

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2152
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026

Impact of tourism in Himalayan region

2152. SHRI VIVEK K. TANKHA:

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

- (a) whether the impact of tourism infrastructure on glacial retreat, spring drying and river source contamination in the Himalayan region has been assessed and if so, the findings thereof;
- (b) the number of environmental impact assessments conducted for tourism projects in glacially sensitive areas during the last five years and those rejected on environmental grounds; and
- (c) whether a moratorium exists on new construction within a defined distance of glacier boundaries or primary water sources?

ANSWER

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

(a): Studies by the G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (GBPNIHE), Almora, an autonomous organization of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change indicate that glacier response is spatially heterogeneous and controlled by the combined influence of climatic forcing together with topography, glacier geometry, debris cover and glacier–lake interactions, rather than any single environmental driver.

A report titled “Environmental Assessment of Tourism in the Indian Himalayan Region” was prepared by GBPNIHE, in pursuance of the directions of the Hon’ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Original Application No. 178/2022 dated 09.03.2022. The report analysed the impact of tourism on the environmental components in the various regions of the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), consolidated actions taken by States and UTs of the IHR, identified gaps and suggested future action for effective implementation of sustainable tourism. Hon’ble NGT has directed all States and UTs of IHR to ensure effective, proper and time-bound implementation of the recommendations in the Report to protect the environment from damage in the Himalayan States. A consolidated compliance report on the same has been submitted to the Tribunal on 10.04.2026.

(b) and (c): Tourism projects do not attract the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended, since tourism projects, per se, are not included under any of the categories or activities specified in the Schedule to the said Notification. Accordingly, tourism projects do not require prior Environmental Clearance under the EIA Notification, 2006, unless it involves any project or activity that is covered under its Schedule.

However, tourism-related establishments are regulated by the State Pollution Control Boards/ Pollution Control Committees for UTs under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 through grant of Consent to Establish (CTE), Consent to Operate (CTO), monitoring, inspections and enforcement mechanisms.
