

Copy of D.O. letter No. C11021/6/76/FRY (FD) Dated 30-8-1976 from Sri.N.D.Jayal, Joint Secretary (F & WL), Govt. of India Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation (Department of Agriculture) New Delhi to Sri. P.T. Devassy, Chief Conservator of Forests, Trivandrum.

Sub:- Prime Minister's directive on conversion of forests for other purposes.

Dear Sri. Devassy,

This is in continuation of my D.O. Letter of even No. dated April/May 1976 in which it had been stated that instances of conversion of valuable forest areas for agricultural or commercial purposes had come to the notice of the Prime Minister and grave concern had been expressed by her over such ill-considered removal of forest cover which was increasingly resulting in soil erosion, floods and drought in various parts of the country. The Prime Minister, therefore, desired that any proposals for removal of Forest cover should be invariably assessed by a competent authority like the Inspector General of Forests in the Department of Agriculture before any such conversion of Forests/area for other purposes was ordered so that irreversible environmental damage was not done.

2. Some State Governments have sought clarification as to whether such a reference to the Inspector General of Forests for conversion of Forests was necessary where

- (a) Small isolated areas were involved;
- (b) Under existing executive or legal provision safeguards had already been provided For decisions by the State Government or its legislature or high level executive Committees;
- (c) appropriate provision had been proposed in the National Forest Policy.
- (d) forests other than reserved forests such as protected forests or revenue forests were concerned.

3. I am directed to clarify that, despite such and any other safeguards as may be provided by some of the State Governments, instances of destruction of forests have continued to come to the notice of the Prime Minister and it is in this context, therefore, that she had desired that all cases where forest cover on any type of land is sought to be removed, the prior authority with full justification of the Inspector General of Forests will be necessary. This would include all cases covered in Para 2 above subject to Para 4 below, and would equally apply where original forests are sought to be converted for monoculture. The only exception to this would be in areas where shifting cultivation or "jhuming" is traditionally practiced, but it is hoped that the state Government concerned will vigorously tackle this destructive practice.

4. However, State Government/Union Territories may, subject to their own safeguards, divert forest area for other purposes up to a limit of 10 hectares when this is required for a public purpose on the periphery of a larger composite forest, provided no other alternative after close examination is feasible. In this case a certificate to this effect will have to be duly recorded and copy sent to the Inspector General of Forests for information only.

5. These instructions, designed in the larger interests to save the country from the rapid irreversible environmental damage being caused in many areas, may kindly be observed scrupulously, in accordance with the wishes of the Prime Minister.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-, N.D. Jayal

/copy/

Sd/-

Chief Conservator of Forests.

Copy of D.O.No.F1-53907/76 dt.21-9-1976 from Sri. K.K. Nair, Chief Conservator of Forests (Development) Kerala Trivandrum to Sri. A.I. Iyppu, Conservator of Forests, Trichur.

Sub:- Forest land conversion for other purposes – Prime Minister's directives – regarding.

A copy of D.O. letter No.C.11021/6/76 (FRY) (F.D.) dated 30-8-76 from Sri. N.D. Jayal, Joint Secretary (F & WL) Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Department) of Agricultural Government of India, is enclosed for information and guidance whenever any proposal for clearance³ of forest area comes up for consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-

K.K. Nair.

Endt. on FS-20155/76 (K.Dis) dt. 4-10-1976.

Copy with copy of enclosures to PC sections of this office for information

Copy to Senior Superintendent, Administrative Assistant and Stock file.

For Conservator of Forests,
Trichur.

AB/12.11.