

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1115
ANSWERED ON:12.08.2013
TRANSFER OF FOREST LAND FOR PROJECTS
Gandhi Shri Dilip Kumar Mansukhlal

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

- (a) whether various developmental projects have been affected due to delay in transfer of forest land for the required projects in Maharashtra;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any step in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Various developmental projects of Maharashtra are being granted approval expeditiously under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for use of forest land for non-forestry purposes. However, certain time period is required in processing and approval of the proposal and submission of compliance before effecting the transfer of forest land. This is unavoidable as transfer of forest land could be effected only after the final approval under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

As per provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2003 every State Government or other authority is required to send the proposal for diversion of forest land for non-forestry purpose to the Central Government in appropriate form within 90 days of the receipt of such proposal from the User Agency in case of new proposals and within 60 days in case of proposals seeking renewal of leases. Then the proposal is considered by the Forest Advisory Committee / State Advisory Group, if the proposal is complete in all respects. The recommendation of the Forest Advisory Committee / State Advisory Group is considered by the competent authority within sixty days of the receipt of the recommendations. After the approval of competent authority, the Stage-I approval is granted to the proposal stipulating conditions like Net Present Value, Compensatory Afforestation, Penal Compensatory Afforestation, Soil Conservation Measures and other mitigative measures to mitigate the impact of diversion of forest land. Only after receipt of the compliance to the above-said conditions from the State Government, Stage-II approval is granted for effecting the transfer of forest land required for the proposal / project.

(c) & (d) Various steps have been taken by the Central Government to expedite the approval of developmental projects. These are as follows:-

1. General approval has been granted upto 5.00 ha to State Government in case of Left Wing Extremists affected districts. The activities covered under the general approval are Schools, Dispensaries/Hospitals, Electrical and Telecommunication Lines, Drinking Water, Water/Rain Water Harvesting Structures, Minor Irrigation Canal, Non Conventional Sources of Energy, Skill up Gradation/Vocational Training Center, Power Sub-stations, Rural roads, Communication Posts, Police establishments like Police Stations / Outposts / Border Outposts / Watch Towers in sensitive area (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs) and underground laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines.

2. General approval has been granted to the State Government for certain activities to be carried out by the Government Departments involving not more than one ha. These activities are Schools, Dispensaries/Hospitals, Electrical and Telecommunication Lines, Drinking Water, Water /Rain Water Harvesting Structures, Minor Irrigation Canal, Non Conventional Sources of Energy, Skill up Gradation/Vocational Training Center, Power Sub-stations, Rural roads, Communication Posts, Police establishments like Police Stations / Outposts / Border Outposts / Watch Towers in sensitive area (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs) and underground laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines.

3. No compensatory afforestation in lieu of the forest land diverted in accordance with the above-mentioned general approvals is insisted upon.