

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2784
ANSWERED ON- 19/12/2024

POLLUTION FROM PASAKHA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

2784. SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- a) whether Government is aware of the pollution affecting villages in West Bengal's Kalchini block of Alipurduar district due to industrial activities in Bhutan's Pasakha Industrial Estate;
- b) the diplomatic measures being taken by Government to address the cross-border pollution issues affecting the health and environment of residents in Alipurduar;
- c) the steps taken to ensure that the Bhutanese authorities comply with international environmental standards to mitigate the adverse effects of industrial activities on neighboring Indian territories; and
- d) the assistance being offered to the affected communities in Alipurduar by Government in coordination with other relevant Ministries?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a to d) Government are aware of the reports regarding pollution from industrial activities in Bhutan's Pasakha Industrial Estate affecting tea gardens in West Bengal. The issue was taken up with the Bhutanese side, and in August 2018, a joint delegation led by the Tea Board of India and the Department of Trade from the Bhutanese side, undertook a site visit. The delegation recommended a separate visit to the Pasakha Industrial Area to be undertaken jointly by the Environment Commission of Bhutan, Tea Board of India, Ministry of Jal Shakti and other environmental experts.

During the Commerce Secretary Level Meeting (CSLM) held in November 2021, Indian side requested Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to facilitate this visit. However, due to COVID pandemic, the visit could not take place. This matter was again discussed by the Indian side with RGoB during Border District Coordination Meetings between Bhutan and the State Government of West Bengal. This matter has been raised most recently with the Bhutanese side in the CSLM held in September 2024.
