

PRESS RELEASE ON THE 405TH REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE

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The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita, M.P., Rajya Sabha presented/laid on the Table its 405th Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to both the Houses of Parliament on the 09th March, 2026. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Report in its meeting held on 9th March, 2026. The Recommendations/observations made by the Committee in this Report are enclosed.

2. The entire Report is also available on <https://sansad.in/rs>.

405th Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS-AT A GLANCE

BUDGETARY DETAILS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-26 AND ALLOCATION FOR 2026-27

The Committee notes that the utilization of funds by the Ministry in the years 2024-25 and 2025-26 is less compared to the year 2023-24 when it had been able to utilize more than 96% of the allocated funds. While the Ministry could utilize 72.35% of the allocated funds in 2024-25, the Ministry has been able to utilize only 67.87% (as on 31.1.2026) of its RE allocation in 2025-26 of ₹3481.61 crore. The Committee takes note of steps being taken by the Ministry to ensure full utilization of allocation in remaining part of 2025-26 and recommends that the Ministry should take all necessary steps to ensure that the allocation made to it is utilized to the maximum possible extent. (Para 2.4)

The Committee further notes that the BE allocation of ₹3759.46 crore in 2026-27 is around 10 percent increase over the BE allocation of ₹3412.82 in the year 2025-26. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should make proactive efforts from the beginning of the next financial year and ensure that the funds allocated to it during the financial year are optimally utilised. (Para 2.5)

CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEMES

The Committee notes that although the budget allocation for Central Sector Schemes was increased from ₹1060.56 crore in BE 2025-26 to ₹1451.52 crore at RE 2025-26, the Ministry could utilize only ₹888.22 crore (as on 31.01.2026). There has been less utilization of funds in three out of the four components viz. 'Environmental Knowledge and Capacity Building', 'National Coastal

Management Programme’ and ‘Control of Pollution’. The Committee also took note that the major contributor for less utilization is the ‘Control of Pollution’ Scheme. The Committee recommends that all steps be taken to ensure utilization of funds allocated during 2025-26. (Para 4.5)

CONTROL OF POLLUTION

The Committee observes the financial performance of the ‘Control of Pollution’ Scheme during the last three years. The Committee noted that in 2025-26, the Ministry has been able to utilize ₹814.26 crore (upto 31.01.2026) out of the increased RE allocation of ₹1300 crore. The Committee took note of the fact that for 2025-26, budget allocation for ‘Control of Pollution’ scheme has been increased from ₹853.9 core to ₹1300 crore. Environmental pollution in the country poses a significant, ongoing threat to public health and environmental stability and hence, the funds allocated for its control must be optimally utilized. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry must take remedial measures, devise a robust monitoring system to monitor financial and physical progress of the works and ensure that the funds allocated under ‘Control of Pollution’ are thoroughly utilized in the next financial year, ensuring desired outcomes. (Para 5.5)

The Committee observed that the Air quality in Delhi NCR remained in the category of poor and below during most part of October-February period of current financial year. The Committee feels that there is a need of a sturdy plan to mitigate the air pollution and recommends that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in coordination with the Govt. of NCR of Delhi, should chalk out a long term plan to overcome this long standing problem. (Para 5.6)

ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION, AWARENESS, RESEARCH AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The Committee notes the reasons advanced by the Ministry for underutilization of funds under ‘Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development’. The Committee is of the view that the reasons advanced by the Ministry for underutilization are mostly procedural and administrative in nature. The Committee recommends the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to further strengthen its administrative and monitoring mechanism for utilising the allocated resources and ensure that the fund for the schemes are not underutilized. (Para 6.4)

The Committee recommends that environment education be made a national priority and all State Governments be made an integral part of it as a national programme. The Ministry may also take up the matter with the Ministry of Education (Department of School Children and Literacy and Department of Higher Education) so that environment awareness and education is integrated into the syllabus of school children and environmental awareness and protection is imbibed into the minds of future generations from the very beginning and helps them become environmentally responsible citizens. (Para 6.6)

CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES

The Committee observes that the BE 2025-26 allocation of ₹720.00 crore under this Head was reduced to ₹391.75 crore at RE stage, which is merely 55 percent of the BE allocation. Out of this reduced RE allocation, the Ministry has been able to spend only ₹256.31 crore upto 31st January 2026 i.e. 65.40 percent of the allocated amount. The Committee further observes that the reduced RE resulted in reduction in allocation in all sub-schemes under this scheme. One of the major schemes namely, National Mission for a Green India, was also impacted adversely due to this. The Committee is also concerned about only 60% expenditure i.e. ₹18.27 crore out of the RE allocation of ₹30.48 crore on Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems. (Para 7.2)

NATIONAL MISSION FOR A GREEN INDIA

The Committee observes that the BE 2025-26 allocation of ₹220.00 crore for National Mission for a Green India was reduced to ₹95.70 crore at RE stage, which is nearly 44 percent of the BE allocation. Again, out of the reduced allocation of ₹95.70 crore, the Ministry could utilise only ₹40.95 crore upto 31st January 2026 i.e. nearly 43 percent of the RE allocation. The Ministry must work out a plan of action to expedite utilization of RE allocation. Full utilization of the available funds during the current financial year should be ensured. The Ministry has not provided any reason for the reduction in allocation at RE stage. The Committee is of the view that though the reduction at RE adversely affected the activities under the scheme, but the Ministry also, on its own part, has not able to utilize the available funds to the desired extent till January month. The Committee recommends the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to examine the slow progress of funds utilization under this scheme and take measures to ensure that such funds are not underutilized. (Para 8.5)

FOREST FIRE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

The Committee notes that although the expenditure in this head had been satisfactory during 2023-24 and 2024-25, however, the pace of utilization has been slower during the current financial year so far, since only ₹15.52 crore have been spent out of the reduced RE allocation of ₹33.25 crore. (Para 9.3)

The Committee also observes that occurrence of forest fires has become more frequent in the country and have a devastating effect on environment, forest, biodiversity and wildlife. Forests in Uttarakhand invariably catch fire in summers every year. In such a scenario, the Committee is of the view that there is need not only to minimize such incidents but also to devise a protocol for dousing of forest fires which may be followed in case of any forest fire in the Himalayan belt. The Committee also understands that modern advance technologies are now available for dousing of forest fires, including use of satellites and drones for early detection, alerts, cause and nature of forest fires, as well as dousing of the same. The Committee, therefore, further recommends that the Ministry should explore the latest technologies available to shift focus to a proactive, AI and data-driven prevention and management to minimize the ecological damage due to forest fires and provide adequate budgetary support to State Governments in this regard.

(Para 9.4)

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF WILDLIFE HABITATS

The Committee finds that the performance of the Ministry under ‘Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats’ has been extremely good during the last two financial years. Since the Ministry has already utilized nearly 75% of the allocation upto 31st January 2026, the Committee hopes that the Ministry would be able to fully utilize the allocations under this head in the current financial year. (Para 10.2)

PROJECT TIGER & ELEPHANT

Centrally-funded schemes are crucial for implementing national priorities, reducing inter-state inequalities, and ensuring uniform development. The Committee finds the financial performance of the Ministry in ‘Project Tiger & Elephant’ satisfactory. The Committee is in agreement that the pace of expenditure had slowed down due to unavoidable administrative reasons. The Committee also agrees that fund requirement under this scheme is significantly higher, as the number of Tiger Reserves, tiger population, landscape coverage, and human–wildlife conflict incidents have all increased in recent years. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should consider allocating additional funds to this head to address the rising demands of protection, relocation, and conflict mitigation. (Para 11.7)

NEED TO REDUCE CASES OF MAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

The Committee observes that although the Ministry informed that they had been making efforts very assiduously to reduce the cases of man-animal conflict, such incidents were increasing day by day. The Committee feels that the number of tigers and leopards has increased as compared to the forest area, and hence there is a shortage of habitat for them. The Committee recommends that all possible steps should be taken to prevent these animals from entering populated areas so that they remain restricted to forest areas only. Suitable funds may be allocated to build rescue centers for tigers and leopards in the forest areas so that they do not leave the forest area. The Ministry may also come up with technological interventions to tackle this menace and to reduce the cases of man-animal conflicts. (Para 12.2)

PLANTATION OF MEDICINAL PLANTS FROM CAMPA FUNDS

Medicinal plants have been an integral part of traditional and modern healthcare systems due to their therapeutic potential and bioactive compounds. Medicinal plants offer natural, cost-effective remedies with fewer side effects for a wide range of health conditions, including chronic diseases, infections, and metabolic disorders. In order to reach maximum benefits of these traditional plants, the availability of such plants becomes essential. In view of this, the Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change should make it mandatory that, in case of afforestation in degraded areas, at least 25 percent of the plantation from CAMPA funds should be of medicinal plants, suitable for that particular ecology. The Ministry should ensure that plantations contribute meaningfully to carbon sinks and biodiversity restoration rather than short-term target fulfillment. (Para 13.3)

OTHER CENTRAL SECTOR EXPENDITURE

The Statutory and Regulatory / Autonomous bodies play a crucial part by facilitating the Ministry in executing its mandate, acting as specialized arms for conservation, enforcement, and scientific assessment. As brought out by the Ministry in the preceding paragraphs, the curtailment of allocation at RE in 2025-26 and a reduced BE 2026-27 would adversely impact almost all the Statutory and Regulatory / Autonomous bodies in carrying out their mandated functions, including slowing down some expansion activities and essential regulatory, research and wildlife conservation mandates. The Committee supports the needs for improvement in the budgetary allocations for these institutions. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that in 2026-27, all the Statutory and Regulatory / Autonomous bodies under the Ministry should make proactive efforts to achieve the physical and financial targets in respect of their various activities at the earliest in the first half of the financial year to stake claim for enhanced allocations at RE stage. (Para 14.7)

FOREST LAND ENCROACHMENT

The Committee expresses concern on forest land encroachment in the country. There are reports that over 13,000 sq km of forest area is occupied illegally across 25 states. The Committee is of the view that use of forest areas for non-forestry purposes reduces forested areas, driving biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, and environmental degradation. The Supreme Court of India has ruled that forest land recorded in all government records including the forest land as per dictionary meaning, shall be brought under the purview of Forest Conservation Act and prior approval of Central government shall be obtained for diversion of such forest lands for non-forestry purposes. (Para 15.3)

The Committee notes that the Ministry needs to examine Committee's query regarding getting the drone survey of lands in forest areas done. Although the Ministry has drawn attention to provisions of Rule 16(1) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, whereby all States and Union

Territory Administrations are required to prepare and maintain consolidated records of all categories of forest land to which the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 are applicable. However, it is not clear whether such information is available in public domain or not or is easily accessible to the public at large. There have been numerous instances of sale of forest land involving illegal conversion or unauthorized transfer, frequently involving nexus between private parties, developers and officials. The Committee, therefore, recommends that Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change should stress upon all State/UT Governments to get the drone survey of lands conducted in forest areas and place these reports in public domain to enable the concerned public / public authorities to verify the status of such lands before any commercial activity/sale/purchase relating to such land is undertaken. Any instances of laxity in this regard by the public authorities should be severely dealt with. (Para 15.4)

The Committee further recommends that all eco-sensitive zones of the country should be mapped digitally and all necessary steps should be taken to protect the fragile ecosystems of the country. (Para 15.5)

ADDITIONAL BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINING KEY PROGRAMMES

The Committee notes the constraints highlighted by the Ministry regarding budget allocations for key programmes, as well as the minimum financial requirements identified for sustaining these initiatives. The Committee concurs with the projections submitted by the Ministry. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance should positively consider the financial requirements of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It further recommends that, in 2026–27, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change should strive to maximize the utilization of funds allocated at the BE stage, thereby placing itself in a strong position to seek additional allocations at the RE stage for the above stated schemes and programmes. (Para 16.2)

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