

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2360

ANSWERED ON:04.08.2015

Relaxation of Forest Laws

Singh Shri Pashupati Nath

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to relax certain provisions of the forest laws for construction of pucca roads, school buildings etc. and to provide irrigation facilities in tribal dominated villages located in the forests; and
(b) if so, the details thereof, area and State-wise including Jharkhand?

Answer

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

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) To facilitate creation of critical public utility and security related infrastructure, the Central Government has accorded general approval under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forest use with adequate environmental safeguards of not more than one hectares of forest land, in each case, for creation of 13 categories by Government Departments, Undertakings, Boards and Corporations. These categories of projects include schools, dispensaries/hospitals, electrical & telecommunication lines, drinking water projects, water/rainwater harvesting structures, minor irrigation canals, non-conventional sources of energy, skill upgradation/vocational training centres, power sub-stations, communication posts, construction/widening of roads including approach roads to roadside establishments, upgradation/strengthening/widening of existing bridges by Border Roads Organisation (BRO), and police establishments like police stations/outposts/ border outposts/watch towers in sensitive areas identified by Ministry of Home Affairs. The said general approval extends to all districts in the country, except those located in Jammu & Kashmir.

Similarly, to expedite creation of public utility infrastructure in 117 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, including the LWE affected districts falling in Jharkhand, the Central Government has accorded general approval under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forest use with adequate environmental safeguards of not more than five hectares of forest land in each case for creation of critical public utility infrastructure of specified categories. Categories of projects to which this general approval extends include schools, medical colleges, dispensaries/hospitals, electric & telecommunication lines, drinking water projects, water/rainwater harvesting structures, minor irrigation canals, quarrying of materials used in construction of public roads, non-conventional sources of energy, skill up-gradation/vocational training centers, power sub-stations, communication posts, police establishments like police stations /outposts /border outposts /watch towers in sensitive areas identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and underground laying of optical fiber cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines.

Central Government has also accorded general approval section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forest use with adequate environmental safeguards of forest land required for construction of two lane public roads in 117 LWE affected districts irrespective of the area of forest land involved.

It has also been decided by the Central Government that the cases of resurfacing and strengthening of existing Highways, not involving widening within the Protected Areas will be possible without reference to Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife.

The above measures will facilitate movement of tribal population.
