

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 62
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.01.2026

Identification of land for tree plantation

62. SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:

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

- (a) whether Government would consider identifying Iyyanar, Amman and other temple campuses for intensive tree plantation as Puducherry has less than one percent forest cover and limited land area;
- (b) whether Government would direct the UT administration to resurvey encroached and sacred groves' areas and handover it to the forest department for its restoration; and
- (c) the action taken to transfer 180 years old botanical garden, an instrument of biodiversity conservation, to forest department from Agriculture department in Puducherry?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Enhancement of green cover in the country, particularly in areas with limited forest land, including in Puducherry, is a priority of the Government. As per the information provided by the Government of Puducherry, initiatives such as *Spiritual Van* and *Amma Vanam* are being implemented to promote tree plantation in religious establishments, including temple campuses. Sacred groves, locally known as *Kovil Kadugal*, in Puducherry are under severe anthropogenic pressure due to urbanisation and encroachments. Decisions on relevant authority to manage these sacred groves, their digital survey and the GIS-based demarcation of such areas are the prerogative of the Government of Puducherry. Similarly, authority to transfer of administrative control of the Botanical Garden, presently under the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in the Union Territory, rests with the Government of Puducherry and at present, there is no proposal in this regard.
