

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 390
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.11.2024

Conservation of Indian Botanical Garden

390. SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA:

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

- (a) the measures taken by Government to ensure the conservation and preservation of rare plant species at the Indian Botanical Garden;
- (b) the manner in which Government is addressing the concerns about the loss of green cover and biodiversity in the Indian Botanical Garden;
- (c) whether Government can provide an update on the maintenance and restoration efforts for heritage structures within the AJC Bose Indian Botanical Garden such as Roxburgh House; and
- (d) the manner in which Government plans to balance the need for visitor attraction with the primary goal of conservation and research at the Indian Botanical Garden?

ANSWER

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

- (a) As per information received from Botanical Survey of India (BSI), a subordinate organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, AJC Bose Indian Botanical Garden (AJCBIBG), Howrah acts as a hub for ex-situ conservation of plants and has more than 20,000 plants belonging to over 3000 species of flowering and non-flowering plants. Of these, more than 300 species are in IUCN Red List, including the endemics from different phytogeographical regions of the country. The AJCBIBG, Howrah, in its regular activities, multiplies these plants and also introduces for plantation in the AJCBIBG as and when required. Distribution of these seedlings is being done regularly to different botanical gardens and forest departments.

The AJCBIBG has created different Sections for conservation, such as Aquatic Plants Section with over 90 taxa, *Hibiscus* Section with over 100 taxa and hybrid collection, wild banana, wild edible fruits with over 100 taxa, Medicinal Section with over 400 medicinal plants, a *bambusetum* with 42 species of bamboo and a *palmetum* with more than 50 species.

Besides, threatened species of plants are collected for introduction in the AJCBIBG. During the period 2021-24, 579 species, which include threatened and endemic species, were collected from all over the country and added to the AJCBIBG.

- (b) The AJCBIBG is being maintained to preserve the green cover and biodiversity. During the period 2021-24, about 8000 plants belonging to 579 species under 180 families have been planted in different Divisions and Sections of AJCBIBG. To maintain and restore the green cover along the river Hooghly, about 3000 mangrove plants belonging to 10 different species have also been planted.
- (c) Botanical Survey of India has signed an MoU with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) to restore the old structures in the AJCBIBG.
- (d) The AJCBIBG has more than 8000 morning walkers daily, especially senior citizens, and has over 5 lakh annual visitors and over 25,000 students from schools, colleges and researchers. The minimum required facilities like footpaths, sitting benches, drinking water, gazebos and toilet facilities have been provided. Keeping in mind the primary goal of conservation, 8000 saplings collected from different parts of the country have been planted and 150 rare species (White Sandal, Red Sandal, Sita Ashok, Magnolia, Bentinckia, Neem, Cassia, Amaltash, Champagne Palm, Branch Palm, etc.) have been introduced along the road side and in various Divisions and Sections of the garden. The AJCBIBG is also developing new Sections for particular plants like Hibiscus Section, Aquatic Plant Section, extension of Medicinal Plant Garden, Zinger Section, Cycad Section, Wild Edible Fruit Section, Orchidarium, Nature Trail, Taxonomic Plant Section, etc. Thus, the AJCBIBG is fulfilling the goal of conservation, the needs of visitors and educating the people about the importance of biodiversity conservation.
