently. However, decline in the number of some species like White-rumped vulture, Long-billed, Slender-billed, red-headed vultures was reported first during the 1990s. These have been declared critically endangered as per the Red List of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Government took the following steps for protection and conservation of Vultures in the country includes:

- (i) Protection status of White backed, Long Billed and Slender Billed Vultures upgraded from Schedule IV to Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.