

Centre to move Supreme Court on issue of ESZ around protected forests: Union MoS

Synopsis

"We will be holding discussions with the Kerala government and we will file an affidavit in the Supreme Court. Whatever disquiet is there among people...that will be taken care of," the Union minister told reporters here.



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The [Centre](#) on Saturday said it would be approaching the [Supreme Court](#) in connection with its order to create a one-kilometre eco-sensitive zone ([ESZ](#)) around all wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in the wake of rising protests in the high ranges of Kerala against the apex court direction. Responding to a query on the ongoing protest in Kerala over the apex court order, Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey said any verdict of the Supreme Court has to be accepted.

"We will be holding discussions with the Kerala government and we will file an affidavit in the Supreme Court. Whatever disquiet is there among people...that will be taken care of," the Union minister told reporters here.

Expressing their anguish over the implications of the Supreme Court order, farmers in high range areas of the state had been holding various forms of protests including hartals for the past two weeks urging the Centre and state governments to seek legal remedies to exclude human habitations from the one-km ESZ around protected [forests](#), national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

The state government has said it would explore the legal options to take care of the livelihood options of the people living in such areas.

The apex court recently issued a direction that each protected forest, including national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, must have an ESZ of one kilometre and banned mining activities within such parks across the nation.

The high range areas of Kerala, particularly areas in Idukki, Wayanad, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts, had been witnessing hartals by various political and farmers' groups against the apex court order delivered on June 3.

Issuing a slew of directions, a bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao had on June 3 ordered that no permanent structure will be allowed within such ESZs and said if the local law or other rules provide for an ESZ of more than one kilometre then the earlier provision would continue to apply.

The SC order came on a batch of applications filed on a pending PIL of 1995 and they raised two sets of issues with the first one related to mining activities in and around Jamua Ramgarh, a wildlife sanctuary in Rajasthan.

The second set of issues was related to prescribing ESZs surrounding the wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.