

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1179
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.08.2024

Climate action and carbon neutrality

1179. SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry has strategy to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070 and the sector-specific targets set therefor;
- (b) whether the Ministry is addressing the issue of forest fragmentation, and the measures being taken to restore degraded forests;
- (c) whether initiatives are being implemented to promote sustainable urban planning and development, and reduce urban air pollution; and
- (d) whether the Ministry is enhancing climate resilience in vulnerable ecosystems, such as coral reefs and mangroves?

ANSWER

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

(a) India, at the 26th session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP 26) in November 2021, announced its target to achieve net zero by 2070. In pursuance thereof, India formulated and submitted its Long-Term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS) to the UNFCCC in November 2022, which reaffirms the goal of reaching net-zero by 2070. India's LT-LEDS is based on the principles of equity and climate justice and the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities. India's LT-LEDS involves seven key strategic transitions, namely: (i) Low carbon development of electricity systems consistent with development; (ii) Developing an integrated, efficient, inclusive low-carbon transport system; (iii) Promoting adaptation in urban design, energy and material-efficiency in buildings, and sustainable urbanisation; (iv) Promoting economy-wide decoupling of growth from emissions and development of an efficient, innovative low-emission industrial system; (v) CO₂ removal and related engineering solutions; (vi) Enhancing Forest and vegetation cover consistent with socio-economic and ecological considerations; and (vii) Economic and financial aspects of low-carbon development and Long-Term Transition to Net-Zero by 2070.

(b) While granting prior approvals for diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes, under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the issue of forest fragmentation is duly considered. Mitigation measures are ensured and duly factored in while granting the approval for various projects particularly in proposals of linear infrastructure. Compensatory afforestation is a mandatory component for projects where diversion of forestland for non-forestry purposes is permitted which includes components of soil and moisture conservation and eco-restoration. Further, “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” tree plantation campaign has been launched throughout the country on the World Environment Day (5th June 2024). In addition, the Green Credit Program has been launched in 2023. The State Forest Department of every State and Union Territory have been requested to identify degraded forestland parcels under the control and management of Forest Departments which shall be made available for tree plantation for the purpose of generation of green credit. The National Afforestation Programme (NAP) is implemented on pan India basis, for afforestation in identified degraded forest areas with people’s participation and decentralized forest governance. Compensatory afforestation under CAMPA has also been used for taking up plantations on degraded forest lands and carrying out eco-restoration works.

(c) As per India’s LT-LEDS, mainstreaming adaptation measures in urban planning and measures for enhancing energy and resource efficiency within urban planning guidelines, policies and bye-laws is an important component of low carbon development pathway for the urban sector. The relevant policies and initiatives for sustainable urban planning include: (1) Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation (URDPFI) guidelines; (2) Town and Country Planning Act; (3) National Urban Missions such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT); Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY)– Housing for all (Urban), providing housing especially for low-and middle-income groups; Smart Cities Mission (SCM); Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is implementing National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as a national level strategy to reduce air pollution levels across the country. Under NCAP, City Specific Clean Air Action Plans for 131 non-attainment/million plus cities have been prepared to improve air quality. Funding for implementation of City Action Plans is mobilised through convergence of resources from various schemes of Central Government such as Swachh Bharat Mission SBM (Urban), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart City Mission, Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT), Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME-II), Nagar Van Yojna, etc. and resources from State/UT Governments and its agencies such as Municipal Corporations, Urban Development Authorities and Industrial Development Authorities, etc.

In addition, the Government has taken a number of initiatives for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution including enactment of environmental laws and associated regulations; notification of National Ambient Air Quality and effluent discharge standards; introduction of cleaner / alternate fuels (such as CNG/LPG); ethanol blending program; leapfrogging from Bharat Stage (BS) IV to BS VI fuel norms; revision of emission standards for industrial sectors from time to time, promotion of cleaner production processes; incentives for production and use of hybrid and electric vehicles; banning open burning of leaves, biomass and waste; and Constitution of the Commission on Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas.

(d) The Government has taken steps to protect, sustain, conserve and augment mangroves and coral reefs in the country through promotional as well as regulatory measures. MoEFCC has provided financial assistance to Coastal States/Union Territories (UTs) for enhancing climate resilience which includes conservation of mangroves and coral reefs, shelterbelt plantation, coral transplantation, enhancement of livelihood security of coastal communities, pollution abatement in coastal areas and capacity building. Moreover, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans (ICZMP) for identified stretches of Gujarat and Odisha have been prepared. Further, ICZM Plan and Marine Spatial Plan for identified stretches of West Bengal have also been prepared. MoEFCC launched 'Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)' in June 2023 to promote and conserve mangroves as unique, natural eco-system having very high biological productivity and carbon sequestration potential, besides working as a bio shield. MISHTI envisages restoration/reforestation of Mangroves covering approximately 540 km², spreading across 9 Coastal states and 4 Union Territories. A total of ₹ 12.55 crores has been released to the states of Gujarat, West Bengal, Kerala and UT of Puducherry for restoration of 3,046 ha. of mangroves in financial year 2024-25.

For enhancing climate resilience, regulatory measures are implemented through Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification (2011 & 2019) under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; the Indian Forest Act, 1927; the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; and rules under these Acts as amended from time to time. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019, promulgated under Environment (Protection) Act 1986, has specific focus on conservation and management plans of 11 Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) including mangroves and coral reefs ecosystems.
