

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1665
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.03.2025

Encroachment of forest land

1665. DR. SIKANDER KUMAR:

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

- (a) whether the encroachment on forest land cannot be regularised without the approval from Central Government under Forest Conservation Act, 1980;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the funds released by Government to meet the expenditure towards protection of forest land during the last two years in Himachal Pradesh;
- (d) whether any cases are pending regarding land settlement in various courts, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether Government is taking any innovative steps to recognise and safeguard the rights of forest dwellers in Himachal Pradesh?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) and (b) As per the provisions of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and the Rules made thereunder, the prior approval of the Central Government is required for using any forest land for any non-forest purpose including the regularization of encroachment.

(c) and (d) The protection and management of forests are primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments or Union Territory (UT) Administrations. To prevent encroachment on forest land, several legal provisions exist under the Indian Forest Act of 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972, and various local forest acts and rules.

The Ministry supports the efforts of States and UTs in preventing and controlling forest fires by providing financial assistance through the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme. Under this scheme, Rs. 119.29 lakhs were released to the State of Himachal Pradesh in the financial year 2022-23, followed by Rs. 180.80 lakhs in 2023-24.

Additionally, an outlay of Rs. 7 crore in 2022-23 and Rs. 8.94 crore in 2023-24 was approved under the State CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority) Annual Plan of Operations of Himachal Pradesh for forest fire prevention and control operations.

As per the report received from the State Government of Himachal Pradesh, there are no cases pending regarding land settlement in various courts.

(e) As per the report received from the State Government of Himachal Pradesh, the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (recognition of Forest Rights) Act, (FRA) 2006 has been implemented in the State of Himachal Pradesh. Under Section 3 (2) of FRA, 2006, forest land up to one hectare is diverted for 13 specified activities by the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department as per case to case basis. The Tribal Development Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh is the Nodal department responsible for recognizing and safeguarding the rights of forest dwellers in Himachal Pradesh.
