

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:100

ANSWERED ON:05.08.2013

FOREST CLEARANCE FOR ROAD PROJECTS .

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Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Cabinet Committee on Investment (CCI) has relaxed forest clearance norms for road projects;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of projects for which green norms have been relaxed/exemption of environmental clearance given and the extent to which this will help in getting clearances to road projects;
- (c) whether CCI has also raised the ceiling of 4,000 kms of four-laning under National Highways Development Projects (NHDP)-IV to 8,000 kms; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI SARVEY SATHYANARAYANA)

(a) and (b) Cabinet Committee on Investment (CCI) had directed the Ministry of Environment & Forests to simplify the procedures for obtaining Environment and Forests Clearances for linear road projects and to remove identified impediments like stringent stipulation introduced by them pursuant to the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of TN Godhavarman versus Union of India and others [LaFarge case] by linking the Environment Clearances with Forest Clearance and imposition of provision of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 etc. As a result of the efforts made by the Government, Environment Clearances has now once again been delinked with the Forest Clearance and the Ministry of Environment & Forests has also directed all the State Governments not to invoke provision of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 in case of linear road projects. The Ministry of Environment & Forest has also decided that work on non-forest land may only be executed on either side of forest land subject to execution of the project along an alternate alignment without involving diversion of forest land. In case of the projects involving widening/ upgradation of existing roads, it will only be allowed to be executed on the entire stretch located in non- forest land, subject to width of the portion of road falling in the forest land will be maintained at its existing level, in case the necessary approval is declined. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has also agreed that the resolution of Gram Sabhas may not be required in cases of linear projects where diversion of forest land is involved. Ministry of Environment & Forests has also agreed to exempt the widening projects on the available Right of Way from the purview of the requirement of environment clearance upto 40 meters. Accordingly, Ministry of Environment & Forests has granted Environment Clearance for 24 projects and 6 projects have also been recommended by Environmental Appraisal Committee (EAC).

(c) and (d) CCI also approved enhancement of the ceiling of 4000 km of four laning in National Highways Development Programme (NHDP) Phase-IV to 8000 km, to be undertaken on Built-Operate-Transfer (BOT) (Toll) mode only, based on the traffic justification as per Indian Road Congress code and guidelines subject to the geographical balance be ensured in respect of projects to be covered under the NHDP.