

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2163

ANSWERED ON:11.03.2013

CLEARANCE NORMS FOR PROJECTS

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

- (a) whether the Government has proposed to exempt green norms for key infrastructure and public utility projects in Naxal-hit areas in the country;
- (b) if so, the details, thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has issued guidelines to streamline forest clearance processes for mining leases criteria for thermal and steel projects;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the extent to which such guidelines are likely to be beneficial for clearance of forest land in naxalite areas?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests accorded general approval under section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for creation of critical public utility infrastructure of 14 categories, by Government departments involving not more than 5.00 hectares of forest land, in each case, in 82 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts identified by the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Home Affairs for implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The category of public utility infrastructure projects to which the said general approval extends are- 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 center; power sub-stations; all category of public roads; communication posts; police establishments like police stations/ border outposts/ watch towers in sensitive areas (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs); underground laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines; and quarrying of materials used in construction of public roads. For the remaining LWE affected districts, which have not been selected for implementation of the IAP, the said general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is limited to 2.00 hectares of forest land, in each case, for creation of public utility infrastructure of 13 categories, excluding the quarrying of materials used in construction of public roads. In case of roads, instead of all categories of public roads, as is applicable in case of IAP districts, the general approval in the LWE affected districts which have not been identified for implementation of the IAP is applicable for the rural roads only.

(c) & (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) vide letter dated 01.02.2013 informed the all State/ Union Territory Governments as below:

(i) Henceforth, in case of mining leases having forest land in part or in full, approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FC Act) for diversion of entire forest land located within the mining lease shall be obtained before execution/renewal of the lease under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. Applications seeking prior approval under FC Act for diversion of the entire forest land (and not a portion thereof) located within the area proposed to be assigned on lease shall only be accepted by the Nodal Officers in the concerned State/ Union Territory Governments.

(ii) All State/Union Territory Governments shall within a period of three months submit to the MoEF details of all such mines where approval under the FC Act for diversion of only a part of forest land has either been obtained or is presently under examination in the State/Central Government. The State Governments in all such cases shall request the concerned user agencies to submit application to obtain approval under the FC Act for diversion of the remaining forest land located within the mining lease. Mining in such leases after two years will be allowed only if the user agency either obtains approval under the FC Act for the entire forest land located within the mining lease or surrenders such forest land for which approval under FC Act has not been obtained and execute a revised mining lease for the reduced lease area.

(e) General approval under section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 accorded by the MoEF, as per details given in reply to parts (a) to (b) above; will facilitate accelerated creation of public utility infrastructure in the LWE affected districts.