

that they would like to undertake the exercise of demarcating ESA by physical verification as has been already done by the State of Kerala.

This Ministry has decided to give an opportunity to State Governments of Western Ghats region for undertaking demarcation of ESA by physical verification within their jurisdiction, if they so desire, except for Kerala State which has already undertaken such an exercise, and submit their proposals to the Ministry by 9th August 2014.

**Dilution of green norms to help fast track infra projects**

3094. SHRI KALPATARU DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is proposed to dilute green norms to help fast-track infra projects in the tribal hot bed forests in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of road projects that are proposed to be executed in the regions that are proposed to be executed under relaxed norms in Odisha region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) Central Government *vide* letter dated 4th July, 2014 accorded general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land, not located within the protected areas, for construction of two lane public roads by Government Departments in 117 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, **irrespective of the area of forest land involved in such projects.**

(c) As per the information provided by the Nodal Officer, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in the Government of Odisha, a proposal seeking prior approval of Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land required for construction of a road from Jamkhar to Mahanpali village in the LWE affected district of Bargarh has been forwarded to the Divisional Forest Officer, Bargarh Forest Division by his office on 8th August, 2013 for processing. The said proposal will now be considered by the Government of Odisha for approval as per the said general approval accorded by the Central Government *vide* letter dated 4th July, 2014.

**India's rank in UNs Environmental Performance Index**

3095. SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the United Nations (UNs) Environmental Performance Index (EPI) has ranked India at a low 155th position among 178 countries on how well they perform on high priority environmental issues;