

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2303

ANSWERED ON:04.08.2015

Pending Projects

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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:**

(a) the number of projects including construction of roads, hydro electric projects etc. pending for forest/environmental clearance along with the reasons for pendency, project, sector and State-wise;

(b) the number of such projects cleared during each of the last three years and the current year, project and State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for expeditious clearance of all the pending projects?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) The number of the projects under consideration for Environmental clearance in the Ministry are 475 and for approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are 240. The detail of the same sectorwise is at Annexure-1, 2a and 2b. The proposals are processed for approval as per the provisions under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. These projects are accorded approval within the stipulated timeframe and after receiving requisite documents from the project proponents and State Government.

(b) The detail is at Annexure 3 and 4.

(c) The initiatives taken for streamlining the process is at Annexure 5.

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**Annexure 5**

Steps for streamlining the process of Approvals.

1. The initiatives taken by the Ministry for expeditious Environmental clearance inter alia include, amendments in EIA Notification, 2006 giving more powers to SEIAA, exempting the construction of industrial shed, school, college, hostels for education institution from requirement of EC, exemption to all highway projects in border States from scoping requirement and exempting all linear projects in border States from the requirement of public hearing subject to suitable conditions prescribed by the Ministry, non requirement of no objection for transfer of environment clearance of cancelled coal block to legal person to whom such block is subsequently allocated and also without referring to EAC SEAC, amendment in CRZ Notification relaxing the criterion for construction of memorial/monuments within the CRZ area only in exceptional cases with adequate environmental safeguards, standardising the Terms of Reference for preparation of EIA Report, increasing the validity of Environment Clearance etc. The Ministry has started State online portal for application of EC. Additionally, various office Memoranda issued to fast-track decision making in the process of environment clearance process.

2. Launched a web portal for online submission and monitoring the Forest clearance proposals;

3. Launched the first version of the Geographical Information System (GIS) based Decision support system to facilitate informed, expeditious, transparent and predictable decisions on the forest clearance applications.

4. Accorded General approval under the FC Act for diversion of forest land required for construction and widening of two lane roads by the BRO/ other agencies whom the Ministry of Defence entrusts the job, in the area falling within 100 kilometers aerial distance from the LAC and widening of link roads, between Border roads in the area within 100 kilometer aerial distance from the LAC and National Highways/State Highways/Other State Roads.

5. Extended the general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of upto 5 hectares of forest land for construction of all categories of public roads by Government Departments in 117 LWE affected districts to projects involving diversion of forest land, not located within the protected areas, for construction of two lane public roads by Government Departments in these 117 LWE affected districts irrespective of the area of forest land involved in such projects

6. With a view to ensure, speedy laying of transmission line projects, the general dispensation available for undertaking compensatory afforestation over degraded forest lands so far available to the transmission lines upto 220 KV has been extended to all kinds of transmission lines.

7. Notified the Forest (Conservation) Second Amendment Rules, 2014 to provide for inter-alia constitution of Regional Empowered Committee (REC) at each of its Regional Offices and delegation of power to these RECs to finally dispose of proposals, other than those related to mining, regularization of encroachment and hydel projects, involving diversion of upto 40 hectares of forest land, and

all proposals related to linear projects such as roads, railway lines etc. irrespective of the area of forest land involved have been notified on 10th October 2014. These Rules will come into force on 1st November 2014.

8. The Forest (Conservation) Second Amendment Rules, 2014 also stipulated a simplified procedure to obtain approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for renewal of mining lease in case renewal of mining lease falls due within 10 years from the date of grant of stage-I approval. In such cases, instead of submitting a de-novo proposal, then State Government may seek approval in letter format by giving status of compliance to condition stipulated in the earlier approval along with report on compliance to guidelines which came into force after the grant of earlier approval.

9. Amended the guidelines to provide that in case of linear projects in-principle approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 may be deemed as the working permission for tree cutting and commencement of work, if the required funds for compensatory afforestation, NPV, wildlife conservation plan, plantation of dwarf species of medicinal plants, and all such other compensatory levies specified in the in-principle approval are realised from the user agency, and non-forest land for creation of compensatory afforestation, wherever required to be provided by the project proponent, has been transferred and mutated in favour of the State Forest Department.

10. Filed an application before the Supreme Court for regularization of the institution of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).

11. Issued guidelines to the effect that in case of proposals seeking forest clearance for prospecting in forest land forest land which experience permanent change in the land use due to prospecting activity shall only be considered for the purpose of the compensatory afforestation and the NPV. Such proposals have been exempted from the requirement of FRA certificate. It has also been clarified that site inspection from Regional Office in case of these proposals is insisted only if the actual area of the forest land proposed to be utilized for construction of new roads/paths and for drilling of bore holes/sample collection pits etc. is more than 100 hectares.

12. Advised the States/ UTs to not to impose additional conditions over and above the conditions stipulated in the Forest Clearance accorded by the MoEFCC.

13. Rationalized the guidelines for diversion of forest land for entry/ exit of patrol pumps/ fuel stations to make in compatible with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, keeping in view the passenger safety.

14. Advised States/ UTs identify in advance compact/ sizeable blocks of non-forest land or revenue forest land free from encumbrance/ encroachment which are suitable for creation of compensatory afforestation and also from management point of view. It has also been stated in the said letter that land available in the land bank may be made available to user agencies seeking prior approval of Central Government under the afore-mentioned Act on realization of appropriate fee/ land cost.

15. Advised the States/ UTs that in cases where land proposed to be utilised for CA is proposed to be acquired by the project proponent himself through outright purchase from the individual owners, at the time of submission of application for grant of Stage-I approval under the FC Act, uploading/submission of a copy of letter from each of present owners of the land identified for CA stating their willingness to sell the land to the user agency for its transfer and mutation in favour of the State Forest Department for creation of CA will only be sufficient. States/ UTs have also been advised that in cases where the non-forest land or revenue forest land proposed to be utilised for CA is to be provided by the State Government, uploading/submission of a copy of the letter from concerned competent authority in the State Government stating that land identified for CA will be transferred and mutated in favour of the State Forest Department for creation of CA immediately on receipt of Stage-I approval under the FC Act for diversion of forest land required by the project proponent will be sufficient.

16. Advised the States/ UTs that investigations and surveys carried out in connection with development projects such as transmission lines, hydro-electric projects, seismic surveys, exploration for oil drilling, mining etc. in wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and sample plots demarcated by the Forest Department also will not attract the provisions of the FC Act as long as these surveys do not involve any clearing of forest or cutting of trees, and operations are restricted to clearing of bushes and lopping of tree branches for purpose of sighting.

17. Advised the States/ UTs that to expedite processing of proposals seeking prior approval of Central Government under the FC Act for diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose, once the boundary of forest land proposed to be diverted is firmed up/finalized, the user agency, if it so desires, may provide, in advance, a copy of map of the forests land proposed to be diverted to the concerned Divisional Forest Officer and request him to undertake enumeration of tree available on the forest land proposed to be diverted. The concerned Divisional Forest Officer, in such cases, without waiting for receipt of the proposal, may after realizing appropriate fee, as the State Government may stipulate in this regard, authorize concerned officers having jurisdiction over the forest land proposed to be diverted to enumerate, in advice, trees available on the forest land proposed to be diverted.

18. Advised the States/ UTs that to minimize delay in actual utilization of the forest land for the purpose for which it is diverted, the State Governments or the Union Territory Administration may initiate procedural formalities such as, enumeration/ valuation; preparation of estimates/schemes for extraction; inviting and finalization of bids, wherever required, for selection of agencies to be engaged for extraction of timber and other forest produce from the forest land to be diverted for non-forest purpose; and raising of demand note for realization of extraction cost from the user agency etc immediately on receipt of stage-I approval under the FC Act for diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose. It has however, been clarified in the said letter that actual handing over of the forest land to the user agency and felling/ extraction of timber and other forest produce therefrom, except in case of linear project for which a separate guidelines has been issued by this Ministry vide letter of even number dated 8th August, 2014, shall be undertaken only after final approval under the afore-mentioned Act for diversion of such forest land is accorded by the Central Government.

19. Advised the States/ UTs that wherever re-diversion or change in approved land use of the forest land for the same project becomes essential, State Government should seek the prior permission of the Central Government giving details of the earlier approval and the proposed activity details in letter form rather than initiating a fresh proposal, as is provided in para 2.1 (iv) of guidelines issued under the FC Act. It has however, also been clarified in the said letter that in case re-diversion of whole or a part of the forest land diverted for non-forest purpose for execution of a project, becomes essential for execution of a project other than the project for which such forest land was originally diverted, State Government should seek prior permission of the Central Government under the FC Act by initiating a fresh proposal.

20. Advised the States/ UTs that temporary work in forest land which does not involve breaking up or clearing of forest land or portion thereof, or assigning by way of lease or otherwise to the firm, person or organization using such forest land temporarily; and does not create any right on such forest land of such firm, person or organization, will not require prior approval of Central Government under the FC Act. It has also been stated in the said letter that State Governments and Union Territory Administrations may authorize Officer

of an appropriate rank, preferably the Divisional Forests Officer having jurisdiction over the forest land proposed to be utilised temporarily, to accord permission for such temporary activities.

21. Issued guidelines to the effect that in further modification of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change's letter dated 3rd August 2009, proposals seeking prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of plantations which were notified as "forest" on a day less than 75 years prior to the 13th day of December 2005 and are located in villages having no recorded population of Scheduled Tribes, as per the Census-2001 and the Census-2011, are exempted from the requirement of initiation and completion of process for recognition and vesting of forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers as stipulated in clause (a), read with clause (d) and clause (g) in second para of the Ministry's said letter dated 3rd August 2009. In such cases a certificate from the concerned District Collector to the effect that the forest land proposed to be diverted is plantation which was notified as "forest" less than 75 years prior to the 13th day of December 2005 and is located in villages having no recorded population of Scheduled Tribes, as per the Census-2001 and the Census-2011, will only be sufficient to meet requirement of clause (a), read with clause (d) and clause (g) in second para of Ministry's letter of even number dated 3rd August 2009.

22. Extended the general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for underground laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines and drinking water supply pipelines along the roads within existing right of way not falling in National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, without felling of trees, where the maximum size of the trench is not more than 2.00 meter depth and 1.00 meter width to the underground laying of CNG/ PNG pipelines also.

23. Extended general approval under section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of not more than 1 hectare of forest land in each case, for creation of critical development and security related infrastructure of 13 categories by Government Departments/ Undertakings, Boards, Corporations etc. accorded by this Ministry vide letter of even number dated 13th February 2014 read with letter of even number dated 21st August 2014 to diversion of not more than 5 hectares of forest land in each case, for creation of critical development and security related infrastructure of 13 categories, as specified in this Ministry's said letter of even number dated 13th February, 2014, by Government Departments/ Undertakings, Boards, Corporations etc. to flood affected districts in Uttarakhand and Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh for a period of one year with effect from 7th November 2014.

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