

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5147
ANSWERED ON:05.09.2011
CHECK ON DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS
Jawale Shri Haribhau Madhav

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

- (a) the reasons of vanishing of forests in the Country and the persons responsible therefor;
- (b) the number of such cases brought to the notice of the Government so far during the last three years and the current year and the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the matter of deforestation of Satpura forests by the anti-social elements in the Jalgaon of Maharashtra has been brought to the notice of the Government; and
- (d) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) & (b) No sir, there is no large scale vanishing of forests reported upon. In fact, as per the latest State Forest Report (SFR), 2009, the forest cover has increased by 728 sq. km in the Country.

(c) As per the report of Maharashtra Forests Department, in Jalgaon District of Maharashtra bordering Madhya Pradesh, report from front field Staff and other sources have been received that some anti social elements are instigating local people as well people from bordering State to encroach upon forest land after fresh clearing and claiming it as old encroachment and get it sanctioned through coercive action at Gram Sabha level and terrorizing Forest and other officials.

(d) Forest personnel are protecting the forest day and night erecting special camps. Help from local Revenue and police administration is also taken. Arms and ammunition provided for protection of forests is being used to deter the anti social elements. A platoon of State Reserved police has been also deployed for this purpose. Honourable Chief Minister of Maharashtra also organized a special meeting on 03.08.2011 of Forests, Police, revenue officials and people concerned to protect forests and announced measures like taking the services of ex-Army men for protection, providing self driven fourwheel vehicle to range Forest Officers, giving magistrate power to Assistant Conservator of Forests, giving order to SRP in case of self defence from anti social elements, and providing additional grant to such area to boost the protection of forests effectively.