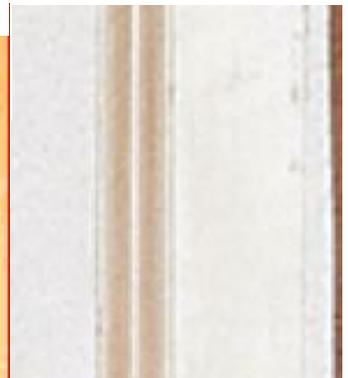




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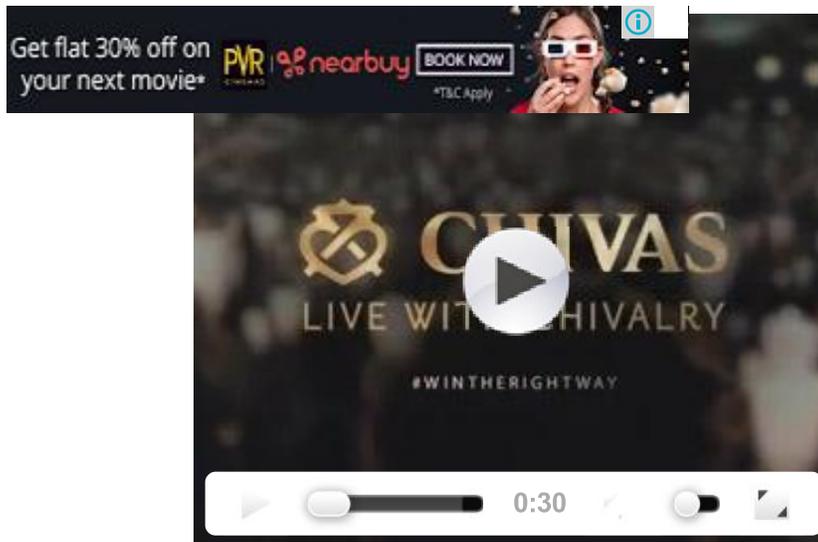
Maharashtra proposes drastic reduction in ecologically sensitive area of Western Ghats

Date published: Thursday, 5 November 2015 11:58 AM by a webdesk

Maharashtra government submitted its report to the ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEF) which, according to a report by a leading daily, suggests that ecologically sensitive area (ESA) of the Western Ghats has been reduced from 17,340 square km to 6,719 sq km.

Maharashtra government has submitted a report to the ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEF) which, according to a report by a leading daily, suggests that ecologically sensitive area (ESA) of the Western Ghats has been reduced from 17,340 square km to 6,719 sq km.

The news report also noted that the number of villages falling under ESA in the state government's report has been reduced from 2,133 (as per the draft notification) to 1,254. There is also a significant drop in the number of villages included in the ESA, from 2,133 in the draft notification to 1,254 in the report submitted to MoEF.



In March 2014, the environment ministry had issued a draft notification, identifying 60,000 sq km of area in Ghats as ecologically sensitive and the ministry had to finalise the draft in 500 days by September 9. Maharashtra along with Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were to submit their ground assessment of the notification, that was based on recommendations of the K Kasturirangan-led high-level working group. To carry out the ground assessment, the state government had decided to form local committees comprising forest officers, revenue officials and gram panchayat members.

Maharashtra government submitted its report on September 8 and state forest minister of Maharashtra Sudhir Mungantiwar told the daily that the state had recommended 6,714 sq km of land in 1,254 villages should be included in the ESA. "This has been done on the basis of an extensive ground-level exercise that was carried out in all villages," he said.

There was a meeting on Wednesday between chief minister Devendra Fadnavis and the union minister of state for environment, forests and climate change Prakash Javadekar where discussion on Western Ghats ESA was one of the key

element, reported the leading daily.

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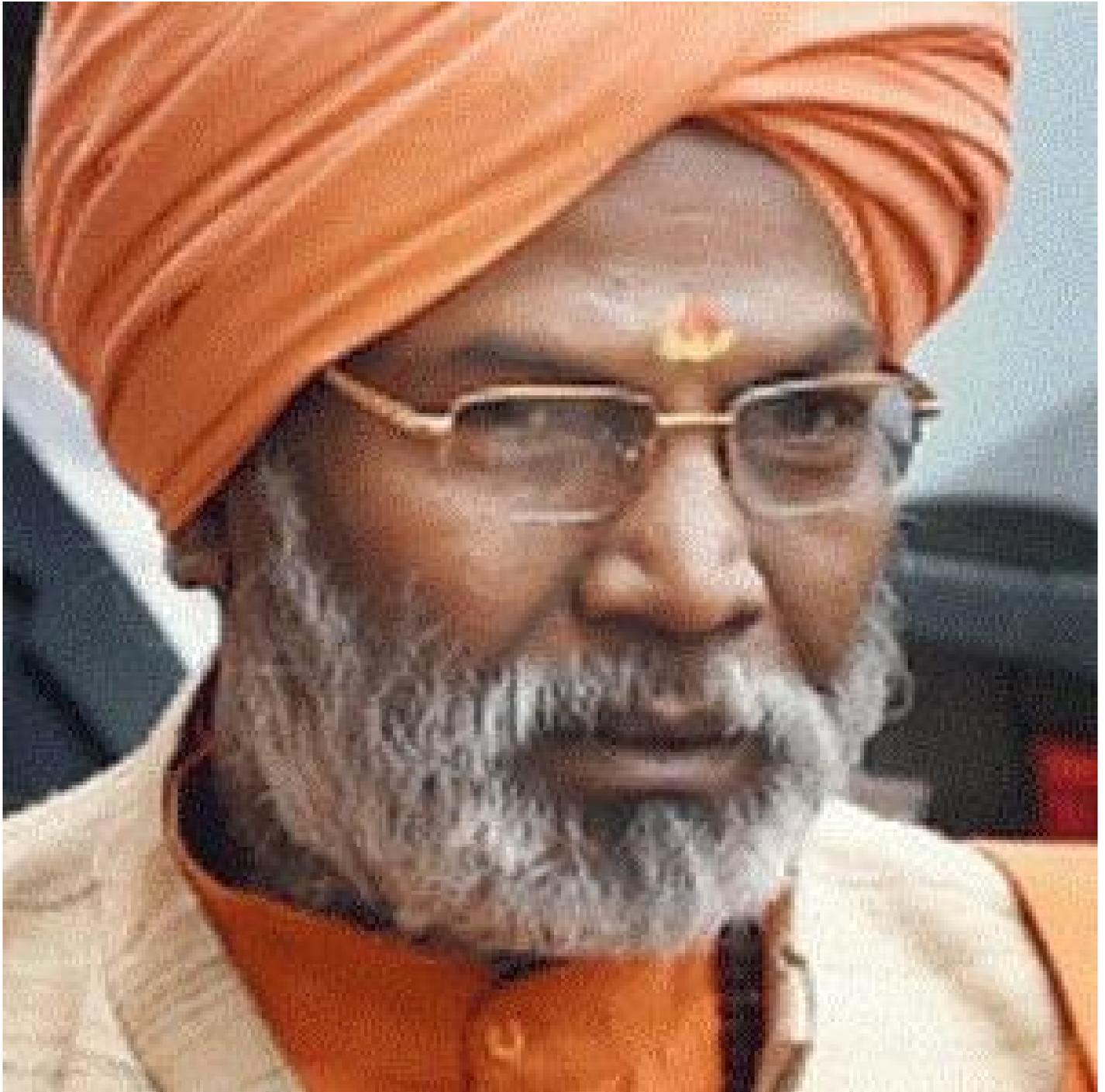


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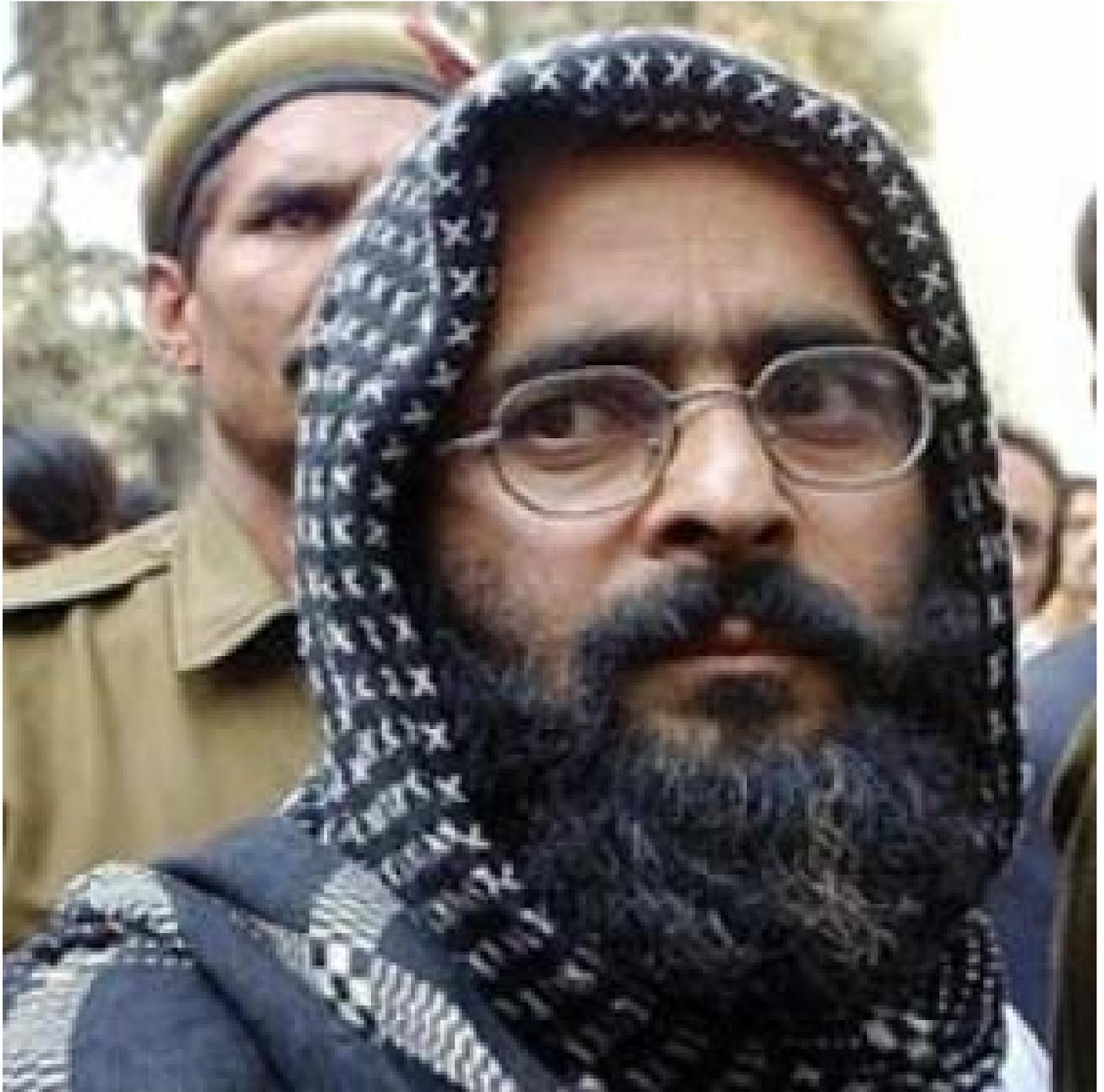
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