

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2853
ANSWERED ON:12.12.2011
DIVERSION OF FOREST LAND
Deshmukh Shri K. D.

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

- (a) whether the Government has granted approval for use of forest land for creation of public utility infrastructure in the country;
- (b) if so, the norms and conditions laid down by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government has notified areas where forest land would be used for other purposes;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) The Central Government accorded general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 1.00 hectare of forest land, in each case, required for execution of public utility projects of 11 specified categories such as schools, dispensary/hospital, electric and telecommunication lines, drinking water, water/rainwater harvesting structures, minor irrigation canal, non-conventional sources of energy, skill up-gradation/vocational training centre, power sub-stations, communication posts and police establishments like police stations/ outposts / border outposts/ watch towers in sensitive areas (identified by Ministry of Home affairs). The said general approval is applicable in all State/ Union Territories in the country except Jammu & Kashmir. The norms and conditions laid down by the Central Government in this regard is given in annexure-I.

To facilitate expeditious creation of public utility infrastructure in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, the Ministry of Environment and Forests on 3rd November 2010 further relaxed the said general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land upto 2.00 ha., in each case, for execution of public utility infrastructure of 13 specified categories including the rural roads and underground laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines & drinking water supplies by the Government Departments in LWE affected districts. The norms and conditions laid down by the Central Government in this regard is given in annexure-II.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests 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 for implementation of Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The norms and conditions laid down by the Central Government in this regard is given in annexure-III.