



₹48,000 crore released to 32 States for afforestation

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The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) has so far disbursed ₹48,606 crore to 32 States, according to a response by the Environment Ministry in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

In August, 2019, the Ministry said it had transferred ₹47,436 crore to 27 States for afforestation. CAMPA funds are part of long-pending dues part of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF), a ₹54,000-crore tranche collected for nearly a decade as environmental compensation from industry, which has razed forest land for its business plans.

By comparison, the Centre had collected ₹9,656 crore from the States from Jan-2019 to March 2020, the Monday statement from Lok Sabha noted.

Monitoring mechanism

States have their own established monitoring mechanism to check if the funds are being used for their intended purpose.

The Centre also has its own monitoring scheme and approves funds for use by States. “Independent concurrent monitoring and evaluation and third party monitoring of works undertaken from State Fund is included in the Annual Plan of Operations of the respective State CAMPA and States are required to carry out internal and third party monitoring of the Compensatory Afforestation (CA) and other activities,” the Environment Ministry said in its reply.

In addition, “measurable output” of all physical activities and targets of each permissible activity along with checking if deadlines are met is monitored by the State Executive Committee and State Steering Committee of the respective State CAMPA.

Chhattisgarh and Odisha have had the maximum amount transferred to them, or close to ₹5,700 crore each followed by Jharkhand and Maharashtra at around ₹3,000 crore.

Independent authority

The CAF Act 2016, which came into being more than a decade since it was devised, established an independent authority — the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority — to execute the fund.

However, it was not until last August that the rules governing the management of the fund were finalised.

The Rules specify that the funds are to be used for catchment area treatment, wildlife management, forest fire prevention, soil and moisture conservation work in the forest. It cannot be used for payment of salary, travelling allowances, making buildings and buying office equipment for forest officers.

Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/48000-crore-released-to-32-states-for-afforestation/article37872622.ece>