

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 543
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2026

Scientific conservation of forests

543 DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE:

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

- (a) whether India's forest and tree cover together accounts for 25.17% of the total geographical area and that the forest protection is presently governed by Central and State laws, resulting in fragmented management of ecologically interconnected forests;
- (b) whether Government has examined the international best practices, including forest conservation legislation of the Republic of Korea, covering forest zoning, disease and pest monitoring, fire prevention and landslide mitigation; and
- (c) whether Government proposes to constitute expert committee comprising forestry scientists, ecologists and State representatives to recommend amendments to existing forest laws for a uniform and scientific conservation framework?

ANSWER

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

(a) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out the assessment of forest and tree cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The forest cover assessment is a wall-to-wall mapping exercise based on remote sensing supported by intensive ground verification and field data from the National Forest Inventory. As per latest ISFR 2023, the total forest and tree cover is 8,27,357.95 square kilometer which is 25.17% of the geographical area of the country.

The protection and management of forests are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations, as forests are included in the Concurrent List (List III) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. The Central Government formulates national policies, enacts forest-related legislations and provides technical and financial support to the States, while the State Governments/UT Administrations are responsible for the protection, conservation and scientific management of forests under the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the respective State Forest Acts and Rules.

(b) & (c) The Government periodically reviews the legal, policy and institutional frameworks relating to conservation and sustainable management of forests, taking into consideration the scientific developments, emerging challenges, and best practices at the national as well as international levels, as appropriate. Inputs and suggestions from State Governments, scientific institutions and other stakeholders are also considered, wherever required, while formulating or reviewing policies, programmes, guidelines and legislative provisions in accordance with India's ecological, socio-economic and legal framework.
