GEOGRAPHY 20 September 2026

Kerala Minister Vows Exclusion of Inhabited Areas from Western Ghats ESA

Kerala's Agriculture Minister stated the state will submit a comprehensive response to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change regarding the exclusion of inhabited and agricultural areas from the proposed Ecologically Sensitive Area in the Western Ghats.

Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) are regions declared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change around Protected Areas, National Parks, and Wildlife Sanctuaries to regulate activities and protect biodiversity.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- **Kerala's Agriculture Minister T. Siddique** promised to exclude inhabited and agricultural areas from the proposed **Ecologically Sensitive Area** (ESA) in the **Western Ghats**.
- The state will submit a comprehensive response to the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** within the stipulated **60-day period**.
- The Centre's **seventh draft ESA notification** was issued on **July 25, 2026**.
- This notification covers **9,993.7 sq. km** across **131 villages** in **Kerala**.

DID YOU KNOW..!?

The **Western Ghats** are a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and one of the world's eight 'hottest' **biodiversity hotspots**.

Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) are declared under the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**.

The **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel** (WGEEP), also known as the **Gadgil Committee**, was constituted in **2010**.

The **High-Level Working Group** (HLWG) on Western Ghats, known as the **Kasturirangan Committee**, was formed in **2012**.

The **Kasturirangan Committee** recommended that **37%** of the total area of the Western Ghats be designated as an **Ecologically Sensitive Area**.

The **Western Ghats** span **six Indian states**: **Gujarat**, **Maharashtra**, **Goa**, **Karnataka**, **Kerala**, and **Tamil Nadu**.

REVISION FLASHCARD

Kerala seeks exclusion of inhabited/agricultural areas from Western Ghats ESA.

Syllabus Relevance: High

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