

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2148
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.08.2025

Felling of Indigenous Trees in Rajasthan for Solar Energy Projects

2148. SHRI RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of large-scale felling of indigenous tree species, including the protected Khejri tree, for solar projects in arid and semi-arid zones of Rajasthan;
- (b) whether any reports have been received from Rajasthan or other agencies regarding violations of environmental norms or lack of clearances;
- (c) whether Government plans to strengthen guidelines to regulate tree felling and enforce stricter safeguards for solar and infrastructure projects on non-forest land; and
- (d) whether stronger legal protection and revised afforestation policies are being considered for ecologically sensitive arid regions?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (d) The protection and management of forest and tree resources is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government/Union Territory Administration. The prevention of illegal cutting of trees and the protection of forests in India are comprehensively governed under the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980, and the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, along with relevant rules and State-level legislations. These Acts collectively provide a robust legal framework for the regulation, conservation, and protection of forests and wildlife, including enforcement mechanisms and penal provisions to address forest offences such as illegal felling and encroachment.

The Ministry, in close coordination with State and Union Territory Forest Departments, is implementing a range of schemes and programmes aimed at afforestation, forest conservation, and ecological restoration. These include the National Mission for a Green India (GIM), the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), and other region-specific initiatives. To foster public participation in afforestation, the Ministry has also launched the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign. This initiative encourages individuals to plant a tree in honour of their mothers, promoting emotional

connection with nature. Furthermore, institutional monitoring systems such as the e-Green Watch portal and satellite-based forest cover assessments conducted by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) are in place to ensure transparency, accountability, and data-driven decision-making in forest governance.

The Ministry has established the Arid Forest Research Institute, Jodhpur (AFRI) in Rajasthan under the Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education, Dehradun. The mandate of the AFRI includes undertaking and promoting forestry research, education and extension, leading to scientific and sustainable management of forests, with a special focus on arid and semi-arid regions. The Institute also provides scientific advice to the central and state governments aiding informed decision making in matters of national and regional importance and international commitments and to address forestry research needs. It also provides technical assistance and material support to states in their forestry based programmes for conservation and sustainable use of forest resources.
