

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2430
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2025

Air Pollution

2430. MS MAHUA MOITRA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons that the Government is not proposing to regulate the statutorily mandated "Air Pollution Control Areas" and instead is experimenting with huge loan driven air shed management strategy in the Indo Gangetic plain;
- (b) whether there is a need to rehaul the Air Act, 1981 and move away from only programmatic approaches to curb air pollution which has become such a hazardous and lethal means affecting public health;
- (c) whether the Government is proposing to bring a robust Coastal Management Act for the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to revive the State Land Use Boards (SLUBs) to understand and decide the utility of the land in the most efficient way to curb unbridled and unplanned growth;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to recommend all the States to formulate the Biodiversity Heritage Rules, and prepare a management plan for Biodiversity Heritage Sites under Section 37 of Biodiversity Act, 2002;
- (f) whether the Government proposes to implement Biodiversity Impact Assessment process with robust framework to preserve Biodiversity Heritage; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof particularly focusing on amending the provisions of the Act which allows exemption to certain infrastructural Rail and Road projects?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) & (b): Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have demarcated the critically polluted areas and severally polluted areas in the country based on the Comprehensive Environment Pollution Index (CEPI). Central Pollution Control Board under the powers conferred section 18(1) of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 has issued directions to the State Pollution Control Boards to prepare action plans and implement to bring down CEPI scores in the critically as well as severally polluted areas. Further, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 has provided sufficient legal provisions for the Central Government,

Central Pollution Control Board, State Governments and the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) to control and abatement of air pollution.

Under the said Act, Central Pollution Control Board has been mandated to plan and execute nationwide programme for prevention, control and abatement of pollution, laydown standards for quality of air and establish laboratories to perform its functions. CPCB also advises central government on matter concerning improvement of air quality.

State Government has been provided statutory power under the Act to declare air pollution control areas or alter any air pollution control area. Further, the State Government may issue directions to regulate and prohibit the use of any appliance used in such air pollution control area. Also, State Government may prohibit use of any fuel other than approved fuels in such air pollution control areas.

State Pollution Control Board under the said Act has been provided the mandate to advise the State Government regarding matters concerning prevention and control of pollution and suitability of location for carrying on any industries likely to cause air pollution, lay down standards for air quality, standards for emission of air pollutants from industrial plants and automobiles or for the discharge of any pollutant and from any other source, to inspect the air pollution control areas, to plan and execute comprehensive plan for control and abatement of air pollution, regulate the industrial pollution through consent and, to collect and disseminate information related to air pollution.

To address air pollution in urban areas, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in January 2019 and it aims to improve air quality in 130 non-attainment and Million-Plus Cities in 24 States/UTs.

Performance linked grant of ₹ 13,036.52 crore has been provided to 130 cities during 2019-20 till date, as a critical gap funding to implement air quality improvement measures. The focused actions by 130 cities under NCAP have shown positive results with 103 cities showing reduction in PM₁₀ concentration in 2024-25 with respect to 2017-18, out of which 64 cities have shown reduction in PM₁₀ levels by more than 20% and 25 of these cities have achieved a reduction of more than 40%. A total of 22 Cities have met National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and have PM₁₀ Concentrations less than 60 µg/m³.

Further, the programme leverages mobilisation of resources through convergence of various schemes of Central Government such as Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), AMRUT, Smart City Mission, PM e-Bus Sewa, Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT), and Nagar Van Yojana, as well as resources of State Govts. / UT administration, Municipal Corporations and other developmental authorities for implementation of action plans. Under NCAP, an amount of Rs. 5,318 crore have been provided to 8 States/UTs that are part of Indo-Gangetic Plain to implement city action plan of 41 targeted cities. Further, State action plans have been prepared by all 8 States/UTs of IGP region to implement air quality improvement measures.

In addition to the funds provided under NCAP as well as Central Government Schemes, State Governments, if required, may mobilise resources through various financial instruments such as Green Municipal Bonds, Green Debt Securities, Public Private Partnership projects and soft loans as per their needs to develop urban infrastructure and to implement air pollution mitigation measures.

(c): MoEFCC has been implementing the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification since 1991. This was later replaced by the CRZ/IPZ Notification, 2011, and subsequently by the CRZ/ICRZ Notification, 2019, which places greater emphasis on the conservation and management of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

Under the 2019 Notification, all coastal States and Union Territories are required to revise and update their Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs), Island Coastal Regulation Zone Plans (ICRZPs), or Integrated Island Management Plans (IIMPs) in line with the updated provisions and submit them for approval to the Ministry. Until these plans are approved, the 2011 Notification provisions continue to apply. As of now, the CZMPs for Odisha, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Kerala, and the ICRZPs for Great Nicobar and Little Andaman have been approved by the Ministry under the 2019 Notification.

(d): State Land Use Boards are constituted by State Govt. under respective Town Planning and Land Development laws. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development issued 'Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation Guidelines' for adoption by State Govts. to promote sustainable regional and urban planning and development including land use planning.

(e), (f) & (g):

Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (as amended in 2023) empowers State Government to notify areas of biodiversity importance as biodiversity heritage sites based on recommendations from State Biodiversity Board. Further, Section 37 enables the State Government in consultation with the Central Government to frame rules for the management and conservation of all the biodiversity heritage sites.

Clause (i) of sub-section (4) of Section 36 of the said Act, mandates the Central Government to undertake measures for the assessment of environmental impact of a project likely to have an adverse effect on biological diversity, with a view to avoid or minimise such effects, wherever required and provide for public participation in such assessment, where appropriate.
