

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:3
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2014
MINING IN FOREST AREAS
Dhruvanarayana Shri Rangaswamy

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the mining activities in the forest areas have severely affected the biodiversity of plant and animal life in various parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether environment clearance has been given by the Government as per the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 before permitting mining activities in such forest areas including Karnataka;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to regulate mining activities in the forest areas of the country in order to ensure minimum damage/disturbance to the flora and fauna of the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF MINES, STEEL AND LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question Number 3 for reply on 07.07.2014 regarding Mining in Forest Areas asked by Shri R. Dhruva Narayana

(a) and (b): Mining activities in forest areas per se affect bio-diversity of plant and animal life. While according prior approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for mining projects in forest areas, the Central Government assesses the impact of such projects on plants and animals in each case and stipulates appropriate measures to mitigate/ minimise these impacts. These measures include afforestation to compensate the loss of flora, implementation of wildlife management plan to combat the adverse impacts on the fauna, afforestation of safety zone, phased reclamation of mined out areas etc. to be undertaken at the project cost.

(c): Environment Clearance to various activities, including mining projects, is given as per the provisions under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended from time-to-time prior to permitting mining activities.

(d): The details of number of State/Union Territory-wise Environment Clearance issued by the Ministry of Environment & Forests for Mining Projects during 2013-14 are as follows:

S. No.	State	Number of Environment Clearance issued during 2013-14
1	Andhra Pradesh	5
2	Chhattisgarh	1
3	Himachal Pradesh	3
4	Jharkhand	10
5	Madhya Pradesh	5
6	Maharashtra	3
7	Meghalaya	1
8	Odisha	7
9	Punjab	26
10	Rajasthan	4
11	Tamil Nadu	3
12	Uttar Pradesh	6
	Total	74

(e): The Government has taken the following steps to regulate mining activities in the forest areas of the country:

i) Use of forest land for non-forest purposes, including mining purposes requires prior approval of Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. To facilitate scrutiny of the proposals seeking prior permission of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in an effective, efficient and transparent manner, an elaborate institutional mechanism, both at the Central as well as State/ Union Territory Governments level has been set up.

ii) The Central Government having due regard to all or any of the following matters accords approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for mining or reject the same:

(a) Whether the forest land proposed to be used for non-forest purpose forms part of a nature reserve, national park, wildlife sanctuary, biosphere reserve or forms part of the habitat of any endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna or of an area lying in severely eroded catchment;

(b) Whether the State Government or the other authority has certified that it has considered all other alternatives and that no other alternatives in the circumstances are feasible and that the required area is the minimum needed for the purpose; and

(c) Whether the State Government or the other authority undertakes to provide at its cost for the acquisition of land of an equivalent area and afforestation thereof.

iii) Central Government while according approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 stipulates appropriate mitigative measures, such as creation and maintenance of compensatory afforestation, realization of Net Present Value of the diverted forest land, implementation of wildlife conservation plan (wherever required), phased reclamation of mined out area, demarcation of boundary of mining lease etc. A copy of the approval accorded by the Central Government is uploaded on website of the Ministry to place it in public domain.

iv) In case a proposal involves diversion of forest land located within a protected area notified in accordance with the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, approval of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) and Hon'ble Supreme Court is required to be obtained by the concerned user agency before grant of approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Similarly, in case the forest land proposed for diversion is located within the duly notified eco-sensitive zone around boundary of a protected area, EIA of the project needs to be placed before the Standing Committee of NBWL. In case eco-sensitive zone has not been notified, 10 km distance from the boundary of such protected area shall be treated as eco-sensitive zone. The Standing Committee of NBWL stipulates additional safeguard to minimize impacts of such projects on wildlife.

v) Government takes various steps from time to time to regulate mining activities in forest areas to ensure minimum damage to flora and fauna of the country.