

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1671

ANSWERED ON:19.07.2004

MERCURY POISONING THREAT TO CAPITAL

Mehta Shri Bhubneshwar Prasad;Pathak Shri Brajesh;Rawat Shri Ashok Kumar;Verma Shri Rajesh

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that capital is facing mercury poisoning threat as per the news-item reported in "The Hindu" dated July 2, 2004.
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the factual position in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to ban import of mercury and medical waste incineration;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the remedial steps taken in the matter so far?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

- (a) & (b) The news item "Capital faces mercury poisoning threat", has dealt with the issues pertaining to mercury use and disposal in health care sector. The said news is based on a report by Toxics Link, a non-government organization working in the area. As per the report, mercury present in various instruments regularly used in hospitals and clinics, such as thermometers, blood pressure monitors, barometers etc. and in dental amalgams, contributes to mercury pollution because of improper disposal.
- (c),(d) & (e) As per the Hazardous Waste (Management & Handling) Rules 1989 as amended in 2003, import of mercury bearing waste is prohibited. However, import of pure (metal) mercury is allowed for use in industries like chloralkali, pesticides & drugs, electrical and electronic appliances, dental amalgam, clinical thermometer, barometers etc. Under the Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998, incineration of solid wastes, including the wastes contaminated with mercury, generated from disposable items is not permitted.