GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2372
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2025

Encroachment on Forest Land

2372. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:

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

(a) the concrete measures being taken by the Government to prevent encroachment on forest land and deforestation, particularly in those States where this problem is more severe;
(b) whether any special study has been conducted to assess the decline in forest cover and its environmental impact, based on the latest data from the India State of Forest Report, 2021;
(c) whether any comprehensive action plan has been formulated to check the increasing incidents of human–wildlife conflict in wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas; and
(d) whether the Government is developing any special technology-based mechanism to monitor the progress of implementation of afforestation and forest conservation schemes?

ANSWER

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

(a) Forest protection and management are primarily the responsibility of State Governments and UT Administrations, which act against encroachment and illegal felling under the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Van (Sanrakshan Evm Samvardhan) Adhiniyam1980 and State Forest Acts/Rules. Under the relevant provisions of these acts, the states take necessary action through the relevant authorities. The Ministry has issued advisories for removal and prevention of encroachments. States also carry out surveys, demarcate boundaries, fix pillars and conduct regular patrolling, supported by modern tools such as GIS, remote sensing and GPS.To prevent illegal felling, States also undertake patrolling, operate anti-poaching camps and check posts, deploy vigilance teams and conduct inspections. They also promote Joint Forest Management, awareness activities and community participation to strengthen forest protection.

(b) As per the India State of Forest Report-2023 published by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, the forest cover in the country have increased as compared to the assessment published in ISFR-2021. As per India State of Forest Report 2023, the positive changes in forest cover arise due to natural growth of vegetation, afforestation initiatives, improved protection of plantations and forest areas, increase in trees outside forests, and regeneration in shifting cultivation areas, while negative changes occur due to harvesting of short-rotation plantations, shifting cultivation, encroachment and natural calamities such as storms, floods and landslides.

(c) A comprehensive set of measures has been formulated to address the increasing incidents of human–wildlife conflict in wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas. The Ministry has issued

an advisory on managing human–wildlife conflict (February 2021) and followed it with detailed guidelines to States and Union Territories on 3rd June 2022, including measures to reduce conflict and mitigate crop damage. Species-specific guidelines were also issued on 21st March 2023 to strengthen site-level responses.Further, under Section 11 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, Chief Wildlife Wardens are empowered to permit controlled intervention in cases where Schedule I or II animals pose a danger to human life or property. Additionally, a robust network of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves has been established to ensure better protection and management of wildlife habitats, thereby reducing conflict at the source.

(d)   The Ministry provides technical and financial support to States and UTs through various Central Government schemes—such as the National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme (FPM), Nagar Van Yojana (NVY), Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI), and the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats—for the enhancement, protection, conservation and management of forests. In addition, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) employs advanced remote sensing technology, supported by intensive ground verification and field data collected through the National Forest Inventory, to assess periodic changes in forest and tree cover. These modern tools, including GIS-based mapping, GPS-enabled field data collection, digital reporting platforms and satellite monitoring, ensure transparent, accurate and timely assessment of progress under various afforestation and forest conservation schemes.

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