

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2451
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.08.2026

Protection of Existing Natural Forests

2451. THIRU DR. S JAGATHRATCHAKAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government has reviewed scientific findings relating to tropical forest regeneration indicating that although tree cover may return relatively quickly after deforestation, full biodiversity recovery, restoration of ecological functions and revival of wildlife habitats require substantially longer periods;
- (b) if so, the details of measures undertaken by the Government to strengthen protection of existing natural forests, improve ecological restoration programmes, conserve native flora and fauna and enhance monitoring of forest ecosystem health across the country; and;
- (c) the initiatives proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that afforestation efforts prioritize biodiversity restoration, ecosystem integrity and long-term ecological resilience, promote the use of indigenous species and reduce reliance on plantation-focused targets while supporting sustainable conservation outcomes across the country?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (c) Scientific evidence indicates that while tree cover may recover through natural regeneration and afforestation, restoration of biodiversity, ecological functions and wildlife habitats is a gradual process that depends on local ecological conditions and appropriate management interventions. The conservation of natural forests and restoration of degraded forest landscapes is carried out through assisted natural regeneration, artificial regeneration, compensatory afforestation under *the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980* and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016, as well as through programmes such as the Green India Mission, Nagar Van Yojana, Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) and other afforestation and restoration initiatives. These interventions are implemented in accordance with the objectives and guidelines of the respective Acts and programmes, which include restoration of degraded forest landscapes, plantation of suitable indigenous/native species and biodiversity conservation, as applicable.

The National Working Plan Code-2023 lays down guidelines for sustainable

forest management, including biodiversity conservation, restoration of degraded forests, wildlife habitat improvement, soil and water conservation and site-specific silvicultural practices. Forest and tree cover are monitored periodically by the Forest Survey of India through the India State of Forest Report, while biodiversity conservation is supported through the Protected Area network and other conservation measures implemented by the Central and State Governments.
