

Amendments to FCA don't open doors for privatisation of forest management Officials

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New Delhi, Jan 8 (PTI) Environment Ministry officials on Thursday clarified that the amendments made to the Forest (Conservation) Act will not "open up" management of forest land by non-government entities, and will only allow them for restoration work aimed at achieving the target of 33 per cent forest cover in India.

The clarification comes after the Congress on Wednesday alleged that the amendments made to the Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA) in 2023 have opened the door for the privatisation of forest management.

"The amendment in the guidelines does not open up the management of forest land to non-government entities," a senior government official said.

"The government amended guidelines of the Van Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Adhiniyam, 1980, will allow the participation of non-government entities in restoration of degraded forest lands which will help achieve the ambitious national target of 33 per cent forest cover in India," the official said.

Congress general secretary and former environment minister Jairam Ramesh shared on X a circular issued by the Union environment ministry on January 2 related to amendment of the guidelines specifying the terms and conditions for the assignment of forest land on lease.

The opposition party had alleged that the amendments had introduced far-reaching changes in the legal regime for the governance of forests in the country.

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