

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 3891
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.04.2023

Diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes

3891. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI:

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

- (a) the total forest area diverted for non-forest purposes, including for infrastructure and industrial projects, over the last five years, year-wise;
- (b) the criteria adopted by the Forest Survey of India to count plots of land as part of forest cover;
- (c) the total area of land of limited or no ecological or biodiversity value counted in India's forest cover at present;
- (d) the proportion of dense forests in India's total recorded forest area as on date; and
- (e) the details of ministerial and official residences, institutional buildings, university campuses and residential neighborhoods in New Delhi declared forest on the official forest cover map?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) During the last 5 years, various approvals for diversion of forest land for non-forestry purpose including for infrastructure and industrial projects, involving an area of 88,903.80 hectare have been accorded by the Central Government under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act,1980. The Category wise and year wise details are enclosed at **Annexure-I**.

(b) & (c) The term "Forest Cover" refers to all lands, more than one hectare in area, with a tree canopy density of more than 10 percent, irrespective of ownership and legal status. Such lands may not necessarily be a recorded forest area. It also includes orchards, bamboo and palm. All lands covered in the definition of forest cover have certain ecological or biodiversity value.

(d) As per India State of Forest Report 2021, published by Forest Survey of India, the area under 'Very Dense Forest' category is 87,742square kilometer, while 'Moderately Dense Forest' category has an area of 2,39,564 square kilometer, within the Recorded Forest Area (RFA)/ Green Wash (GW) area of digitized RFA/GW boundary, of 7,38,373 square kilometer. Hence,

the proportion of Very Dense and Moderately Dense Forests within the Recorded Forest Area/Greenwash area of the country is 44.33 %.

(e) For assessment of forest cover, the forest cover is defined as ‘all lands, more than one hectare in area, with tree canopy density of more than 10 percent irrespective of ownership and legal status. It also includes orchards, bamboo and palm’.

Therefore, all those areas irrespective of land ownership or land use and legal status, which satisfy the above conditions and are captured by the satellite sensor (LISS –III with 23.5 m resolution) are treated as Forest Cover. This also includes plantations on the private and community lands, road, rail, and canal side plantations, rubber, tea and coffee plantations etc.

The trees growing in residential complexes and other urban areas are serving the ecological function of trees, creating their own micro-climate and micro-ecosystems. The role of urban greens in cities is a well-known fact. Further, carbon stock is being stored in all these trees irrespective of their location and hence, are playing an important role in the climate change mitigation.

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3891 due for answer on 06.04.2023 regarding 'Diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes'

Diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes for the period 01/04/2018 to 31/03/2022

All State/UTs		Diverted Area of forest land					
S. No.	Category	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Grand Total
1	Approach Access	2.68	12.35	30.55	43.86	36.18	125.62
2	Borehole Prospecting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	Canal	0.00	0.00	5.89	6.88	3.02	15.80
4	Defence	4159.09	187.44	2601.08	421.94	261.26	7630.81
5	Dispensary/Hospital	41.37	0.00	1.10	11.02	6.81	60.30
6	Drinking Water	17.37	234.92	513.78	63.46	144.20	973.73
7	Encroachments	0.00	1.25	0.00	0.00	8.38	9.63
8	Forest Village Conversion	285.70	0.00	210.00	298.27	394.80	1188.77
9	Hydel	116.85	4633.78	593.49	222.42	651.66	6218.19
10	Industry	181.28	12.51	43.27	31.96	7.93	276.95
11	Irrigation	5371.39	2813.77	1542.04	1784.88	1832.89	13344.97
12	Mining	5471.49	3413.84	2393.62	3938.26	3629.85	18847.05
13	Optical Fibre Cable	15.73	91.47	121.67	94.41	47.71	370.99
14	Others	525.70	1276.89	1430.45	807.07	703.14	4743.25
15	Pipeline	0.00	18.67	96.43	127.13	162.71	404.94
16	Quarrying	13.79	6.69	2.59	1.21	0.99	25.28
17	Railway	236.84	612.87	1049.79	1169.53	1700.60	4769.64
18	Rehabilitation	0.00	0.00	42.50	86.90	75.11	204.51
19	Road	2084.66	2655.95	5267.18	4922.55	4494.23	19424.58
20	School	12.79	0.18	0.03	40.87	6.23	60.10
21	Solar Power	0.00	0.00	0.01	1.09	0.00	1.10
22	Sub Station	0.00	12.98	45.42	9.95	2.01	70.36
23	Thermal	10.70	46.51	38.10	0.00	0.00	95.32
24	Transmission Line	974.01	1484.70	2281.76	2731.36	1997.37	9469.20
25	Village Electricity	35.78	11.92	3.19	374.10	117.42	542.41
26	Wind Power	30.00	0.00	0.30	0.00	0.00	30.30
Grand Total		19587.21	17528.69	18314.23	17189.14	16284.53	88903.80

(Area in hectares)