

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 1016
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2022

Forest cover and cleaner environment

1016 SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

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

- (a) whether forest cover in the urban and rural areas of the country is fast depleting thereby threatening the ecology, if so, the corrective steps taken by Government in this regard;
- (b) the steps taken by Government to boost and develop urban forests in the country;
- (c) whether excessive use of plastic is also polluting the oceans, damaging marine life and threatening human health;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the measures taken/being taken by Government in this regard; and
- (e) the steps taken by Government to generate awareness and public participation towards a cleaner environment?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) & (b) The Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The forest cover information is not available separately for rural and urban areas. The FSI has published a study on the decadal change in forest cover in seven major mega cities between ISFR 2011 and ISFR 2021. The details of decadal change in forest cover in seven mega cities between ISFR 2011 and ISFR 2021 are given in **Annexure**.

The Ministry is implementing Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) since the year 2020 which envisages developing 400 Nagar Vans and 200 Nagar Vatika in the country during the period of 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an objective to significantly enhance the tree outside forests and green cover, enhancement of biodiversity and ecological benefits to the urban and peri-urban areas apart from improving quality of life of city dwellers with the funds under the National Fund of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).

The Ministry has approved 270 projects under Nagar Van Yojana with the total cost of Rs.238.64 Crore till date, which includes an amount of Rs. 57.14 Crore for creation of 97 Nagar Van/Vatika during 2022-23.

(c) & (d) National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), an attached office of Ministry of Earth Sciences is collecting the real-time information on coastal water quality by deploying water quality buoys at 10m water depth in coastal waters. NCCR is also undertaking research activities in quantifying litter (mainly meso, macro and microplastics) in the beach, in the water column and sediment on the sea floor. An increase in the abundance of microplastics is observed along the east coast during the monsoon. The stations nearer to the river mouth had higher numbers of microplastics concentrations. The Beach litter survey revealed that the maximum accumulation occurs in the backshore than in the intertidal zone. Moreover, Urban beaches have higher accumulation rates than rural beaches. Under Beach Clean-up program/activity, it was found that the majority of the waste composition was contributed by single use plastics.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, and its amendments, which provide the statutory framework for plastic waste management in the country. The Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016, prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags and plastic sheets less than fifty microns in thickness in the country. There is complete ban on sachets using plastic material used for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala. MoEF&CC had also issued Gazette notification on “Guidelines on Extended producer responsibility for Plastic Packaging” and Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) rules, 2022 on 16th February, 2022 to all States/UTs and Ministries. Further, the Government of India has initiated several programmes such as “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan”, National Mission for Clean Ganga and Smart Cities Mission” in order to develop clean and sustainable environment which contribute towards the reduction in marine pollution.

(e) Under the Central Sector scheme Environment Education, Awareness and Training (EEAT) implemented till year 2021-22, more than 1 lakh Eco-clubs have been formed in schools and colleges to educate students and to spread awareness on environmental issues. Activities undertaken by Eco-clubs include plantation drives, cleanliness drives, celebration of important environmental days, awareness and capacity building on solid waste management through waste segregation, green pledges, etc.

Further, clean coast campaigns are taken up regularly to create awareness among the public and stakeholders to keep the beaches and coastal areas clean.

Annexure

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No.1016 due for answer on 15.12.2022 regarding 'Forest cover and cleaner environment'

Decadal change in Forest Cover in Major Mega Cities between ISFR 2011 and ISFR 2021**(Area in Square Kilometre)**

Mega Cities Name	State	Area as per digitized boundary	ISFR 2011		ISFR 2021		
			Total Forest Cover	Percentage of total forest cover wrt area of digitized boundary	Total Forest Cover	Percentage of total forest cover wrt area of digitized boundary	Forest cover change between ISFR 2011 to ISFR 2021
Ahmedabad	Gujarat	455.32	17.96	3.94	9.41	2.07	-8.55
Bengaluru	Karnataka	1,307.35	94.00	7.19	89.02	6.81	-4.98
Chennai	Tamil Nadu	430.07	18.02	4.19	22.70	5.28	4.68
Delhi	Delhi	1,540.63	174.33	11.32	194.24	12.61	19.91
Hyderabad	Telangana	634.18	33.15	5.23	81.81	12.90	48.66
Kolkata	West Bengal	186.55	2.52	1.35	1.77	0.95	-0.75
Mumbai	Maharashtra	435.91	101.74	23.34	110.77	25.41	9.03
Total		4,990.01	441.72	8.85	509.72	10.21	68.00