

Business Standard

HOME MARKETS COMPANIES OPINION SPECIALS TECH PF PORTFOLIO BS SHOWS SPORTS BFSI SUMMIT ELECTIONS

Today's Paper Latest News Economy Finance Current Affairs International Management Strategist Weekend Data Stories **BS Reads**

JUST IN Good, bad and intelligent Tech beyond AI

You are here: [Home](#) » [Opinion](#) » Columns

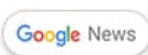
Should degraded land be leased to industry?

DEBATE

Business Standard | New Delhi
Last Updated at June 14, 2013 18:12 IST



Follow us on



Current Affairs GO

ALSO READ

- Time to rescind the ban
- Has de-coupling happened?
- Use technology, please
- Ready for action, soon
- Crunch-time



It is important to know if issues of livelihood have been addressed this time around and whether it is superior to joint forest management.



Ashish Kothari,
Kalpavriksh
Environment Action Group

Degraded land is not waste since millions depend upon it "" regeneration is what is needed, not giving it to industry

For the third time in two decades, the central government is proposing to lease out degraded forest lands or wastelands to industry. On the first two occasions, widespread opposition from communities, environmental and human rights groups had stalled the move. Their objections remain valid even today.

First, it is time we abolished the word "wastelands". A large amount of land in India is indeed degraded, but it is not lying "waste". There is substantial dependence on such lands for fuel, fodder, wild foods and other survival resources by millions of poor people. Handing them over to industry will deprive these people. The industry promises to provide communities forest products from the plantations they set up. This is hardly credible, given the overwhelming past experience of industry cordoning all lands given to it into private estates, the tendency to maximise profits, and the fact that species used for industrial plantations are not of much use to local people.

LATEST NEWS

IN THIS SECTION ALL



Good, bad and intelligent



Tech beyond AI



The free grain scheme risks undermining more than the rural economy



Lunch with BS: 'G20 is about thinking and acting big', says Amitabh Kant



Best of BS Opinion: Dumping ground, defending constitutional order, & more

More >

Second, even degraded forest lands harbour substantial wildlife and biodiversity, such as wolves. Converting them to industrial plantations will threaten such wildlife.

If this move is to help the government reach the target of 33 per cent forest cover, then it is totally inappropriate. Industrial plantations are not forests, and no industry is interested in establishing mixed forests because these will not be as industrially valuable as monocultural plantations. On the other hand, tens of millions of hectares of degraded forest lands have been regenerated and conserved by communities across India, either on their own (for instance, there are over 10,000 such initiatives in Orissa, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra alone), or under joint forest management (JFM) processes. Why not just encourage further such processes, in which there are all-round benefits to the environment and to poor people? Policy changes are needed to enable local communities to share decision-making power with the forest department, rather than hand control over to industry.

If, on the other hand, the motivation is to generate raw material for industry (for instance, pulpwood for the paper industry), then too it is unnecessary. With a fraction of agricultural lands in India, enough industrial wood can be produced by farmers. There are many such farmer-industry tie-ups already. Care only has to be taken that critical food-growing lands are not diverted.

Simultaneously, government and industry need to promote ecologically friendlier raw materials and processes, including much greater recycling.

With such alternatives staring at them in the face, one can only be suspicious that this move is more about handing over real estate to industry than about afforestation. It is an extension of the same "10 per cent economic growth at all costs" mindset that brings about cynical policies such as special economic zones (SEZs). This move needs to be opposed with all the power that people's groups can muster.

R Narayan Moorthy,
Secretary-General,
Indian Paper Manufacturers'
Association



Around Rs 60,000 cr is required to meet the country's forest cover needs "" a PPP effort is needed to achieve this goal

India has a forest cover of 77 million hectares and degraded land of about 28 million hectares. There is no denying the fact that forest resources in India have been increasingly subjected to deforestation and degradation. Poverty and alienation of forest-dependent communities from their life support systems have resulted in widespread forest degradation and have placed the state forest departments in perpetual conflict with them. Today, the need of the hour is to prevent India's forest resource from depletion beyond its regenerative capacity.

In the present global scenario, meaningful conservation can be expected only when the corporate sector is involved in the afforestation programme of degraded forestlands, in linkage with the local communities, through scientific management of land use. The new environment policy of the government sets an ambitious target of achieving 33 per cent green cover over the geographical area of India by 2012 from that of today's 23 per cent forest cover. To cover 33 per cent under tree cover actually means bringing 34 million hectares under plantation. The investment required to afforest this land is nearly Rs 60,000 crore, which is quite high. Industry

EDITORIALS COMMENTS

- **India's international canvas**
The nation's diplomacy enters a critical phase
- **Search for growth**
Tech sector is adjusting to the post-pandemic world
- **The investment puzzle**
Sustainable demand revival will need policy certainty

» More

MOST POPULAR

READ SHARE COMMENTED



Defending the constitutional order



A match not made in start-up heaven



The free grain scheme risks undermining more than the rural economy



Best of BS Opinion: Dumping ground, defending constitutional order, & more



Lunch with BS: 'G20 is about thinking and acting big', says Amitabh Kant

MOST POPULAR COLUMNS



No free lunches

The free food scheme is driven by electoral considerations, but its long-term fiscal risks outweigh the short-term gains

believes the same can be achieved through a public-private partnership as private investment could help stimulate the process.

Envisaged as a tripartite agreement between the local community, the state forest departments and the private investor, the multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) model proposed by the ministry of environment and forests could help provide a green cover over 28 million hectares of degraded land available in India. This concept is based on rotational planting and harvesting to ensure that once placed, the entire area remains green in perpetuity along with generating employment and enabling the wood-based industry to become globally competitive in the long run.

During the course of development of captive plantations, industry will endeavour to train and employ the local inhabitants in forestry activities. Industry will also plant fuel and fodder species at its own cost in approximately 2 per cent of the project area in small patches in close proximity of villages for meeting the requirements of the local communities. Additionally, during harvesting operations of industrial plantations, lops, tops and barks from the felled trees will be allowed by the industry to be collected by local community for use as firewood free of cost. The project management will take due precautions against forest fire by establishment of fire lines along the boundary of the plantation and within the plantation as well as maintain necessary fire fighting force to control and minimise any fire risk.

So, sustainable agro-forestry, in which industry can play as a partner in rehabilitation of degraded forests in such a way that the commercial interests are balanced with the livelihood needs of the neighborhood communities, is a win-win solution to problems across the country.



Indian rupee goes digital

Digital currency and fail-safe wireless connectivity should have preceded demonetisation



Leading the global digital economy

With its abundance of talent, wealth, and innovative capabilities, India's digital ecosystem is a vital global asset that could be harnessed to solve major challenges worldwide

Subscribe to Business Standard Premium

Exclusive Stories, Curated Newsletters, 26 years of Archives, E-paper, and more!

Business Standard

SUBSCRIBE

Insightful news, sharp views, newsletters, e-paper, and more! Unlock incisive commentary only on Business Standard.

Download the [Business Standard App](#) for latest [Business News](#) and [Market News](#).

First Published: Wed, September 12 2007. 00:00 IST

READ MORE ON OPINION COLUMNS

PREVIOUS STORY



The free grain scheme risks undermining more than the rural economy

NEXT STORY

Best of BS Opinion: Dumping ground, defending constitutional order, & more



RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Genuine Leather Sling Bags **Buy 1/2/3 BHK Flats in Solan**

Ad

Ad

Recommended for you

Recommended by



Make Your Child a Confident Speaker

PlanetSpark



Cristiano Ronaldo Sells Manchester House: This Is A Big One

Mansion Global

Last Date to Apply For PGDM @Welingkar is 15th Jan 2023.



Business Standard

BROWSE STOCK COMPANIES [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#)

TRENDING IN BUSINESS

Adani Enterprises | Adani Ports | Apollo Hospitals Enterprise | Asian Paints | Axis Bank | B P C L | Bajaj Auto | Bajaj Finance Ltd | Bajaj Finserv | Bharti Airtel | Britannia Industries | Cipla | Coal India | Divi's Laboratories | Dr Reddy's Labs | Eicher Motors | Grasim Inds | HCL Technologies | H D F C | HDFC Bank | HDFC Life Insurance Company | Hero Motocorp | Hind. Unilever | Hindalco Inds. | ICICI Bank | IndusInd Bank | Infosys | ITC | JSW Steel | Kotak Mah. Bank | Larsen & Toubro | M & M | Maruti Suzuki | Nestle India Ltd. | NTPC | O N G C | Power Grid Corpn | Reliance Inds. | St Bk of India | SBI Life Insurance | Sun Pharma. Inds. | Tata Consumer Products | Tata Motors | Tata Steel | TCS | Tech Mahindra | Wipro | UltraTech Cement Ltd | Foxconn

FROM BS WEBSITE

Home
Companies
Markets
Opinion
Politics
Technology
Specials
Personal Finance
Latest News
Today's Paper
Events
Author
Education

ABOUT US

About Us
Code of Conduct
Terms & Conditions
Privacy Policy
Cookie Policy
Disclaimer
Investor Communication
Compliance
List of our GST registration number

SUPPORT & CONTACT

Partner with Us
Careers
Advertise with Us
Contact Us
Feedback
Browser Support
Sitemap

READER CENTRE

Assistance
E-Paper
Manage My Account
My Page
Portfolio
Registration
Subscribe
Custom Payment

BS PRODUCTS

BS Hindi
BS Motoring
BS Books
B2B Connect
iPhone
iPad
android
Mobile Browser

EVENT

Insurance Round Table 2020

SPORTS

Cricket
Football
ICC World Test Championship
India vs Bangladesh

BUDGET 2022

Budget With BS
Elections 2022
Lok Sabha Elections 2019

Business Standard

Copyrights © 2022 Business Standard Private Ltd. All rights reserved

[About](#) [Cookies](#) [Disclaimer](#) [Contact Us](#) [Complaint](#) [Advertisement With US](#)

Follow us on 

Download Business Standard App 