

Parliament Question:- Illegal Felling of Trees

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Protection and management of forests and tree cover are primarily the responsibilities of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. There are legal frameworks for the protection and management of forests and tree cover of the country, which include, the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, the State Forest Acts, Tree Preservation Acts and Rules made thereunder. The instances regarding the illegal felling of trees as and when detected are proceeded against the offenders before the competent Court/ Authorities under relevant acts. The concerned State Governments / Union Territory Administrations maintain the particulars regarding illegal felling of trees.

The local forest authorities carry out the assessment of the illegally felled trees and the associated data are maintained in the relevant forest offence registers in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the concerned State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations. As per the India State of Forest Report-2023 published by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, the forest cover and tree cover in the country have increased by 156.41 square kilometers and 1289.40 square kilometers respectively, as compared to the assessment published in ISFR-2021.

The important steps taken by the Government to stop illegal felling of trees include the following:

- i. regular patrolling in the forest areas by front-line forest staff to prevent occurrence of any illegal/prohibited activities,
- ii. establishment of patrolling camps/anti-poaching camps, check posts at strategic and vulnerable locations,
- iii. deployment of vigilance and flying squad parties, regular inspections in vulnerable areas, etc.
- iv. implementing Joint Forest Management programmes, awareness campaigns, educational programmes, etc., to secure the involvement of communities in forest protection activities.

This information was given by Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

VM/GS

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