

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO 134
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2026

Impact of Oil Drilling and Industrial Projects on Desert Ecology

*134. SHRI UMMEDA RAM BENIWAL:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has reviewed the impact of oil drilling and industrial projects on desert ecology in Barmer;
- (b) if so, the measures taken to mitigate damage; and
- (c) whether similar reviews have been conducted for industrial zones in coastal States/UTs?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

- (a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 134 RAISED BY SHRI UMMEDA RAM BENIWAL REGARDING IMPACT OF OIL DRILLING AND INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS ON DESERT ECOLOGY DUE FOR REPLY ON 09.02.2026.

(a) to (c): All projects/activities listed in the Schedule to the EIA Notification, 2006, as amended, require prior Environmental Clearance (EC) for the setting up of a new project/activity or expansion of an existing project/activity beyond the thresholds mentioned in the Notification. These projects/activities, including oil drilling and industrial projects, are granted EC by the regulatory authority based on the recommendations of the concerned Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), which rigorously appraises the projects/activities based on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out for such projects, taking into account the impact of the said projects/activities on the environment. The mitigation measures recommended by the EAC's form a part of the EC conditions for the proposed project/activity.

For oil drilling projects, the EAC assesses site suitability and impacts on air, water, noise, ecology, and socio-economic conditions. In ecologically sensitive areas such as deserts, the EIA evaluates effects on habitats, biodiversity, soil, water resources, and overall ecological balance using baseline data and impact predictions. Based on anticipated impacts, a detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is prepared, covering mitigation measures, pollution control, conservation actions, risk management, and environmental monitoring. The appraisal emphasizes appropriate siting away from sensitive areas, settlements, floodplains, and forest land, along with safe management of drilling wastes, effluents, hazardous chemicals, and safety risks. Key mitigation measures include use of low-toxicity drilling fluids, lined and reclaimed waste pits, authorized treatment and disposal of wastes, full site restoration, SCADA-based operations, and comprehensive onsite and offsite disaster management and emergency response plans.

The projects/activities once granted EC are required to file six monthly compliance reports, mandatorily through PARIVESH, with regard to the conditions prescribed in the EC. In addition to the above, projects are governed by the consent mechanism which is implemented by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in association with the State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs/SPCCs), under the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. Under the consent mechanism, projects are granted Consent to Establish (CTE) and Consent to Operate (CTO) by the respective SPCBs/SPCCs taking into account various criteria such as siting of the project /activity, the environmental safeguards to be observed by the project/ activity etc., thereby ensuring sustainability. The compliance to CTE/CTO conditions are regularly monitored by the respective SPCBs/SPCCs. Recently, the Ministry has also notified the Environment Audit Rules, 2025 to strengthen the environmental compliance framework for projects operating under various environmental laws.

These mechanisms are uniformly applicable across the country, including desert areas of Barmer and industrial zones located in Coastal States and Union Territories. In addition, for coastal areas, the provisions of the CRZ Notification, 2011 or 2019, as the case may be, are also applicable.
