

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1497
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.02.2026

Environmental and forest clearances in Odisha

1497. DR. SASMIT PATRA:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware that environmental and forest clearances for mining, industrial and infrastructure projects in tribal-dominated districts of Odisha such as Rayagada, Koraput and Sundargarh have been granted without full and verifiable compliance with provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, including recognition of individual and community forest rights;
- (b) the number of projects in these districts that have been accorded forest or environmental clearance during the last three years despite pending or disputed Gram Sabha consent and whether such approvals were subsequently reviewed or rectified; and
- (c) whether post-clearance monitoring mechanisms, including site inspections have been found effective?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) All new Projects/Activities, including their expansion, modernisation, change in product mix etc. covered under the Schedule to the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended require prior Environmental Clearances (EC). The process of grant of EC involves a four stage appraisal process, namely screening, scoping, public consultation and appraisal. The final EC is thereafter granted by the regulatory authority, viz. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) or the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), as the case may be.

Further, in cases involving diversion of forest land, prior approval of the Central Government is also required under the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. In accordance with the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and the rules framed thereunder, proposals received from the State Governments are comprehensively examined by the Advisory Committee constituted under Section 3 of the Adhiniyam. Such examination includes due diligence in assessing the direct and indirect impacts of diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes.

Further, as per the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, the final use of forest land for non-forestry purposes, by the State can only be undertaken after fulfilment and compliance of the provisions of all other Acts and rules, including ensuring settlement of rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.
