

and ecological angles.

The Forest(Conservation) Act, 1980 is a comprehensive piece of legislation providing the detailed procedure for diversion of forest land as well as to deal with the violation of any provision contained therein. It is incorrect to say that such diversions were made at the whims and fancies of ministers and bureaucrats. It is also incorrect to say that such diversions have been made with the objective of exploiting the forest wealth. Proposals or diversion of forest land are made after considering all pros and cons and examining all alternatives.

54. That with reference to statements made in para 73 the same are admitted to the extent that the 5th meeting of the Island Development Authority was held under the chairmanship of the then Prime Minister of India on 6.1.1987 at Car Nicobar. The rest of the paras are denied. I say that the recommendations of the Island Development Authority (IDA) to bring down the quantum of timber extraction has been and is being taken care of. No new wood-based industry is allowed to be set up in the islands. The existing industries are also not allowed to expand their installed capacity. Over the last few years extraction of timber has been gradually reduced. The annual extraction of timber in the entire A&N Islands had been very sharply brought down from the level of