

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2270

ANSWERED ON:11.03.2013

DECLINE IN FOREST AREA

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any study to estimate the decline in forest area as a result of urbanisation and exploitation of coal mines in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of plants, trees proposed to be planted to maintain environmental balance in the country; and
- (d) the measures taken by the Government to save the forests from destruction in the country?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Forest Survey of India has been carrying out assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in the "India State of Forest Report". The Report brings out loss/gain in forest cover as compared to previous assessment period. However, no specific study regarding decline in forest area as a result of urbanisation and exploitation of coal mines in the country has been conducted.

The Ministry has granted approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 70,207 ha of forest land for mining of coal. The diverted forest land is cleared of vegetation in accordance with the requirement of land for mining at different stages of life of the mine.

(c) & (d) The State Governments are provided funding for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme called National Afforestation Programme. The Central Government has approved a total of 19,11,003 ha area under the Programme from the year 2000 to 2013. In addition to this, an amount of Rs.81.66 crores was released to the State Governments during the year 2009-10 for restoration and regeneration of forest cover. Tree planting is also undertaken by the State Governments under various other schemes under Central and State Sectors like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and Integrated Watershed Management Programme, etc.