

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2080
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2002
HAZE POLLUTION ACROSS SOUTH ASIA
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a vast blanket of haze pollution stretching across South Asia is cutting down sunlight over India by 10 per cent;
- (b) if so, whether this haze is having adverse effect on crops in the area;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of action plan prepared by the Government to meet the situation/consequences of this phenomenon?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (d) An international collaborative study `Indian Ocean Research Experiment- (INDOEX)` has indicated haze over the Indian Ocean. The haze is not a permanent feature of the atmosphere over the Asian region and the surrounding seas. It occurs only during January -March, the season in which INDOEX observations were made in 1999. Conclusive data are not available to co-relate the impact of haze on the monsoon and/or agriculture of our country. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has, this year, brought out a report entitled `The Asian Brown Cloud: Climate and other Environmental Impacts` based on INDOEX. The press release of the UNEP launching the said report paints an alarming picture of the impacts of this haze on both regional and global scales. However, most of the concerns expressed therein are not well substantiated by reliable modeling studies or experimental observations. The existing legal and policy framework, supported by several initiatives to protect and improve the environment, addresses the concerns of air pollution in the country.