

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1967
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.12.2018

Environmental Performance Index

1967. SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI:

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

- (a) whether India ranks 177 out of 180 countries in terms of environmental performance index;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the factors of environmental performance index such as air quality, water and sanitation, heavy metals, bio-diversity and habitat etc.; and
- (d) the details regarding the awareness programmes conducted by the Government in order to promote environmental sustainability?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) and (b) The Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy (YCELP), Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission released a report in January, 2018 entitled 'Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2018' which ranks 180 countries on 24 performance indicators across ten issue categories covering environmental health and ecosystem vitality. India has been ranked at the 177th position in this ranking.

An assessment indicates that the weightages given to the parameters at the three hierarchical levels (policy objectives, issue categories and indicators) are different in 2018 iterations. The changes made have not been explained or backed by scientific arguments. Different weightages and difference in methodology used implies that rankings arrived at are not comparable and has its limitations. Under the category, water resources, the only indicator shown is waste water treatment, which puts developed countries on the top since it is a measure of the capacity to address a problem. The report relied on data gathered by NASA satellite in place of actual monitored data. Report has not been peer reviewed. Countries can be ranked on the basis of different criteria pollutants with different results.

(c) The measures taken/being taken by the Government to check/control pollution and improve the air quality *inter alia*, include notification of Graded Response Action Plan for different levels of air pollution in Delhi and NCR; notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards; setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality; introduction of cleaner / alternate fuels like gaseous fuel (CNG, LPG etc.), ethanol blending,

launching of National Air Quality index; universalization of BS-IV from 2017; leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI fuel standards since 1st April, 2018 in NCT of Delhi and from by 1st April, 2020 in the rest of the country; notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules; banning of burning of biomass; notifications regarding 'Mandatory Implementation of Dust Mitigation Measures for Construction and Demolition Activities for projects requiring EC' and 'Mandatory Implementation of Dust Mitigation Measures for all Construction and Demolition Activities'; notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules; promotion of public transport network; streamlining the issuance of Pollution Under Control Certificate; issuance of directions under Section 18(1)(b) of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, etc. Eastern Peripheral Expressway & Western Peripheral Expressway have been operationalised to divert non-destined traffic from Delhi. The Central Government has also notified a Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) identifying timelines and implementing agency for actions identified for prevention, control and mitigation of air pollution in Delhi and NCR.

Also, the Government is implementing a nationwide water quality monitoring under National Water Quality Monitoring Programme (NWMP) at 3500 locations including surface and ground water in association with State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) & Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) to fulfill the mandate of Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. This Ministry has been supplementing the efforts of the State Governments for setting up facilities for collection, transportation and treatment of sewage and ensure that untreated sewage does not fall into the rivers.

(d) Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Delhi Government launched Clean Air for Delhi Campaign from 10th – 23rd Feb 2018. The campaign aimed at sensitizing ground-level functionaries and general public about their roles in making the air quality better in Delhi along with enforcement of various measures for improving air quality. Also, to check air polluting activities pre and post Diwali, a special campaign called "Clean Air Campaign" was organized during November 01, 2018 to November 10, 2018. For the purpose, 52 teams had been constituted that included members from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Central Pollution Control Board and Government of Delhi and NCR towns (Noida, Gurugram, Greater Noida, Faridabad and Ghaziabad) to take on-spot ground actions to control air polluting activities and sensitizing public to ensure their effective participation. Media briefings are organized regularly to disseminate the appropriate information to citizens. A dedicated media corner, twitter and Facebook account has been created for access to air quality related information and to provide a platform to the public for lodging complaints. Further, SAMEER app has been launched wherein air quality information is available to public along with provisions for registering complaints against air polluting activities.
