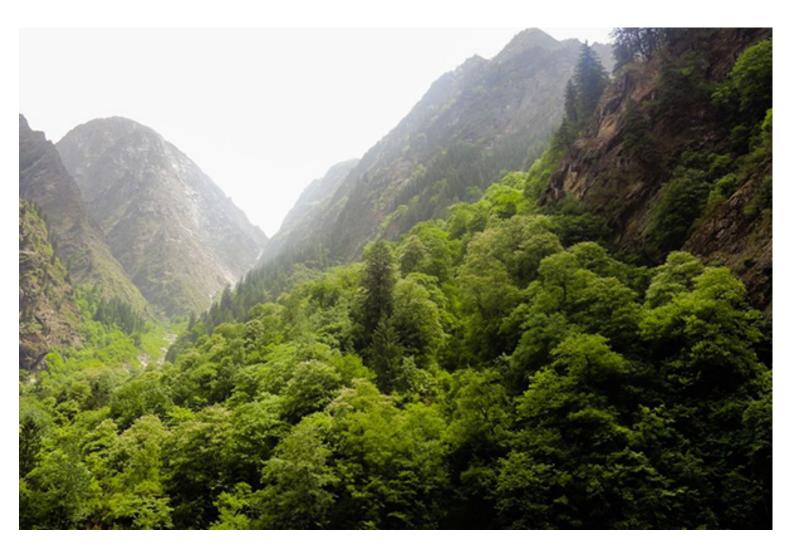


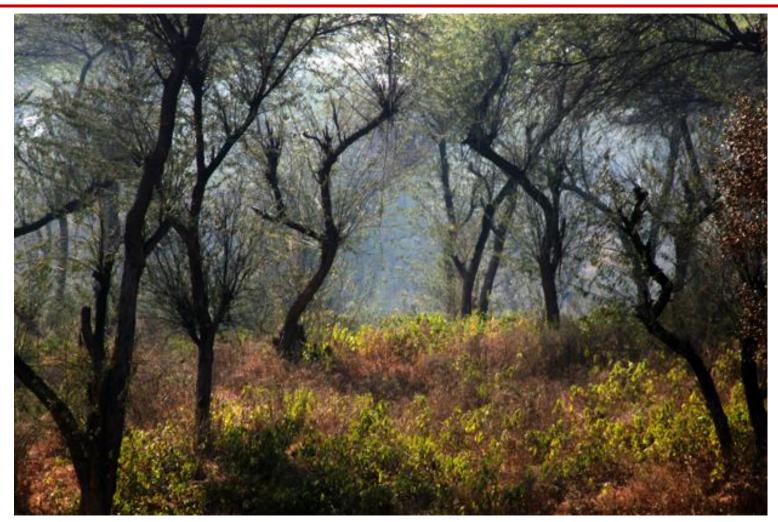
Keep eco-sensitive zone of 1 km around forests: Supreme Court

By IASToppers | 2022-06-04 17:10:00



Keep eco-sensitive zone of 1 km around forests: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court directed that every protected forest, national park, and wildlife sanctuary across the country should have a mandatory eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of a minimum of one km starting from their demarcated boundaries.



[Ref-Live Mint]

Highlights of the Judgement

- The government should not confine its role to that of a "facilitator" of economic activities for the "immediate upliftment of the fortunes of the State".
- The State has to act as a trustee for the benefit of the general public in relation to the natural resources so that sustainable development could be achieved in the long term.
- Mining within the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries shall not be permitted.
- The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Home Secretaries of States are responsible for compliance with the judgment.
 - The Court entrusted the PCCF to ensure that no new permanent structure comes up within ESZ and those already carrying out any activity will have to apply for permission afresh from the PCCF within six months.
- The present order would apply in all such states/UTs where the minimum ESZ is not prescribed.
 - However, if the **ESZ** is already prescribed as per law that goes beyond the one-kilometer buffer zone, the wider margin as **ESZ** shall prevail.
- The minimum width of ESZ may be diluted in the overwhelming public interest.
 - In the above case, the state or UT concerned shall approach the Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) and MoEFCC, and both these bodies shall give their respective opinions or recommendations and based on which this Court shall pass the appropriate order.



Eco-sensitive zone

- They are areas around Protected Areas, National Parks, and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- The purpose of declaring ESZs is to create some kind of "shock absorbers" to the protected areas by regulating and managing the activities around such areas.
- They also act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection.
- They are notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Activities prohibited in ESZ

- Activities such as commercial mining, setting of sawmills and industries causing pollution, commercial use of firewood, and major hydropower projects, are prohibited.
- **Tourism activities** like flying over protected areas in an aircraft or hot air balloon and discharge of effluents and **solid waste** in natural water bodies or terrestrial areas are also prohibited.