

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5266

ANSWERED ON:05.09.2011

DIVERSION OF FOREST LAND

Bapurao Shri Khatgaonkar Patil Bhaskarrao;Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Paranjpe Shri Anand Prakash

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

- (a) whether the Government has decided to liberalise the diversion of forest land for setting up of public infrastructure in the naxal affected areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

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

(a)to(d)To facilitate expeditious creation of public utility infrastructure in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) on 3rd November 2010 accorded general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for a period of five years i.e. up to 31.12.2015, for diversion of forest land upto 2.00 ha., in each case, for execution of public utility infrastructure of 13 specified categories such as schools, dispensaries/hospitals, electrical and telecommunication lines, drinking water, water/rain water harvesting structures, minor irrigation canal, non-conventional sources of energy, skill upgradation/vocational training centers, power sub-stations, rural roads, communication posts, police establishments like police stations/outposts/border outposts/watch towers in sensitive areas (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs) and underground laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines by Government Departments in such LWE affected districts. MoEF on 13th May 2011 further relaxed the said general approval to the diversion of not more than 5.00 ha. of forest land in each case, for execution of public utility infrastructure of the afore-mentioned 13 categories by Government Departments in 60 LWE affected districts selected by the Planning Commission and Ministry of Home Affairs.

The MoEF on 16th June 2011 further clarified that compensatory afforestation in lieu of the forest land diverted in accordance with the above said general approval dated 13th May 2011 shall not be insisted upon.