Calamity-prone Odisha second in forest cover denudation
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BHUBANESWAR: Odisha has approved diversion of a whopping 11,862.24 hectare of forest land for non-forestry use from 2016 to 2021, standing second in the country in terms of denudation of forests in the last five years.

Madhya Pradesh tops the list with over 19,638 hectare forest land facing denudation in the last five years while Telangana is third in the list with denudation of over 8,209 hectare forest area. As per statistics of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the forest land was diverted for 101 projects including mining and expansion of highways in the State.
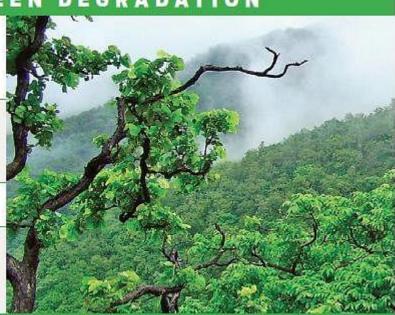
GREEN DEGRADATION

Over 11,800 hectare of forest land diverted for 101 projects

1.4 crore trees felled from 2015 to 2020 for expansion of national and State highways

62,02,936 trees felled in 2015-16

State's green cover increased by 1,821 sq km between 2015 and 2019

Statistics of Odisha Forest department suggests a staggering 1.4 crore trees were felled between 2015-16 and 2019-20 for expansion of National and State highways and other projects. The highest 62,02,936 trees were felled in 2015-16 followed by 18,07,909 in 2016-17, 13,10,314 in 2017-18, 20,44,782 in 2018-19 and 26,77,686 in 2019-20.

While the State continues to face loss of green cover for non-forestry purposes, forest officials said compensatory afforestation is mandatory for diversion of such lands. Union Minister of State for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey had informed the Parliament recently that non-forestry use of forest land is allowed under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act for development purposes after following due process.

As per the forest and tree cover assessment carried out biennially by the Forest Survey of India and published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR), the State's green cover has increased by 1,821 sq km between 2015 and 2019. The green cover of the State which was 54,446 sq km in 2015 has increased to 56,267 sq km in 2019.

Source: https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2021/dec/13/calamity-prone-odisha-2nd-in-forest-cover-denudation-2394886.html