

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 172**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.12.2022

**Proposed amendments to the Environment Protection Act**

172. SHRI BINOY VISWAM:

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

- (a) whether Government intends to bring an amendment to the Environment Protection Act, 1986 for decriminalisation of environmental offences after receiving comments for the same;
- (b) whether Government has taken cognizance of various civil society organizations and environment groups objecting to the said amendments along with the details of such objections; and
- (c) rationale for the proposed amendment in light of the growing criminalisation of environmental offences across the world?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)**

**(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.**

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 172 RAISED BY SHRI BINOY VISWAM REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT DUE FOR REPLY ON 22.12.2022.**

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(a) and (b) The Government intends to bring an amendment to the Environment Protection Act, 1986 for decriminalisation of environmental offences. Comments from the general public and State/ Union Territory Governments were sought through Public Notice published on website of Ministry and in 61 newspapers Pan-India. A total of 73 comments/ suggestions were received which were duly examined and incorporated, as deemed fit, in the final bill.

(c) The provisions under EPA, 1986 are proposed to be decriminalized with heavier penalties in order to encourage self-regulation in law abiding citizens and entrepreneurs on the one hand and imposition of heavier penalties coupled with provisions of Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860 to act as deterrent for violators on the other hand. The proposed amendment is also intended to save law abiding citizens/ entrepreneurs from undue harassment in case of minor non-compliances which would have otherwise resulted in filing of court cases.

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