

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1299
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.06.2019

Problem of Pollution and Plastic Waste

1299. SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR:

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

- (a) whether the country stands at the fourth place among the most polluted countries of the world and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether levels of chemical contamination have increased in agricultural land in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the disposal of plastic waste like containers of beverages, thermocol plates, plastic pouches of tobacco products have become a major environmental problem and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to extend any special assistance to encourage NGOs working in the field of waste management, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures being taken by the Government to tackle the problem of plastic waste?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

(a) The World Health Organization (WHO) released the WHO Global Ambient Air Quality Database which consists of mainly annual means for PM10 and/or PM2.5, covering more than 4000 human settlements in 108 countries for the years from 2010 to 2016. WHO doesn't rank countries on the basis of air pollution data. The WHO Report does not report pollution level on all parameters.

(b) The study conducted by Indian Council of Agricultural Research under All India Coordinated Research Project on 'Long-Term Fertilizer Experiments' in different soil types (fixed locations) under dominant cropping systems has revealed that even in plots receiving NPK fertilizers, the deficiency of micro and secondary nutrients surfaced after few years affecting soil health and crop productivity. Highest decline in crop yield was observed in plot receiving only Urea. There is possibility of nitrate contamination in ground water above the permissible limit of 10 mg NO₃-N /L due to excessive use of nitrogenous fertilizers including urea particularly in light textured soils.

(c) to (e) In order to tackle the problems of plastic pollution in the country, the Government has notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. As per the rules, the generators of waste have been mandated to take steps to minimize generation of plastic

waste, not to litter the plastic waste, ensure segregated storage of waste at source and handover segregated waste to the local bodies or agencies authorised by the local bodies. The Rules also mandate the responsibilities of local bodies, gram panchayats, waste generators, retailers etc to manage such waste. The producers, importers and brand owners have to work out modalities for waste collection system based on the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility. The rules prohibit the use of carry bag made of virgin or recycled plastic less than fifty microns in thickness. Sachets made of plastic material for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala is also prohibited.

The Rules mandate the local body for setting up, operationalisation and co-ordination of the waste management system inter-alia by engaging civil societies or groups working with waste pickers. The Rules also prescribe that the State Governments' policies and strategies should also acknowledge the important role played by the informal sector of waste pickers. The Ministry is also implementing a scheme "Creation of Management of Structure for Hazardous Substances" for promoting safe management and use of hazardous chemicals and waste. Assistance have been provided under the scheme to Government and non-governmental institutions.
