

# Govt: Zoo on forest land to be considered forestry activity

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NAGPUR: In yet another dilution of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980, the ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) has declared that setting up of zoos on the forest land will be considered a forestry activity and, therefore, will not attract FCA provisions. With this, the proposed project near Tadoba, Maharashtra, spread over 210 hectares and comprising a jungle safari, a transit treatment centre and a rescue centre, is likely expected to benefit. Others like the cheetah project in MP's Kuno could gain too.

Earlier, as per a circular issued on November 13, 2007, activities required to be done in zoos as per the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) approved management plan did not attract FCA provisions, provided these activities were necessary for ex situ conservation of wild animals, including upkeep.

However, in a communication to all states on June 8, 2022, the MoEFCC has said during subsequent developments in the matter, it was deliberated that construction of zoos on forest land having diversified components, including a few public utility facilities, should be treated as forestry activity.

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Recently, CZA represented that as no zoo is planned, approved or constructed without its prior approval under strict adherence to its guidelines for Establishment and Scientific Management of Zoos, 2009, considering zoo as a non-forestry activity has added multiple and overlapping layers of permissions to be procured under different agencies.