

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 853
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2021

Construction of Road on Forest Land

853. SHRI SANTOSH PANDEY:

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

- (a) whether it is necessary to take permission from the forest department before construction of roads on forest land in forest areas;
- (b) if so, whether permission has been taken from the forest department for the construction of the under-construction inter-state Pandriya-Bajag-Gadasarai road in district Kabirdham of Rajnandgaon Parliamentary Constituency and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that due to cutting of thousands of trees without permission from the forest department and illegal mining of 'murum' and 'gitti' for the under-construction road at a cost of 128 crores, a penalty of Rupees 1 crore 17 lakh was imposed on the construction agency by the public works department, which was later reduced to Rupees 20 lakhs;
- (d) if so, the rationale behind reducing the amount of penalty;
- (e) whether the said penalty has been recovered from the concerned agency and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether the permission has been granted by the forest department to continue the said work and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) Yes, Sir. As per the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 prior approval of the Central Government is needed for use of forest land for non-forestry purposes.
- (b) Approval under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, has been obtained for use of 15 ha of forest land for construction of the inter-state Pandariya-Bajag-Godasarai road in District Kabirdham of Rajandgaon Parliamentary constituency vide Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India letter dated 26.03.1996. Original proposal was submitted for diversion of 25 ha of forest land.

(c) (d) Based on a complaint that the user agency was using soil/clay from forest land to construct the referred road, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Kawardha had constituted a committee to investigate the matter. Recommendation of the committee was examined by DFO and a penalty of Rs.1,19,90,600.00 was imposed for the above irregularity.
and (e)

Later, based on the representation of the user agency, site inspection was made by DFO, Kawardha alongwith field staff and Executive Engineer, PWD (User Agency) and it was found that small stones and mud, which rolled down due to rains from the mountain located on both sides of the road, had been removed and dumped on the forest land at the end of the route. Based on this, the penalty was revised to Rs. 20,000,00.00 and the user agency had deposited the penalty amount of Rs.20,00,000.00 vide Challan No. 020, dated 27.04.2020.

(f) As per the report submitted from the State Forest Department, Chhattisgarh, the permission for further continuance of said work was based on the final approval accorded vide letter dated 26.03.1996 by Ministry of Environment and Forest, New Delhi.
