

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 540
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2026

Ecologically Sensitive Areas in Western Ghats

540. DR. JOHN BRITTAS:

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

- (a) whether Government took a final decision on implementation of the recommendations of Kasturirangan Committee relating to declaration of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) in Western Ghats;
- (b) the present status of proposal relating to Kerala, including the extent of area and number of villages proposed to be notified as ESA;
- (c) whether Kerala sought modification of the proposed ESA boundaries in view of the large population residing in the affected areas and mapping discrepancies;
- (d) if so, the response of Government thereto; and
- (e) whether Government proposes to issue the final notification only after resolving the concerns raised by the State Governments and local communities?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) In order to protect the rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats region, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change published the draft notification on Ecologically Sensitive Area of Western Ghats, vide S.O. 3060(E) dated 31.07.2024 with an area of 56,825.7 square kilometre which spread across six States namely, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

To address the issues raised by the respective State Governments, the Ministry has constituted a Committee under retired Director General (Forests) to examine the suggestions of all the six concerned States including Kerala in a holistic manner, keeping in view the conservation aspects of the ecosystem, and the rights, privileges, needs and developmental aspirations of the region. The concerns and suggestions of the State Governments, including that of Kerala are deliberated by the Committee with the respective State Governments on merit for providing its recommendations to the Ministry for finalization. Moreover, the Ministry has also received comments, objections and suggestions from various other stakeholders on the draft notification. These have been forwarded to the respective State Governments, including Kerala, for their comments.
