

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 137
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.07.2022

Ecological Sensitive Areas

137. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:

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

- (a) whether the Government is intending to release the final notification identifying and demarcating Ecologically Sensitive Areas as per the recommendations contained in Dr. Kasturirangan Panel Report and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the final status of Ecologically Sensitive Areas with respect to States of Kerala and Karnataka has been finalized;
- (c) whether the Government has been formally communicated by Kerala and Karnataka State Governments regarding the concerns pertaining to the recommendations contained in the Dr. Kasturirangan Report adversely affecting the livelihood of people in the region;
- (d) if so, whether the Government call for a revised estimation of recommendation of the Report in order to allay the concerns raised by various States including Kerala where a significant population resides in and around the proposed buffer zones; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (e) With a view to issue final notification to declare Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) of the Western Ghats, on the basis of Kasturirangan Panel Report, this Ministry had issued draft Notification *vide* S.O. 733 (E) on 10.02.2014, with an eco-sensitive area of 56,825 km² spreading over six States, namely, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

With persisting demand from the States to reduce/alter the ESA area from the recommendation of the Kasturirangan Panel (High Level Working Group) Report, the final Notification for Western Ghat Eco-sensitive Area could not be issued so far. While consistent efforts to bring the 6 States on board has been underway, the Ministry has subsequently, republished the draft Notification four times, *vide* S.O. 2435 (E) dated 04.09.2015; S.O. 667 (E) dated 27.02.2017; S.O. 5135 (E) dated 03.10.2018 and S.O. 3072 (E) dated 06.07.2022 with

same ESA area. Presently, the recent draft notification dated 06.07.2022 is under Stakeholder consultation for mandatory 60 days.

In order to follow a coherent and consistent approach in Notifying the ESA of Western Ghats, this Ministry has been interacting with all the States of the Western Ghats region at various levels. Efforts are being made to finalise the notification taking into consideration the environmental concerns of the region and the suggestions and/or recommendations of the concerned State Governments including Governments of Kerala and Karnataka in a holistic manner, keeping in view the conservation aspects of the disaster prone pristine ecosystem, and the rights, privileges, needs and developmental aspirations of the region.

To address the issues raised by the state Governments, MoEFCC has already constituted a Committee to examine the concerns/suggestions of the six state Governments.
