

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 13
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.01.2026

Public awareness on pollution control

*13. SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH:

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

- (a) what initiatives are being undertaken to educate the public about the importance of pollution control and the impact of environmental degradation on health and livelihoods;
- (b) whether there are any specific programmes targeting schools, colleges and communities to raise awareness about waste management, air pollution and water conservation; and
- (c) the details of Government plans to use technology and media to encourage responsible environmental behaviour among citizens, particularly in high-risk pollution areas?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARAS (a) to (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. 13 DUE FOR REPLY ON 29.01.2026 REGARDING PUBLIC AWARENESS ON POLLUTION CONTROL BY SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

(a) to (c): The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has been consistently undertaking a wide range of initiatives to educate, sensitise and engage citizens on the importance of pollution control and impacts of environmental degradation on public health, livelihoods and ecological sustainability.

MoEF&CC implements the 'Environment Education Programme (EEP)', one of the components of the Central Sector Scheme 'Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development (EEARSD)' aimed at supplementing the efforts of Ministry of Education in the formal education front, through varied pedagogical initiatives to impart non-formal environment education. The programme supplements the knowledge that the children and young generation gain from classrooms with experience from nature and hands-on activities. The activities of this programme are aligned with Mission LiFE and are implemented by the designated State/UT level Implementing Agencies (IAs) for children and youth through the eco-clubs formed in schools and colleges.

Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) are a significant initiative to promote environmental consciousness among students. These clubs aim to instill values and behaviours necessary for sustainable living. Students are encouraged to participate in environment-friendly activities aligned with Mission LiFE themes, fostering a sense of responsibility towards nature.

Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP) is one of the components of revamped scheme of Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development (EEARSD) implemented by MoEF&CC in alignment with Mission LiFE. Under EIACP programme, 54 EIACP Centres across the country are actively engaged round the year in promoting awareness about sustainable actions that individuals can undertake.

The Breath of Change campaign- "Clean Air for Blue Skies" has been organized under EIACP programme for creating greater public engagement and awareness on air pollution in 13 identified hotspots of Pollution in Delhi-NCR. Campaign included activities like awareness rallies, RWA survey, short film competition, Vayu Mitra Pledges, Nukkad Nataks, Plantation drives, Mobile Journalism, Communication Workshops, Podcast series by environmental experts and change makers, Breathable Art Installation, youth advocacy, carbon tracking etc.

Digital Resource Centre (DRC) is a one stop portal developed and managed by EIACP Cell at the national level through which all EIACP Centres update various activities/events/Programmes scheduled and conducted by them. These may include uploading of various information products, information related to various competitions, workshops, awareness programmes, special publications and reports, celebration of various environmental days, Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP) and Capacity Building Programme related information, Media Gallery, Recruitment related to EIACP and Kids Corner, etc.

National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) further supports public awareness through exhibitions, educational programmes, workshops, mobile museums, and outreach activities for students, teachers, and the general public, fostering environmental literacy and conservation consciousness across regions

Mission LiFE- Lifestyle for Environment is a global initiative launched by the Government in October, 2022 aimed at fostering sustainable lifestyles through mindful and deliberate consumption to protect the environment. It is a citizen-led initiative that focuses on inspiring and enabling individuals to adopt sustainable lifestyles through every day voluntary actions. It aims to nudge individuals and communities to practice a lifestyle that is synchronous with nature. The initiative focuses on seven core themes: saving water, conserving energy, reducing waste, managing e-waste, eliminating single-use plastics, promoting sustainable food systems, and adopting healthy lifestyles.

To encourage public participation in Mission LiFE and promote environmentally sustainable practices, the Ministry in collaboration with various stakeholders including several Union Ministries, State/UT Governments has undertaken mass mobilisation campaigns and awareness initiatives like ‘One Nation, One Mission: End Plastic Pollution’, ‘Harit Yoga on International day of Yoga 2025’, ‘Tree plantation drives under Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’, ‘e-waste awareness and reduction campaign’.

Mission LiFE activities are carried out through tech-based LiFE Pavilions set up during major national events like Bharat Parv, Swachh Vayu Diwas, Mahakumbh Mela, India Water Week, World Environment Day 2025, World Food India Expo 2025 and India International Trade Fair 2025 Expo etc. Dedicated LiFE Pavilions featured interactive technological digital displays, Virtual Reality experiences, and live demonstrations, enabling visitors to explore the seven LiFE themes, take pledges, and commit to sustainable lifestyles.

An ‘Ideas4LiFE initiative’ was launched by MoEF&CC under the framework of Mission LiFE to seek innovative ideas from students, faculties, research scholars, etc on seven themes of Mission LiFE. A total of 1384 entries were received, out of which, 21 ideas with top 3 ideas in each of the seven themes were shortlisted and felicitated on the World Environment Day 2025.

Two dedicated portals were launched for structured monitoring of LiFE events and activities. The Mission LiFE Portal is a knowledge repository of creatives and videos related to Mission LiFE.

Further, ‘Meri LiFE’ Portal is a digital platform launched as part of the Government of India’s Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative by MoEF&CC. The portal enables Ministries, Departments, and Institutions to upload reports on actions, events, and see the progress of the mass mobilization drive focused on seven themes of Mission LiFE.

Meri LiFE has exemplified the convergence of public, private, and youth partners in advancing climate action, involving collaboration across 58 Ministries and Departments across the Government of India, private sector, civil society organisations. So far, more than 6.27 crores people have participated in 35 lakh Mission LiFE action events. More than 5.0 crore Mission Life pledges have been taken by the citizens.

The Ministry, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, is also working towards integrating Mission LiFE principles within school and higher education curricula to institutionalise environmental awareness and responsible environmental behaviour. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also emphasizes the critical importance of integrating environmental awareness and sustainability principles into school curricula.

As on date, 3,87,196 schools across 793 Districts in 36 States/UTs have registered on the Eco-clubs portal. Collectively, Eco-Clubs have organized 3,53,942 events, facilitated the taking of 87,67,291 pledges, and engaged 1,05,19,874 students in activities promoting environmental responsibility and sustainable practices.

In partnership with Department of School Education & Literacy, the E-Waste Awareness and Reduction Campaign was organized in 13 cities across Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh engaged 70,000 students in 632 government schools through 65 virtual workshops and school-based collection drives, resulting in the safe recycling of 4,950 kg of e-waste.

“Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” campaign launched by Hon’ble Prime Minister on World Environment Day 2024 has evolved into a nationwide people’s movement with participation from citizens, institutions and government bodies. More than 267 crore saplings have been planted under the campaign, supported by geo-tagging, transparency and citizen participation through the Meri LiFE portal, adopting a Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approach.

Department of School Education & Literacy has undertaken plantation of 9.85 crore saplings under ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’ campaign in the FY 2025-26.

Under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), MoEFCC has adopted a multi-faceted approach to promote public awareness for air pollution reduction measures across 24 States/UTs and 130 cities by leveraging initiatives such as Capacity building and public outreach programmes through State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees and urban local bodies, disseminating information through ‘PRANA’ online portal, involving youth in awareness campaigns through ‘Meri Yuva Bharat’ online platform of Department of Youth Affairs, incorporating Mission LiFE activities in city action plans to promote environment friendly lifestyles, organizing World Environment Day, Swachh Vayu Diwas, Air Pollution Awareness Weeks, and regular awareness campaigns in cities, which aim to engage citizens across age groups and regions.

“PRANA” (Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment Cities) has been developed as a dedicated platform for monitoring the implementation of NCAP and for disseminating programme-related information to the public. PRANA portal features a city dashboard displaying ambient air quality data of a cities under NCAP where cities upload details of awareness activities such as celebrations of World Environment Day and the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies in the events section.

PRANA portal also features a dedicated Citizen Corner that provides guidance to public on DOs and DON'Ts for improving air quality. This section seeks to engage citizens by promoting good environmental practices and avoiding activities that contribute to air pollution. As per information uploaded by cities on the PRANA portal, a total of 17,457 awareness events have been conducted and 19,749 advertisements have been published under NCAP to enhance public awareness on air pollution issues.

Further, Swachh Vayu Survekshan initiative conducted annually under NCAP ranks cities based on implementation of City Action Plans and air pollution mitigation efforts also promotes awareness to citizens on causes of air pollution, health impacts due to exposure and their control measures.

Government has launched Air Quality Index (AQI) in the year 2015, to provide air quality information to the people in easy to understand terms through one number, one nomenclature and one colour. It transforms air quality data of 8 air pollutants and their likely health impacts into a single number.

The SAMEER mobile application and web portal provide near real-time air quality data and hourly Air Quality Index (AQI) information of more than 280 cities through automated system without any human intervention. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) issues a daily bulletin at 04:00 PM comprising AQI of various cities in the country. SAMEER serves as a grievance redressal mechanism, enabling citizens to report pollution-related complaints for prompt action by concerned authorities. This has created transparency and extensive public awareness on issues related to clean air.

Advanced technological tools like the Decision Support System (DSS) and the Air Quality Forecast and Early Warning System (AQEWS) in 47 cities operated by IMD and IITM provide information to public as well as authorities on air quality 3-4 days in advance enabling timely implementation of air pollution control measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).

CPCB has mandated installation of Online Continuous Effluent/Emission Monitoring Systems (OCEMS) in key polluting sectors to strengthen environmental surveillance and ensure continuous compliance of environmental norms. OCEMS also help industries to self-regulation. Following sectors are required to install OCEMS as per CPCB directions:

- a) 17 categories of high-pollution-potential industries,
- b) Common waste management/treatment facilities (Common hazardous waste incinerators, Common biomedical waste incinerators, Common Effluent Treatment Plants, Sewage Treatment Plants, Waste to Energy Plants)
- c) Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) in Ganga and Yamuna Basin
- d) Major air polluting industries in Delhi-NCR [Red-category (Large & Medium) air-polluting units, as well as units under three sectors namely – Food & food processing, Metal processing, and Textile]

Real-time emission and effluent data generated from these OCEMS are transmitted 24×7 to servers of CPCB and SPCBs. Centralised software of CPCB analyses the data, and automatic alerts are issued to industries and regulators whenever pollutant levels exceed prescribed norms, enabling immediate corrective action and strengthening regulatory oversight.

To promote awareness on ban on single-use plastics, a two month long Awareness Campaign of Single Use Plastics was organized in June, 2021. To encourage innovation in development of alternatives to identified single use plastic items and digital solutions to plastic waste management, the India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021, has been organized for students of Higher Educational Institutions and startups recognized under Startup India Initiative. Pan India essay writing competition on the theme elimination of single use plastics was organized for spreading awareness amongst school students.

Prakriti – Mascot was launched on 5th April 2022 to spread greater awareness among masses about small changes that can be sustainably adopt in our lifestyle for a better environment, and various green initiatives taken by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to ensure effective Plastic Waste Management (PWM) in the country. Three videos of PRAKRITI on ban on single use plastics have been made and translated in 19 languages. These have been shared with states and UTs for further dissemination.

National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management (MoEFCC) has been launched by the Government to bring all stakeholders including Central Ministries/ Departments, State/UT Governments at one place and track the progress made for elimination of single use plastic (SUP) and effective management of plastic waste. Monitoring module for SUP (CPCB), for local bodies, SPCBs/PCCs and CPCB, to inventorize details of SUP production/ sale & usage in commercial establishments at district level, and on-ground enforcement of ban on SUP. Further, mobile App for Single Use Plastics Grievance Redressal (CPCB) has been launched to empower citizens to check sale/usage/manufacturing of SUP in their area and tackle the plastic menace.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, celebrated World Environment Day 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 5th June 2025, with the slogan ‘One Nation, One Mission: End Plastic Pollution’. As part of one month long pre-campaign activities undertaken before World Environment Day 2025, around 69,000 events were organized in which around 21 lakh people participated across the country. The National Plastic Pollution Reduction Campaign (NPPRC) was also launched for the period 5th June to 31st October 2025. The Campaign included activities to reduce plastic pollution in urban and rural areas under Swachhta Hi Sewa programme. The activities also included focus on reducing use of avoidable single use plastics in government offices especially during Special Campaign 5.0.

A one day National Expo on eco-alternatives to banned single-use plastic was also organized on 5th June 2025. The expo saw a vibrant participation by start-ups, recyclers and local bodies from across India showcasing innovative technologies and best practices on Eco-alternatives and plastic waste management.

A National Hackathon on Eco-Alternatives to Single Use Plastic Items was organized on World Environment Day 2025.

A Compendium of Manufacturers / Sellers of Eco-alternatives to Banned Single Use Plastic Items”, launched on World Environment Day, 2025 provides details of nearly 1000 units manufacturing eco-alternatives. This Compendium has been made available on the website of Central Pollution Control Board for wider dissemination and use by stakeholders.

As part of World Environment Day celebrations 2025, the Ministry organized a one-month campaign on ‘My Gov’ online platform to encourage youth participation in ending plastic pollution.

Under the National Coastal Mission, local communities are sensitised on the importance of clean beaches and pollution-free oceans. The Ministry conducts mass beach cleaning drives every year on International Coastal Clean-Up Day, with the objective of preventing and managing marine litter through community participation.

MoEF&CC has organized beach cleaning campaigns in collaboration with Coastal State Governments covering more than 80 beaches in the last 3 years to sensitize the coastal communities and beach users. These campaigns have seen active participation from the students of nearby schools and colleges, NCC and NSC cadets, Coast Guard personnel, NGOs/CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) and Public representatives and general public.

In addition, India currently has 13 Blue Flag–certified beaches and has been promoting the Blue Flag certification, an international eco-label awarded to beaches meeting stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility standards.

Parallely, efforts have been made to conserve wetlands under the *Ramsar Convention*, with India designating 96 Ramsar sites to protect biodiversity, support migratory birds, and ensure ecological balance. Ramsar site designation also promotes public awareness, environmental education, and community participation through information dissemination, capacity-building programmes, and stakeholder engagement aimed at ensuring the wise and sustainable use of wetlands.

Under Swachh Bharat Mission, the Swachhta Action Plan (SAP) is an inter-Ministerial initiative of Government of India, which started in the year 2017-18 by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS). The scope of SAP implementation by MoEFCC currently includes building of bio-toilets at National Parks and Sanctuaries to educate visitors regarding Cleanliness. The SAP has been mainstreamed under the Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity building and livelihood Programme of the Scheme 'Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development'.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) initiated the Swachh Survekshan Survey to evaluate and encourage Urban Sanitation improvements. It emphasizes on parameters such as visual cleanliness, waste segregation, collection and transportation, waste processing, landfill management, dumpsite remediation, waste water treatment, reuse, and faecal sludge management. Citizen participation remains a cornerstone of the initiative. Strategic use of digital, social, and traditional media, along with city-level campaigns raise awareness and encourage active involvement. These efforts aim to empower citizens to contribute to their city's performance in this national cleanliness competition, ensuring a cleaner and more sustainable urban future.

Under SBM-U 2.0, the provisions have been made to ensure awareness creation alongwith large scale citizen outreach to intensify 'Jan Andolan' and institutionalize swachh behavior and related set of actions, towards achieving the vision of Garbage Free cities. The efforts of States/UTs are further supplemented by providing policy directions, financial and technical support. Under IEC component of SBM -U 2.0 (2021-2026), Govt. of India has released Rs. 819.16 crore to States/UTs Governments. MoHUA has issued National Behaviour change communication Framework for Garbage Free Cities to provide knowledge and awareness to States and ULBs.

Ministry of Earth Sciences has run a 75-day citizen-led cleanliness campaign "Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar/Clean Coast Safe Sea" along India's entire coastline for improving ocean health through collective action. The three underlying goals of the campaign are to Consume Responsibly, Segregate waste at home and Dispose Responsibly. A mobile app "Eco Mitram"

has been launched to spread awareness about the campaign and also for the common people for voluntary registration for the beach cleaning activities.

Ministry of Jal Shakti launched 'Catch the Rain' campaign under Jal Shakti Abhiyan to build nationwide awareness and nurturing collective action on water conservation, strengthening the message that every drop counts. It encourages citizens across the country to contribute to the preservation of India's water future through practical measures and community-level engagement. Five focused interventions of the campaign include (i) water conservation and rainwater harvesting; (ii) identification, geo-tagging, and preparation of an inventory of all water bodies, along with scientific planning for water conservation; (iii) setting up Jal Shakti Kendras in all districts; (iv) concentrated afforestation; and (v) awareness generation.

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) is another initiative launched by Ministry of Jal Shakti, a Community-Driven Path to Water Sustainability in India and with a vision to make rain water harvesting a mass movement in the country. By promoting community ownership and responsibility, this initiative seeks to develop cost-effective, local solutions tailored to specific water challenges across different regions.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India issued '*Health Advisory on Air Pollution*' to all States/UTs every year to support them on preparedness for health problems at all levels of health care facilities across the country.

Recognising the critical role of youth and educational institutions in long-term environmental stewardship, the Ministry has placed strong emphasis on school-, college- and community-based programmes. Through the MY Bharat portal of Department of Youth Affairs, systematic youth engagement is promoted by involving schools, colleges, eco-clubs, and institutions of repute in nationwide awareness drives. These initiatives cover key themes such as waste management, plastic-free practices, tree plantation, control of waste burning, emission reduction, and water conservation.

MoEF&CC has supported youth engagement through a 10-day Experiential Learning Programme on 'MY Bharat' platform, offering hands-on learning and community engagement.
