

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO: 333
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.03.2025

Diversion of Forest Land for Developmental Activities

333*. SHRI RAJA RAM SINGH:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023 has not been scientifically prepared;
- (b) whether the said Report suggest exclusion of data relating to the diversification of large tracts of forests for developmental activities between 1996 and 2023, if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has maintained the record of forest land used for developmental activities between 1996 and 2023;
- (d) if so, the details of forest land diverted for developmental activities since last ten years, State/district-wise; and
- (e) whether the Government has conducted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of forest land diversion for developmental projects, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV):

- (a) to (e) The statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (e) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No.333 due for reply on 24.03.2025 regarding 'Diversion of Forest Land for Developmental Activities' by Shri Raja Ram Singh:

- (a) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, is an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, carries out wall-to-wall Forest Cover Mapping (FCM) of the country in every two years cycle and publishes the findings in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) since 1987. FSI has published 18 ISFRs so far, the latest being ISFR 2023.

The first report of 1987 used LANDSAT-MSS satellite data with a spatial resolution of 80 m at 1:1 million scale whereas the latest report i.e. ISFR 2023 is based on Resourcesat-2 LISS III satellite image, with a spatial resolution of 23.5 m and scale of 1:50,000. FSI has always kept pace with technological advancements and improved its assessment over the years. Further, the National Forest Inventory programme of FSI is based on a robust statistical design under which every year field inventory data is collected from about 20,000 sample plots spread over the entire country and this field data is additionally used for supporting FCM.

To ensure scientific accuracy, transparency, reliable ground truthing and correct assessment of forest cover, FSI increased its ground truthing points from 3,414 in ISFR 2021 to 8,494 in ISFR 2023. As mentioned in ISFR 2023, FCM has an accuracy of 96.32%.

Thus, the ISFR serves as a scientific document that offers updated assessments of the nation's forest resources and provides a comprehensive overview of India's forest and tree resources, employing a robust and established methodology.

- (b) Forest cover mapping for preparation of ISFR encompasses all types of lands without regard to their ownership, land use, or legal status. The methodology used by the Forest Survey of India for assessment of forest cover are based on internationally accepted criteria as per Decision 19/Conference of Parties (CoP) 9-Kyoto Protocol. Accordingly, assessment of forest cover includes all lands, more than 1 hectare in area, with a canopy of more than 10% irrespective of ownership and legal status.

- (c)&(d) The Central Government has launched an online portal namely PARIVESH for the purpose of submitting and processing proposals for non-forest use of forestland. The detail for each proposal is available on the portal which is in public domain.

During the period from 2014-15 to 2023-24, the forest area measuring 1,73,396.87 hectares has been approved for various non-forestry purposes including infrastructure projects under the provisions of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. The State/UT wise details of diverted forest land is enclosed at **Annexure.**

- (e) Environmental Clearances (ECs) are granted under the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. EIA Notification, 2006 includes four stages of evaluation

before grant of Environmental Clearance namely screening, scoping, public consultation and appraisal. The projects/activities are assigned Terms of References based on scoping by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to prepare Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIA)/ Environment Management Plan (EMP). These reports are then appraised by the EAC as mandated in EIA, Notification, 2006. The EIA/ EMP report prepared by the Project Proponents through accredited consultants are based on scientific study by taking into consideration of environmental sensitivity such as Ecological area, Forest, Wildlife sanctuary/ National Parks, etc. Based on the evaluation of EIA/EMP report and after thorough discussion/deliberation, EAC recommends the mining projects with certain specific and standard conditions to safeguard environment including the flora and fauna.

Annexure referred to in reply to part (c)&(d) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No.333 due for reply on 24.03.2025 regarding 'Diversion of Forest Land for Developmental Activities' by Shri Raja Ram Singh

Statement Showing State wise area approved (in Hectare) for use of land non-forestry purpose under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980		
Category : All Categories		During the Period : 01.04.2014 to 31.03.2024
S. No.	STATE / UT	Area Approved (in Ha.)
1	Andaman and Nicobar	123.20
2	Andhra Pradesh	5455.99
3	Arunachal Pradesh	9495.98
4	Assam	1720.17
5	Bihar	2780.64
6	Chandigarh	40.72
7	Chhattisgarh	7925.79
8	Dadar & Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	64.50
9	Delhi	116.92
10	Goa	324.13
11	Gujarat	9985.15
12	Haryana	3526.41
13	Himachal Pradesh	3554.74
14	Jammu and Kashmir	577.30
15	Jharkhand	8353.42
16	Karnataka	2991.62
17	Kerala	172.89
18	Madhya Pradesh	38552.61
19	Maharashtra	8498.35
20	Manipur	3111.40
21	Meghalaya	176.92
22	Mizoram	627.64
23	Odisha	24458.89
24	Punjab	3717.23
25	Rajasthan	8796.22
26	Sikkim	254.43
27	Tamil Nadu	703.79
28	Telangana	11422.47
29	Tripura	1298.57
30	Uttar Pradesh	7059.23
31	Uttarakhand	6471.89
32	West Bengal	1037.66
Grand Total		173396.87

