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'No ECs for projects in Western Ghats'

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Panaji: Those projects or activities that require extensive interference and that have the highest impact on the ecosystem within the ecologically sensitive area in the Western Ghats will not be granted environmental clearances, Union minister of environment, forest and climate change (independent charge), Prakash Javadekar said.

"The ministry issued a draft notification dated March 10, 2014, declaring a ecologically sensitive area (ESA) in the Western Ghats under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, wherein, it was proposed to prohibit certain identified projects/activities in the ESA in Western Ghats," Javadekar said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha MP Shantaram Naik.

Subsequently, based upon the requests received from some of the state governments of the Western Ghats region, the ministry gave an opportunity to state governments of the Western Ghats region to undertake demarcation of ESA by physical verification within their jurisdiction. The states of Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat have submitted their proposals after demarcating ecologically-sensitive areas by physical verification in their respective jurisdiction to the ministry, Javadekar informed Naik.

Javadekar went on to state that his ministry had issued a fresh draft notification dated September 4 superseding the earlier draft notification issued in March, 2014 to dispel the apprehensions and concerns raised by the stakeholders with respect to provisions of the draft notification relating to Western Ghats, and also, the concept of ecologically sensitive area.

The states of Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat have submitted their proposals after demarcating ecologically-sensitive areas by physical verification in their respective jurisdiction to the ministry, Union minister of environment, forest and climate change (independent charge) Prakash Javadekar informed MP Shantaram Naik