

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 549
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.07.2025

Ecologically sensitive zones of Odisha

549. SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry has granted forest clearance for mining projects in ecologically sensitive zones of Odisha;
- (b) the details of compensatory afforestation projects undertaken as per mining lease conditions;
- (c) whether the impact of mining on local ecology and water bodies has been assessed;
- (d) the number of cases of environmental violations reported by the Odisha State Pollution Control Board; and
- (e) the steps taken to ensure sustainable mining and environmental rehabilitation in affected areas?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) The proposals for diversion of forest land for various non-forestry purposes including mining are dealt under the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhniyam, 1980 and the rules and guidelines made thereunder. In all such cases of diversion of forest land, the State Government or Union territory Administration has to ensure fulfilment and compliance of the provisions of all other Acts and rules including the provisions under the respective Eco Sensitive Zone Notification, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, as applicable.

Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, in orders dated 26.04.2023 and 28.04.2023 in W.P. (C) No. 202 of 1995, held that mining is not permissible within National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, within one kilometre of their boundaries, or within the notified Eco-Sensitive Zones of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

- (b) The forest land is allowed to be used for non-forestry purposes with adequate mitigation measures including raising of Compensatory Afforestation over identified non-forest or degraded forest-land as applicable. The Compensatory Afforestation activities are carried out and maintained by the concerned State or

Union Territory Administration as per approved site-specific plans prepared by the respective State/UT.

- (c) to (e) Environment Clearance is granted after the appraisal and recommendation of a technical committee (Expert Appraisal Committee-EAC) as mandated in Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The EAC undertakes due process of screening, scoping, scientific and sustainable appraisal of projects before granting Environment Clearances.

The projects are assigned Terms of References based on scoping by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to prepare Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIA)/ Environment Management Plan (EMP). The EIA and EMP reports also include likely impact on water, land and air environment due to upcoming activities, including appropriate mitigation measures to minimize the impacts.

As per information provided by the State Pollution Control Board, Odisha, the Board grants Consent to Operate to the mines under the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 for control of water and air pollution. During 2024-25, twelve mines have been issued with Show Cause Notice / Directions under provisions of these Acts for non-compliances.

The mining plan prescribes comprehensive activities to be undertaken for sustainable mining and for rehabilitation of the mined out areas. Further, the various conditions are also stipulated while granting Environment Clearance and Forest Clearance to ensure sustainable mining activities and for rehabilitation of the mined areas.
