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THE FOREST ACT, 1927

ACT NO. XVI OF 1927

[21st September, 1927]

An Act to consolidate the law relating to forests, the transit of forest-produce and the duty leviable on timber and other forest-produce.*

WHEREAS it is expedient to consolidate the law relating to forests, the transit of forest-produce and the duty leviable on timber and other forest-produce;

It is hereby enacted as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. (1) This Act may be called the Forest Act, 1927.

Short title and extent

¹[(2) It extends to the whole of Bangladesh.]

(3) [Omitted by the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973), section 3 and 2nd Schedule.]

2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,—

Interpretation clause

(1) "cattle" includes elephants, camels, buffaloes, horses, mares, geldings, ponies, colts, fillies, mules, asses, pigs, rams, ewes, sheep, lambs, goats and kids;

* Throughout this Act, except otherwise provided, the words "Bangladesh", "Government" and "Taka" were substituted, for the words "Pakistan", "Provincial Government" and "rupees" respectively by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

¹ Sub-section (2) was substituted, for sub-section (2) by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

- (2) "Forest-officer" means any person whom the Government or any officer empowered by the Government in this behalf, may appoint to carry out all or any of the purposes of this Act or to do anything required by this Act or any rule made thereunder to be done by a Forest-officer;
- (3) "forest-offence" means an offence punishable under this Act or under any rule made thereunder;
- (4) "forest-produce" includes—
- (a) the following whether found in, or brought from, a forest or not, that is to say:—
- timber, charcoal, cuatchouc, catechu, wood-oil, resin, natural varnish, bark, lac, mahua flowers, mahua seeds, kuth and myrabolams, and
- (b) the following when found in or brought from, a forest, that is to say:—
- (i) trees and leaves, flowers and fruits, and all other parts or produce not hereinbefore mentioned, of trees,
- (ii) Plants not being trees (including grass, creepers, reeds and moss), and all parts or produce of such plants,
- (iii) wild animals and skins, tusks, horns, bones, silk, cocoons, honey, and wax, and al other parts of produce of animals, and
- (iv) peat, surface, soil, rock and minerals (including limestone, laterite, mineral oils and all products of mines or quarries);
- ¹[(4A) "owner" includes a Court of Wards in respect of property under the superintendence or charge of such court;]
- (5) "river" includes any stream, canal, creek or other channels, natural or artificial;

¹ Clause (4A) was inserted by section 2 of the Indian Forest (Amendment) Act, 1933 (Act No. III of 1933).

- (6) "timber" includes trees when they have fallen or have been felled, and all wood whether cut up or fashioned or hollowed out for any purpose or not; and
- (7) "tree" includes palms, bamboos, stumps, brushwood and canes.

CHAPTER II

OF RESERVED FORESTS

3. The Government may constitute any forest-land or waste-land ¹[or any land suitable for afforestation] which is the property of Government, or over which the Government has proprietary rights, or to the whole or any part of the forest-produce of which the Government is entitled, a reserved forest in the manner hereinafter provided. Power to reserve forests

4. (1) Whenever it has been decided to constitute any land reserved forest, the Government shall issue a notification in the official Gazette— Notification by Government

- (a) declaring that it has been decided to constitute such land a reserved forest;
- (b) specifying, as nearly as possible, the situation and limits of such land; and
- (c) appointing an officer (hereinafter called "the Forest Settlement-officer") to inquire into and determine the existence, nature and extent of any rights alleged to exist in favour of any person in or very any land comprised within such limits, or in or over any forest-produce, and to deal with the same as provided in this Chapter.

Explanation.—For the purposes of Clause (b), it shall be sufficient to describe the limits of the forest by roads, rivers, ridges or other well-known or readily intelligible boundaries.

(2) The officer appointed under clause (c) of sub-section (1) shall ordinarily be a person not holding any forest-office except that of Forest Settlement-officer.

¹ The words "or any land suitable for afforestation" were inserted by section 2 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

(3) Nothing in this section shall prevent the Government from appointing any number of officers not exceeding three, not more than one of whom shall be a person holding any forest-office except as aforesaid, to perform the duties of a Forest Settlement-officer under this Act.

Bar of accrual
of forest rights

5. After the issue of a notification under section 4, no right shall be acquired in or over the land comprised in such notification, except by succession or under a grant or contract in writing made or entered into by or on behalf of the Government or some person in whom such right was vested when the notification was issued; and no fresh clearings for cultivation or for any other purpose shall be made in such land except in accordance with such rules as may be made by the Government in this behalf.

Proclamation
by Forest
Settlement
officer

6. When a notification has been issued under section 4, the Forest Settlement-officer shall publish in ¹[Bengali] in every town and village in the neighbourhood of the land comprised therein, a proclamation—

- (a) Specifying, as nearly as possible, the situation and limits of the proposed forest;
- (b) explaining the consequences which, as hereinafter provided, will ensue on the reservation of such forest; and
- (c) fixing a period of not less than three months ²[and not more than four months] from the date of such proclamation, and requiring every person claiming any right mentioned in section 4 or section 5 within such period either to present to the Forest Settlement-officer a written notice specifying or to appear before him and state, the nature of such right and the amount particulars of the compensation (if any) claimed in respect thereof.

¹ The word "Bengali" was substituted, for the words "the local vernacular" by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

² The words "and not more than four months" were inserted by section 3 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

7. The forest settlement-officer shall take down in writing all statements made under section 6, and shall at some convenient place inquire into all claims duly preferred under that section, and the existence of any rights mentioned in section 4 or section 5 and not claimed under section 6 so far as the same may be as certainable from the records of Government and the evidence of any persons likely to be acquainted with the same.

Inquiry by Forest Settlement-officer

8. For the purpose of such inquiry, the Forest Settlement officer may exercise the following powers, that is to say:—

Powers of Forest Settlement-officer

- (a) power to enter, by himself or any officer authorized by him for the purpose, upon any land, and to survey, demarcate and make a map of the same; and
- (b) the powers of a Civil Court in the trail of suit.

9. Rights in respect of which no claim has been preferred under section 6, and of the existence of which no knowledge has been acquired by inquiry under section 7, shall be extinguished, unless, before the notification under section 20 is published, the person claiming them satisfies the Forest Settlement-officer that he had sufficient cause for not preferring such claim within the period fixed under section 6.

Extinction of rights

10. (1) In the case of a claim relating to the practice of shifting cultivation, the Forest Settlement-officer shall record a statement setting forth the particulars of the claim and of any local rule or order under which the practice is allowed or regulated, and submit the statement to the Government, together with his opinion as to whether the practice would be permitted or prohibited wholly or in part.

Treatment of claims relating to practice of shifting cultivation

(2) On receipt of the statement and opinion, the Government may make and order permitting or prohibiting the practice wholly or in part.

(3) If such practice is permitted wholly or in part, the Forest Settlement-officer may arrange for its exercise—

- (a) by altering the limits of the land under settlement so as to exclude land of sufficient extent, of a suitable kind, and in a locality reasonably convenient for the purposes of the claimants, or

- (b) by causing certain portions of the land under settlement to be separately demarcated, and giving permission to the claimants to practice shifting cultivation therein under such conditions as he may prescribe.

(4) All arrangements made under sub-section (3) shall be subject to the previous sanction of the Government.

(5) The practice of shifting cultivation shall in all cases be deemed a privilege subject to control, restriction and abolition by the Government.

Power to
acquire land
over which
right is claimed

11. (1) In the case of a claim to a right in or over any land other than a right-of-way or right of pasture, or a right to forest-produce or a water-course, the Forest Settlement-officer shall pass an order admitting or rejecting the same in whole or in part.

(2) If such claim is admitted in whole or in part, the Forest Settlement-officer shall either—

- (i) exclude such land from the limits of the proposed forest; or
- (ii) come to an agreement with the owner thereof for the surrender of his rights; or
- (iii) proceed to acquire such land in the manner provided by the ¹[Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. II of 1982)].

(3) For the purpose of so acquiring such land—

- (a) the Forest Settlement-officer shall be deemed to be a Collector proceeding under the ¹[Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. II of 1982)];
- (b) the claimant shall be deemed to be a person interested and appearing before him in pursuance of a notice given under section 9 of that Act;
- (c) the provisions of the preceding sections of that Act shall be deemed to have been complied with; and

¹ The words, comma, figures and brackets "Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. II of 1982)" were substituted, for the words, comma and figure "Land Acquisition Act, 1894" by section 4 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

- (d) the Collector, with the consent of the claimant, or the Court, with the consent of both parties, may award compensation in land, or partly in land and partly in money ¹[, or wholly in money].

12. In the case of a claim to rights of a pasture or to forest-produce, the Forest Settlement-officer shall pass an order admitting or rejecting the same in whole or in part.

Order on claims to rights of pasture or to forest-produce

13. The Forest Settlement-officer, when passing any order under section 12, shall record, so far as may be practicable,—

Record to be made by Forest Settlement-officer

- (a) the name, father's name, caste, residence and occupation of the person claiming the right; and
- (b) the designation, position and area of all fields or groups of fields (if any), and the designation and position of all buildings (if any) in respect of which the exercise of such rights is claimed.

14. If the Forest Settlement-officer admits in whole or in part any claim under section 12, he shall also record the extent to which the claim is so admitted, specifying the number and description of the cattle which the claimant is from time to time entitled to graze in the forest, the season during which such pasture is permitted, the quantity of timber and other forest-produce which he is from time to time authorized to take or receive, and such other particulars as the case may require. He shall also record whether the timber or other forest-produce obtained by the exercise of the rights claimed may be sold or bartered.

Record where the admits claim

15. (1) After making such record the Forest Settlement-officer shall, to the best of his ability, and having due regard to the maintenance of the reserved forest in respect of which the claim is made, pass such orders as will ensure the continued exercise of the rights so admitted.

Exercise of rights admitted

¹ The comma and words ", or wholly in money" were inserted by section 4 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

(2) For this purpose the Forest Settlement-officer may—

- (a) set out some other forest-tract of sufficient extent, and in a locality reasonably convenient, for the purposes of such claimants, and record an order conferring upon them a right of pasture or to forest-produce (as the case may be) to the extent so admitted; or
- (b) so alter the limits of the proposed forest as to exclude forest-land of sufficient extent, and in a locality reasonably convenient, for the purposes of the claimants; or
- (c) record an order, continuing to such claimants a right of pasture or to forest-produce, as the case may be, to the extent so admitted, as such seasons, within such portions of the proposed forest, and under such rules, as may be made in this behalf by the Government.

Commutation
of rights

16. In case the Forest Settlement-officer finds it impossible, having due regard to the maintenance of the reserved forest, to make such settlement under section 15 as shall ensure the continued exercise of the said rights to the extent so admitted, he shall, subject to such rules as the Government may make in this behalf, commute such rights, by the payment to such persons of a sum of money in lieu thereof, or by the grant of land, or in such other manner as he thinks fit.

Time limit for
resolution of
claims

¹**[16A.** (1) Within 12 months after the period fixed under section 6 has elapsed, or within 12 months after the enactment of this section, whichever is later, the Forest Settlement Officer shall do one of the following:—

- (i) dispose of all claims made under sections 6 and 9; or
- (ii) obtain an extension of this 12 months deadline under sub-section (2).

¹ Section 16A was inserted by section 2 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

(2) Upon application of a Forest Settlement Officer, the Deputy Commissioner may grant a single 2 months extension of the deadline in sub-section (1), making the deadline 14 months, and if that extended deadline threatens to be missed, the Commissioner may grant additional 4 months extensions.]

¹[17. Any person who has made a claim under this Act, or any Forest-officer or other person generally or specially empowered by the Government in this behalf, may, within three months from the date of the order passed on such claim by the Forest Settlement-officer under section 11, section 12, section 15 or section 16, present an appeal from such order to the Divisional Commissioner concerned.

Appeal from order passed under section 11, section 12, section 15 or section 16

18. [(1) *Omitted by the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000), section 3.*]

Appeal under section 17

²[(2) (a) An appeal shall be heard by the Divisional Commissioner in the manner prescribed for the time being for the hearing of appeals in matters relating to land-development tax and the appeal shall be disposed of within 6 months from the date of presenting it under section 17.

(b) The Divisional Commissioner shall report to the Government the particulars of the cases which could not be disposed by him within the time prescribed in clause (a), where upon the Government may extend time as deemed necessary.]

(3) The order passed on the appeal by the Divisional Commissioner shall, subject only to revision by the Government, be final.]

19. The Government, or any person who has made a claim under this Act, may appoint any person to appear, plead and act

Pleaders

¹ Sections 17 and 18 were substituted, for sections 17 and 18 by section 5 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² Sub-section (2) was substituted, for sub-section (2) by section 3 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

on its or his behalf before the Forest Settlement-officer, or ¹[the Divisional Commissioner], in the course of any inquiry or appeal under this Act.

Notification
declaring forest
reserved

20. (1) When the following events have occurred, namely:—

- (a) the period fixed under section 6 for preferring claims has elapsed, and all claims, if any, made under that section or section 9 have been disposed of by the Forest Settlement-officer;
- (b) if any such claims have been made, the period limited by section 17 for appealing from the orders passed on such claims has elapsed, and all appeals (if any) presented within such period have been disposed of by the ²[Divisional Commissioner]; and
- (c) all lands (if any) to be included in the proposed forest, which the Forest Settlement-officer has, under section 11, elected to acquire under the ³[Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Act No. II of 1982)], have become vested in the Government under section 11 of that Ordinance],

the Government shall publish a notification in the official Gazette, specifying definitely, according to boundary-marks erected or otherwise, the limits of the forest which is to be reserved, and declaring the same to be reserved from a date fixed by the notification.

(2) From the date so fixed such forest shall be deemed to be a reserved forest.

¹ The words "the Divisional Commissioner" were substituted, for the words "the appellate officer or Court" by section 6 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The words "Divisional Commissioner" were substituted, for the words "appellate officer or Court" by section 7 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

³ The words, commas, figures and brackets "Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Act No. II of 1982), have become vested in the Government under section 11 of that Ordinance" were substituted, for the words, commas and figures "Land Acquisition Act, 1894, have become vested in the Government under section 16 of that Act" by section 7 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

21. The Forest-officer shall, before the date fixed by such notification, ¹[cause it] to be published in every town and village in the neighbourhood of the forest.

Publication of translation of such notification in neighbourhood of forest

22. The Government may, within five years from the publication of any notification under section 20, revise any arrangement made under section 15 or section 18, and may for this purpose rescind or modify any order made under section 15 or section 18, and direct that any one of the proceedings specified in section 15 be taken in lieu of any other of such proceedings, or that the rights admitted under section 12 be commuted under section 16.

Power to revise arrangement made under section 15 or section 18

23. No right of any description shall be acquired in or over a reserved forest except by succession or under a grant or contract in writing made by or on behalf of the Government or some person in whom such right was vested when the notification under section 20 was issued.

No right acquired over reserved forest, except as here provided

24. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in section 23, no right continued under clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 15 shall be alienated by way of grant, sale, lease, mortgage or otherwise, without the sanction of the Government:

Rights not to be alienated without sanction

Provided that, when any such right is appendant to any land or house, it may be sold or otherwise alienated with such land or house.

(2) No timber or other forest-produce obtained in exercise of any such right shall be sold or bartered except to such extent as may have been admitted in the order recorded under section 14.

25. The Forest-officer may, with the previous sanction of the Government or of any officer duly authorized by it in this behalf, stop any public or private way or water-course in a reserved forest, provided that a substitute for the way or water-course so stopped, which the Government deems to be reasonably convenient, already exists, or has been provided or constructed by the Forest-officer in lieu thereof.

Power to stop ways and water-courses in reserved forests

¹ The words "cause it" were substituted, for the words "cause a translation thereof into the local vernacular" by section 8 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

Acts prohibited
in such forests

26. ¹[(1) Any person who, in a reserved forest—

- (a) kindles, keeps or carries any fire except at such seasons as the Forest-officer may notify in this behalf;
- (b) trespasses or pastures cattle, or permits cattle to trespass;
- (c) causes any damage by negligence in felling any tree or cutting or dragging any timber;
- (d) quarries stone, burns lime or charcoal, or collects, subjects to any manufacturing process, or removes, any forest produce other than timber;

or who enters a reserved forest with fire arms without prior permission from the Divisional Forest-officer concerned, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to two thousand Taka, in addition to such compensation for damage done to the forest as the convicting Court may direct to be paid.

(1A) Any person who—

- (a) makes any fresh clearing prohibited by section 5; or
- (b) removes any timber from a reserved forest; or
- (c) sets fire to a reserved forest, or, in contravention of any rules made by the Government in this behalf, kindles any fire, or leaves any fire burning, in such manner as to endanger such a forest;

or who, in a reserved forest—

- (d) fells, girdles, lops, taps or burns any tree or strips off the bark or leaves from or otherwise damages, the same;
- (e) clears or breaks up any land for cultivation or any other purpose ²[or cultivates or attempts to cultivate any land in any other manner];

¹ Sub-sections (1) and (1A) were substituted, for sub-section (1) by section 9 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The words "or cultivates or attempts to cultivate any land in any other manner" were inserted by section 4 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

- (f) in contravention of any rules made in this behalf by the Government, hunts, shoots, fishes, poisons water or sets traps or snares; or
- (g) establishes saw-pits or saw-benches or converts trees into timber without lawful authority,

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall not be less than six months, and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to fifty thousand Taka and shall not be less than five thousand Taka, in addition to such compensation for damage done to the forest as the convicting Court may direct to be paid.]

(2) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prohibit—

- (a) any act done by permission in writing of the Forest-officer, or under any rule made by the Government; or
- (b) the exercise of any right continued under clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 15, or created by grant or contract in writing made by or on behalf of the Government under section 23.

(3) Whenever fire is caused wilfully or by gross negligence in a reserved forest, the Government may (notwithstanding that any penalty has been inflicted under this section) direct that in such forest or any portion thereof the exercise of all rights of pasture or to forest-produce shall be suspended for such period as it thinks fit.

27. (1) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, direct that, from a date fixed by such notification, any forest or any portion thereof reserved under this Act shall cease to be a reserved forest.

Power to declare forest no longer reserved

(2) From the date so fixed, such forest or portion shall cease to be reserved; but the rights (if any) which have been extinguished therein shall not revive in consequence of such cessation.

CHAPTER III

¹[OF VILLAGE FORESTS AND SOCIAL FORESTRY]Formation of
village forests

28. (1) The Government may assign to any village community the rights of Government to or over any land which has been constituted a reserved forest, and may cancel such assignment. All forests so assigned shall be called village forests.

(2) The Government may make rules for regulating the management of village-forests, prescribing the conditions under which the community to which any such assignment is made may be provided with timber or other forest-produce or pasture, and their duties for the protection and improvement of such forest.

(3) All the provisions of this Act relating to reserved forests shall (so far as they are not inconsistent with the rules so made) apply to village-forests.

Social Forestry

²**[28A.** (1) On any land which is the property of the Government or over which the Government has proprietary rights, and on any other land assigned to the Government by voluntary written agreement of the owner for the purpose of afforestation, conservation or management through social forestry, the Government may establish a social forestry programme under sub-section (2).

(2) A social Forestry programme is established when the Government by one or more written agreements assigns rights to forest-produce or rights to use the land, for the purposes of social forestry, to person assisting the Government in management of the land.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, agreements under sub-section (2) concerning Government-owned lands need not be registered in the local records of right to lands, and no party to such an unregistered agreement

¹ The words "OF VILLAGE-FOREST AND SOCIAL FORESTRY" were substituted, for the words "OF VILLAGE-FORESTS" by section 5 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

² Sections 28A and 28B were inserted by section 6 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

may be divested of rights solely by execution of a subsequent assignment of rights by the Government to another person.

(4) The Government may make rules to set out standards for social forestry agreements and programme, and such standards shall at a minimum—

- (i) require agreements to include or make reference to an agreed-upon management plan for the social forestry programme;
- (ii) guarantee participants an equitable share of proceeds in return for labour invested;
- (iii) in the case of agreements contemplating timber harvest, require the duration of agreements to include the expected principal harvest;
- (iv) allow transfer of benefits and obligations under agreements between spouses, and, when a participant dies, under the laws of succession to his heir, and govern other transfers;
- (v) allow creation and dissolution of management committees representing participants in particular programmes, and empower the management committees to impose fine on participants for violation of agreement; and
- (vi) allow persons to petition the Government for 'undertaking' social forestry programme.

(5) The Government may make rules to set out other requirements or guarantees for agreements, including—

- (i) duties of participants to assist forest officers; and
- (ii) any other matter concerning formation or operation of social forestry programmes.

(6) Rules made under this section may recognize different classes of social forestry programmes, and the Government may make different rules for different classes or programmes.

(7) The Government may publish guidelines and forms for social forestry agreements.

Effect of other provisions of law on social forestry

28B. (1) For the purposes of section 26 and 34, the exercise of any right granted by a social forestry agreement under section 28A shall be considered to be done with permission in writing of the Forest-officer.

(2) Section 80 shall not apply to private lands subject to a voluntary written agreement under section 28A, unless such agreement itself allows the Government to invoke all or part of section 80.

(3) Section 81 shall not apply to participants in social forestry projects under section 28A.]

CHAPTER IV

OF PROTECTED FORESTS

Protected forests

29. (1) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare the provisions of this Chapter applicable to any forest-land or waste-land which is not included in a reserved forest, but which is the property of Government, or over which the Government has proprietary rights, or to the whole or any part of the forest -produce of which the Government is entitled.

(2) The forest-land and waste-lands comprised in any such notification shall be called a "protected forest".

(3) No such notification shall be made unless the nature and extent of the rights of Government and of private persons in or over the forest-land or waste-land ¹[or *charland*] comprised therein have been inquired into and recorded at a survey or settlement, or in such other manner as the Government thinks sufficient. Every such record shall be presumed to be correct until the contrary is proved:

Provided that, if, in the case of any forest-land or waste-land, ¹[or *charland*] the Government thinks that such inquiry and record are necessary, but that they will occupy such length of time as in the meantime to endanger the rights of Government, the Government may, pending such inquiry and record, declare such land to be a protected forest, but so as not to abridge or affect any existing rights of individuals or communities.

¹ The words "or *charland*" were added by section 7 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

- 30.** The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette,—
- Power to issue notification reserving trees, etc.
- (a) declare any trees or class of trees in a protected forest to be reserved from a date fixed by the notification;
 - (b) declare that any portion of such forest specified in the notification shall be closed for such term, not exceeding thirty years, as the Government thinks fit, and that the rights of private persons, if any, over such portion shall be suspended during such term, provided that the remainder of such forest be sufficient, and in locality reasonably convenient, for the due exercise of the rights suspended in the portion so closed; or
 - (c) prohibit, from a date fixed as aforesaid, the quarrying of stone, or the burning of lime or charcoal, or the collection or subjection to any manufacturing process, or removal of, any forest-produce in any such forest, and the ¹[breaking up, clearing or use] for cultivation, for building, for herding cattle or for any other purpose, of any land in any such forest.
- 31.** The Collector shall cause a translation into ²[Bengali] ²[Bengali] of every notification issued under section 30 to be affixed in a conspicuous place in every town and village in the neighbourhood of the forest comprised in the notification.
- Publication of translation of such notification in neighbourhood
- 32.** The Government may make rules to regulate the following matters, namely:—
- Power to make rules for protected forests
- (a) the cutting, sawing, conversion and removal of trees and timber, and the collection, manufacture and removal of forest-produce, from protected forests;
 - (b) the granting of licences to the inhabitants of towns and villages in the vicinity of protected forests to take trees, timber or other forest-produce for their own use, and the production and return of such licences by such persons;

¹ The words and comma "breaking up, cleaning or use" were substituted, for the words "breaking up or clearing" by section 8 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

² The word "Bengali" was substituted, for the words "the local vernacular" by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

- (c) the granting of licences to persons felling or removing trees or timber or other forest-produce from such forests for the purposes of trade, and the production and return of such licences by such persons;
- (d) the payments, if any, to be made by the persons mentioned in clauses (b) and (c) for permission to cut such trees, or to collect and remove such timber or other forest-produce;
- (e) the other payments, if any, to be made by them in respect of such trees, timber and produce, and the places where such payment shall be made;
- (f) the examination of forest-produce passing out of such forests;
- (g) the clearing and breaking up of land for cultivation or other purposes in such forests;
- (h) the protection from fire of timber lying in such forests and of trees reserved under section 30;
- (i) the cutting of grass and pasturing of cattle in such forests;
- (j) hunting, shooting, fishing, poisoning water and setting traps or snares in such forests, ¹[* * *];
- (k) the protection and management of any portion of a forest closed under section 30; and
- (l) the exercise of rights referred to in section 29.

Penalties for acts in contravention of ²[section 28A or of]

33. ³[(1) Any person who commits any of the following offences, namely:—

- (a) contrary to any prohibition under section 30, quarries any stone, or burns any lime or charcoal,

¹ The words, commas and figure "and the killing or catching of elephants in such forests in areas in which the Elephants Preservation Act, 1879, is not in force" were omitted by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

² The words and figure "section 28A or of" were inserted by section 9 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

³ Sub-sections (1) and (1A) were substituted, for sub-section (1) by section 10 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

- or collects, subjects to any manufacturing process, or removes any forest produce other than timber; notification under section 30 or of rules under section 32
- (b) leaves burning any fire kindled by him in the vicinity of any protected forest;
 - (c) causes any damage by negligence in felling any tree or cutting or dragging any timber;
 - (d) trespasses or pastures cattle, or permits cattle to trespass;
 - (e) enters a protected forest with fire arms without prior permission from the Divisional Forest-officer concerned;
 - (f) infringes any rule made under section 32 [;]¹
 - ²[(g) any offence or damage committed against social forestry programme will be deemed as an offense,]

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to two thousand Taka, in addition such compensation for damage done to the forest as the convicting court may direct to be paid.

(1A) Any person who commits any of the following offences, namely:—

- (a) sets fire to a protected forest or, in contravention of any rules made by the Government in this behalf, kindles any fire, or leaves any fire burning, in such manner as to endanger such a forest;
- (b) fells, girdles, lops, taps or burns any tree reserved under section 30, or strips off the bark or leaves from, or otherwise damages, any such tree;

¹ A semi-colon was substituted, for comma (,) at the end of clause (f) by section 9 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

² Clause (g) was added by section 9 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

- (c) contrary to any prohibition under section 30, clears or breaks up any land for cultivation or other purpose ¹[or cultivates or attempts to cultivate any land in any other manner] in the protected forest;
- (d) in contravention of any rules made in this behalf by the Government, hunts, shoots, sets traps or snares or catches or kills any wild animals and birds, fishes or poisons water;
- (e) establishes saw-pits or saw-benches or converts tree into timber without lawful authority in a protected forest;
- (f) removes any timber from a protected forest;

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall not be less than six months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to fifty thousand Taka and shall not be less than five thousand Taka, in addition such compensation for damages done to the forest as the convicting Court may direct to be paid.]

(2) Whenever fire is caused wilfully or by gross negligence in a protected forest, the Government may, notwithstanding that any penalty has been inflicted under this section, direct that in such forest or any portion thereof the exercise of any right of pasture or to forest -produce shall be suspended for such period as it thinks fit.

Nothing in this Chapter to prohibit acts done in certain cases

34. Nothing in this Chapter shall be deemed to prohibit any act done with the permission in writing of the Forest-officer, or in accordance with rules made under section 32, or, except as regards any portion of a forest closed under section 30, or as regards any rights the exercise of which has been suspended under section 33, in the exercise of any right recorded under section 29.

CHAPTER V

OF THE CONTROL OVER FORESTS AND LANDS NOT BEING THE PROPERTY OF GOVERNMENT

35. [*Repealed by the Private Forests Ordinance, 1959 (Ordinance No. XXXIV of 1959), section 63.*]

¹ The words "or cultivates or attempts to cultivate any land in any other manner" were inserted by section 9 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

36. [Repealed by the Private Forests Ordinance, 1959 (Ordinance No. XXXIV of 1959), section 63.]

37. [Repealed by the Private Forests Ordinance, 1959 (Ordinance No. XXXIV of 1959), section 63.]

38. [Repealed by the Private Forests Ordinance, 1959 (Ordinance No. XXXIV of 1959), section 63.]

¹**38A.** (1) After commencement of this section, the Government may no longer exercise authority to vest control of forest land under sub-section (2) of section 6, section 7 or section 11 of the Private Forest Ordinance, 1959 (E. P. Ordinance No. XXXIV of 1959):

Operation of the Private Forest Ordinance

Provided that the forest land already vested shall remain vested.

(2) After commencement of this section, the Government may no longer exercise authority under section 3 of the Private Forests Ordinance, 1959 (E. P. Ordinance No. XXXIV of 1959) to require private forests to have working plans.

38B. (1) The Government may make rules for the purpose of issuing notice to owners or occupiers of neighbouring lands at least 30 days before understanding specified forest management activities that may pose a threat of harm to the environment or private or Government property or that the Government may wish to track for statistical purposes.

Notice of forest management activities

(2) Within 20 days after receiving notice of a proposed activity under this section, upon finding that the proposed activity is likely to cause unreasonable damage to the environment or private or Government property, the Government may issue a written order to the owner or occupier of a land to alter or to refrain from the proposed activity to prevent or minimize such damage.

38C. (1) The Government may make rules to prohibit, restrict or require a permit for land clearing use of pesticides, harvest on steep slopes, or other forest management activities on private land that may pose a threat to property, renewable natural resources or the productivity of land.

Restricted activities

¹ Sections 38A, 38B, 38C and 38D were inserted by section 10 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

(2) The Government shall empower Forest-officers to issue such permits required under sub-section (1).

Abatement of forest nuisances

38D. (1) Upon a finding that conditions on a land pose a risk of disease, insect outbreak fire or other harm to nearby renewable natural resources, the Government may issue a written order to the owner or occupier of the land to abate such a nuisance within 30 days, or sooner as may be specified in the notice, if the protection of renewable natural resources demands.

(2) To be effective, an order under sub-section (1) must be delivered personally to the owner or occupier of the land or sent to him by registered post with acknowledgement receipt due, or if the address of the person is unknown, affixed conspicuously at least two locations on the property.

(3) If the owner or the occupier fails to comply with an order under this section, the Government may enter the land, remove the nuisance and realize compensation as a public demand.]

CHAPTER VI

OF THE DUTY ON TIMBER AND OTHER FOREST-PRODUCE

Power to impose duty on timber and other forest produce

39. (1) The Government may levy a duty in such manner, at such places and at such rates as it may declare by notification in the official Gazette on all timber or other forest-produce—

- (a) which is produced in Bangladesh, and in respect of which the Government has any right;
- (b) which is brought from any place outside Bangladesh or is transported from or to any place within Bangladesh.

(2) In every case in which such duty is directed to be levied *ad valorem*, the Government may fix by like notification the value on which such duty shall be assessed.

Limit not apply to purchase money for royalty

40. Nothing in this Chapter shall be deemed to limit the amount, if any, chargeable as purchase-money or royalty on any timber or other forest-produce, although the same is levied on such timber or produce while in transit, in the same manner as duty is levied.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE CONTROL OF TIMBER AND OTHER FOREST-PRODUCE IN
TRANSIT

41. (1) The control of all rivers and their banks as regards the floating of timber, as well as the control of all timber and other forest-produce in transit by land or water, is vested in the Government, and it may make rules to regulate the transit of all timber and other forest-produce.

Power to make rules to regulate transit of forest-produce

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power such rules may—

- (a) prescribe the routes by which alone timber or other forest-produce may be imported, exported or moved into, from or within ¹[Bangladesh];
- (b) prohibit the import or export or moving of such timber or other produce without a pass from an officer duly authorized to issue the same, or otherwise than in accordance with the conditions of such pass;
- (c) provide for the issue, production and return of such passes and for the payment of fees thereof;
- (d) provide for the stoppage, reporting, examination and marking of timber or other forest-produce in transit, in respect of which there is reason to believe that any money is payable to the Government on account of the price thereof or on account of any duty, fee, royalty or charge due thereon, or, to which it is desirable for the purposes of this Act to affix a mark;
- (e) provide for the establishment and regulation of depots to which such timber or other produce shall be taken by those in charge of it for examination, or for the payment of such money, or in order that such marks may be affixed to it; and the conditions under which such timber or other produce shall be brought to, stored at and removed from such depots;

¹ The word "Bangladesh" was substituted, for the words "the Province" by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

- (f) prohibit the closing up or obstructing of the channel or banks of any river used for the transit of timber or other forest-produce, and the throwing of grass, brushwood, branches or leaves into any such river or any act which may cause such river to be closed or obstructed;
- (g) provide for the prevention or removal of any obstruction of the channel or banks of any such river, and for recovering the cost of such prevention or removal from the person whose acts or negligence necessitated the same;
- (h) prohibit absolutely or subject to conditions, within specified local limits, the ¹[establishment of wood based industries including saw mills, saw-pits, furniture marts and brick-fields], the converting, cutting, burning, concealing or making of timber, the altering or effacing of any marks on the same, or the possession or carrying of marking hammers or other implements used for marking timber;
- (i) regulate the use of property marks for timber, and the registration of such marks; prescribe the time for which such registration shall hold good; limit the number of such marks that may be registered by any one person, and provide for the levy of fees for such registration.

(3) The Government may direct that any rule made under this section shall not apply to any specified class of timber or other forest-produce or to any specified local area.

41A. [*Omitted by the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973), section 3 and 2nd Schedule.*]

¹ The words and commas "establishment of wood based industries including saw mills, saw-pits, furniture-marts and brick-fields" were substituted, for the words "establishment of saw-pits" by section 11 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

42. (1) The Government may by such rules prescribe as penalties for the contravention thereof imprisonment for a term which may extend to ¹[three years and shall not be less than two months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to ten thousand Taka and shall not be less than two thousand Taka].

Penalty for breach of rules made under section 41

(2) Such rules may provide that the penalties which are double of those mentioned in sub-section (1) may be inflicted in cases where the offence is committed after sunset and before sunrise, or after preparation for resistance to lawful authority, or where the offender has been previously convicted of a like offence.

43. The Government shall not be responsible for any loss or damage which may occur in respect of any timber or other forest-produce while at a depot established under a rule made under section 41, or while detained elsewhere, for the purposes of this Act; and no Forest-officer shall be responsible for any such loss or damage, unless he causes such loss or damage negligently, maliciously or fraudulently.

Government and Forest-officers not liable for damage to forest-produce at depot

44. In case of any accident or emergency involving danger to any property at any such depot, every person employed at such depot, whether by the Government or by any private person, shall render any assistance to any Forest-officer or Police officer demanding his aid in averting such danger or securing such property from damage or loss.

All persons bound to aid in case of accident at depot

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE COLLECTION OF DRIFT AND STRANDED TIMBER

45. (1) All timber found adrift, beached, stranded or sunk; all wood or timber bearing marks which have not been registered in accordance with the rules made under section 41, or on which the marks have been obliterated, altered or defaced by fire or otherwise; and in such areas as the Government

Certain kinds of timber to be deemed property of Government until title thereto proved,

¹ The words "three years and shall not be less than two months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to ten thousand Taka and shall not be less than two thousand Taka" were substituted, for the words and commas "six months, or fine which may extend to five hundred Taka, or both" by section 12 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

and may be
collected
accordingly

directs, all unmarked wood and timber;

shall be deemed to be the property of Government, unless and until any person establishes his right and title thereto, as provided in this Chapter.

(2) Such timber may be collected by any Forest-officer or other person entitled to collect the same by virtue of any rule made under section 51, and may be brought to any depot which the Forest-officer may notify as a depot for the reception of drift timber.

(3) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette exempt any class of timber from the provisions of this section.

Notice to
claimants of
drift timber

46. Public notice shall from time to time be given by the Forest-office of timber collected under section 45. Such notice shall contain a description of the timber, and shall require any person claiming the same to present to such officer, within a period not less than two months from the date of such notice, a written statement of such claim.

Procedure on
claim preferred
to such timber

47. (1) When any such statement is presented as aforesaid, the Forest-officer may, after making such inquiry as he thinks fit, either reject the claim after recording his reasons for so doing, or deliver the timber to the claimant.

(2) If such timber is claimed by more than one person, the Forest-officer may either deliver the same to any of such persons whom he deems entitled thereto, or may refer the claimants to the Civil Courts, and retain the timber pending the receipt of an order from any such Court for its disposal.

(3) Any person whose claim has been rejected under this section may, within three months from the date of such rejection, institute a suit to recover possession of the timber claimed by him; but no person shall recover any compensation or costs against the Government, or against any Forest-officer on account of such rejection, or the detention or removal of any timber, or the delivery thereof to any other person under this section.

(4) No such timber shall be subject to process of any Civil, Criminal or Revenue Court until it has been delivered, or a suit has been brought, as provided in this section.

48. If no such statement is presented as aforesaid, or if the claimant omits to prefer his claim in the manner and within the period fixed by the notice issued under section 46, or on such claim, having been so preferred by him and having been rejected, omits to institute a suit to recover possession of such timber within the further period fixed by section 47, the ownership of such timber shall vest in the Government, or, when such timber has been delivered to another person under section 47, in such other person free from all encumbrances not created by him.

Disposal of unclaimed timber

49. The Government shall not be responsible for any loss or damage which may occur in respect of any timber collected under section 45, and no Forest-officer shall be responsible for any such loss or damage, unless he causes such loss or damage negligently, maliciously or fraudulently.

Government and its officers not liable for damage to such timber

50. No person shall be entitled to recover possession of any timber collected or delivered as aforesaid until he has paid to the Forest-officer or other person entitled to receive it such sum on account thereof as may be due under any rule made under section 51.

Payments to be made by claimant before timber is delivered to him

51. (1) The Government may make rules to regulate the following matter, namely:—

Power to make rule and prescribe penalties

- (a) the salving, collection and disposal of all timber mentioned in section 45;
- (b) the use and registration of boats used in salving and collecting timber;
- (c) the amounts to be paid for salving, collecting, moving, storing or disposing of such timber; and
- (d) the use and registration of hammers and other instruments to be used for marking such timber.

(2) The Government may prescribe, as penalties for the contravention of any rules made under this section, imprisonment for a term which may extend to ¹[three years and shall not be less than two months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to ten thousand Taka and shall not be less than two thousand Taka].

CHAPTER IX

PENALTIES AND PROCEDURE

Seizure of
property liable
to confiscation

52. (1) When there is reason to believe that a forest-offence has been committed in respect of any forest-produce, such produce, together with all tools, ²[vessels], vehicles or cattle used in committing any such offence, may be seized by any Forest-officer or Police officer ³[or any other officer authorized in this behalf by or under any other law in force].

⁴[(1a) Every officer other than a Forest-officer seizing any property under this section shall hand over all the seized property mentioned under sub-section (1) along with the accused to the nearest forest-office for further legal proceedings:

Provided that police officers need not hand over the accused to the nearest forest-office but shall inform such forest-office of the arrest.]

(2) Every officer seizing any property under this section shall place on such property a mark indicating that the same has been so seized, and shall, as soon as may be, make a report of such seizure to the Magistrate having jurisdiction to try the offence on account of which the seizure has been made:

¹ The words "three years and shall not be less than two months and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to ten thousand Taka and shall not be less than two thousand Taka" were substituted, for the words and commas "six months, or fine which may extend to five hundred Taka, or both" by section 12 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The word "vessels" was substituted, for the word "boats" by section 14 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

³ The words "or any other officer authorized in this behalf by or under any other law in force" were added by section 11 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

⁴ Sub-section (1a) was inserted by section 11 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

Provided that, when the forest-produce with respect to which such offence is believed to have been committed is the property of Government, and the offender is unknown, it shall be sufficient if the officer makes, as soon as may be, a report of the circumstances to his official superior.

53. Any Forest-officer of a rank not inferior to that of a Ranger who, or whose subordinate, has seized any tools, ¹[vessels], vehicles or cattle under section 52, may release the same on the execution by the owner thereof of a bond for the production of the property so released, if and when so required, before the Magistrate having jurisdiction to try the offence on account of which the seizure has been made.

Power to release property seized under section 52

54. Upon the receipt of any such report, the Magistrate shall, with all convenient dispatch, take such measures as may be necessary for the arrest and trial of the offender and the disposal of the property according to law.

Procedure thereupon

55. (1) All timber or forest-produce which is not the property of Government and in respect of which a forest-offence has been committed, and all tools, boats, vehicles and used in committing any forest-offence, shall be liable to confiscation.

Forest produce, tools, etc. when liable to confiscation

(2) Such confiscation may be in addition to any other punishment prescribed for such offence.

56. When the trial of any forest-offence is concluded, any forest-produce in respect of which such offence has been committed shall, if it is the property of Government or has been confiscated, be taken charge of by a Forest-officer, and, in any other case, may be disposed of in such manner as the Court may direct.

Disposal on conclusion of trial for forest-offence of produce in respect which it was committed

57. When the offender is not known or cannot be found the Magistrate may, if he finds that an offence has been committed, order the property in respect of which the offence has been committed to be confiscated and taken charge of by the Forest-officer, or to be made over to the person whom the Magistrate deems to entitled to the same:

Procedure when offender not known, or cannot be found

¹ The word "vessels" was substituted, for the word "boats" by section 15 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

Provided that no such order shall be made until the expiration of one month from the date of seizing such property, or without hearing the person, if any, claiming any right thereto, and the evidence, if any, which he may produce in support of his claim.

Procedure as to perishable property seized under section 52

58. The Magistrate may, notwithstanding anything herein before contained, direct the sale of any property seized under section 52 and subject to speedy and natural decay, and may deal with the proceeds as he would have dealt with such property if it had not been sold.

Appeal from orders under section 55, section 56, or section 57

59. The officer who made the seizure under section 52, or any of his official superiors, or any person claiming to be interested in the property so seized, may, within one month from the date of any order passed under section 55, section 56 or section 57, appeal therefrom to the Court to which orders made by such Magistrate are ordinarily appealable, and the order passed on such appeal shall be final.

Property when to vest in Government

60. When an order for the confiscation of any property has been passed under section 55 or section 57, as the case may be, and the period limited by section 59 for an appeal from such order has elapsed, and no such appeal has been preferred, or when, on such an appeal being preferred, the Appellate Court confirms such order in respect of the whole or a portion of such property, such property or such portion thereof, as the case may be, shall vest in the Government free from all incumbrances.

Saving of power to release property seized

61. Nothing herein before contained shall be deemed to prevent any officer empowered in this behalf by the Government from directing at any time the immediate release of any property seized under section 52.

Punishment for wrongful seizure

62. Any Forest-officer or Police officer who vexatiously and unnecessarily seizes any property on pretence of seizing property liable to confiscation under this Act shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend

to ¹[one year and shall not be less than one month and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to ten thousand Taka and shall not be less than two thousand Taka].

63. Whoever, with intent to cause damage or injury to the public or to any person, or to cause wrongful gain as defined in the ²[Penal Code] -

Penalty for counterfeiting or defacing marks on trees and timber and for altering boundary marks

- (a) knowingly counterfeits upon any timber or standing tree a mark used by Forest-officers to indicate that such timber or tree is the property of the Government or of some person, or that it may lawfully be cut or removed by some person; or
- (b) alters, defaces or obliterates or obliterates any such mark placed on a tree or on timber by or under the authority of a Forest-officer; or
- (c) alters, moves, destroys or defaces any boundary-mark of any forest or waste-land to which the provisions of this act are applied,

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to ³[seven years and shall not be less than two years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to fifty thousand Taka and shall not be less than ten thousand Taka].

⁴[**63A.** Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, a forest-offence punishable under sub-section (1A) of section 26, sub-section (1A) of section 33 and section 63 shall be non-bailable.]

Some offence to be non-bailable

¹ The words "one year and shall not be less than one month and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to ten thousand Taka and shall not be less than two thousand Taka" were substituted, for the words and commas "six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred Taka, or both" by section 16 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The words "Penal Code" were substituted, for the words "Pakistan Penal Code" by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

³ The words "seven years and shall not be less than two years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to fifty thousand Taka and shall not be less than ten thousand Taka" were substituted, for the words and commas "two years, or with fine, or with both" by section 17 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

⁴ Section 63A was inserted by section 18 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

Power to arrest
without
warrant

64. (1) Any Forest-officer or Police officer may, without orders from a Magistrate and without a warrant, arrest any person against whom a reasonable suspicion exists of his having been concerned in any forest-offence punishable with imprisonment for one month or upwards.

(2) Every officer making an arrest under this section shall, without unnecessary delay and subject to the provisions of this Act as to release on bond take or send the person arrested before the Magistrate having jurisdiction in the case, or to the officer in charge of the nearest police station.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to authorize such arrest for any act which is an offence under Chapter IV unless such act has been prohibited under clause (c) of section 30.

Power to
release on a
bond a person
arrested

65. Any Forest-officer of a rank not inferior to that of a Ranger, who, or whose subordinate, has arrested any person under the provision of section 64, may release such person on his executing a bond to appear, if and when so required, before the Magistrate having jurisdiction in the case, or before the officer-in-charge of the nearest police station¹:

Provided that nothing in this section shall apply in a case where the person arrested is suspected of having committed any non-bailable offence under this Act.]

Power to
prevent
commission of
offence

66. Every Forest-officer and Police officer shall prevent, and may interfere for the purpose of preventing, the commission of any forest-offence.

Power to try
offences
summarily

67. The District Magistrate or any Magistrate of the first class specially empowered in this behalf by the Government may try summarily, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, any forest-offence punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ²[two years], or fine not exceeding ²[ten thousand] Taka, or both.

¹ Colon was substituted, for the full-stop at the end of section 65 and thereafter the proviso was added by section 19 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The words "two years" and "ten thousand" were substituted, for the words "six months" and "five hundred" respectively by section 20 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

¹[67A. (1) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint one or more Magistrate of the First Class to serve as a Forest magistrate to try offences exclusively under this Act, and also specify the territorial jurisdiction of such Magistrate. Appointment of forest Magistrate

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law in force, such Forest Magistrate shall have authority to impose any penalty specified under this Act.]

68. (1) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, empower a Forest-officer ²[not inferior to that of a Ranger] - Power to compound offences

- (a) to accept from any person against whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed any forest-offence, other than an offence specified in ²[section 26 (1A) or section 33 (1A) or] section 62 or section 63, a sum of money by way compensation for the offence which such person is suspected to have committed, and
- (b) when any property has been seized as liable to confiscation, to release the same on payment of the value thereof as estimated by such officer ³[and verified by another officer not below to the rank of a Divisional Forest-officer].

(2) On the payment of such sum of money, or such value, of both as the case may be, to such officer, the suspected person, if in custody, shall be discharged, the property, if any, seized shall be released, and no further proceedings shall be taken against such person or property.

¹ Section 67A was inserted by section 12 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

² The words "not inferior to that of a Ranger" and the words, figures, brackets and letters "section 26(1A) or section 33 (1A) or" were inserted respectively by section 21 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

³ The words "and verified by another officer not below to the rank of a Divisional Forest-officer" were added by section 13 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

(3) [Omitted by the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990,) section 29 (kha).]

Presumption that forest produce belongs to Government

69. When in any proceedings taken under this Act, or in consequence of anything done under this Act, a question arises as to whether any forest-produce is the property of the Government, such produce shall be presumed to be the property of the Government until the contrary is proved.

Prosecution of forest-offences

¹[**69A.** Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the Government may empower any Forest-officer not inferior to that of a Deputy Ranger to appear, plead and conduct the prosecution on behalf of the Government before any Court in any case where a forest-offence is under trial.]

CHAPTER X

CATTLE-TRESPASS

Cattle-trespass Act, 1871, to apply

70. Cattle trespassing in a reserved forest or in any portion of a protected forest which has been lawfully closed to grazing shall be cattle doing damage to a public plantation within the meaning of section 11 of the Cattle-trespass Act, 1871, and may be seized and impounded as such by any Forest-officer of Police officer.

Power to alter fines fixed under that Act

71. The Government, may by notification in the official Gazette, direct that, in lieu of the fines fixed under section 12 of the Cattle-trespass Act, 1871, there shall be levied ²[per day or part thereof] for each head of cattle impounded under section 70 of this Act such fines as it thinks fit, but not exceeding the

¹ Section 69A was inserted by section 22 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The words "per day or part thereof" were inserted by section 14 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

following, that is to say:—

For each elephant	¹ [Taka one thousand]
For each buffalo or camel	¹ [Taka two hundred]
For each horse, mare, gelding, pony, colt, filly, mule, bull, bullock, cow or heifer	¹ [Taka one hundred]
For each calf, ass, pig, ram, ewe, sheep lamb, goat or kid	¹ [Taka fifty]

CHAPTER XI

OF FOREST OFFICERS

72. (1) The Government may invest any Forest-officer with all or any of the following powers, that is to say:—

- (a) power to enter upon any land and to survey, demarcate and make a map of the same;
- (b) the powers of a Civil Court to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents and material objects;
- (c) power to issue a search-warrant under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898; and
- (d) power to hold an inquiry into forest-offences, and, in the course of such inquiry, to receive and record evidence.

Government
may invest
Forest-officers
with certain
powers

(2) Any evidence recorded under clause (d) of sub-section (1) shall be admissible in any subsequent trial before a Magistrate, provided that it has been taken in the presence of the accused person.

¹ The words "Taka one thousand", "Taka two hundred", "Taka one hundred" and "Taka fifty" were substituted, for the words "ten Taka", "two Taka", "one Taka" and "fifty poisha" respectively by section 23 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

Forest-officers deemed public servants

73. All Forest-officers shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of the ¹[Penal Code].

Indemnity for acts done in good faith

74. No suit shall lie against any public servant for anything done by him in good faith under this Act ²[and no court may try such a public servant for a crime stemming from actions related to the public servant's official duty under this Act and occurring within the public servant's assigned geographical jurisdiction, unless the court first conducts a preliminary inquiry and verifies that there is credible evidence to support the basic elements of the complaint].

Forest-officers not to trade

75. Except with the permission in writing of the Government, no Forest-officer shall, as principal or agent, trade in timber or other forest-produce, or be or become interested in any lease of any forest or any forest or in any contract for working any forest, whether in or outside Bangladesh.

CHAPTER XII

SUBSIDIARY RULES

Additional powers to make rules

76. The Government may make rules—

- (a) to prescribe and limit the powers and duties of any Forest-officer under this Act;
- (b) to regulate the rewards to be paid to officers and informers out of the proceeds of fines and confiscation under this Act;

¹ The words "Penal Code" were substituted, for the words "Pakistan Penal Code" by section 3 and 2nd Schedule of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973).

² The words "and no court may try such a public servant for a crime stemming from actions related to the public servant's official duty under this Act and occurring within the public servant's assigned geographical jurisdiction, unless the court first conducts a preliminary inquiry and verifies that there is credible evidence to support the basic elements of the complaint" were added by section 15 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2000 (Act No. X of 2000).

- (c) for the preservation, reproduction and disposal of trees and timber belonging to Government, but grown on lands belonging to or in the occupation private of persons; and
- (d) generally, to carry out the provisions of this Act .

77. Any person contravening any rule under this Act, for the contravention of which no special penalty is provided, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to ¹[six month], or fine which may extend to ¹[five thousand] Taka, or both. Penalties for breach of rules

78. All rules made by the Government under this Act shall be published in the official Gazette, and shall thereupon, so far as they are consistent with this Act, have effect as if enacted therein. Rules when to have force of law

CHAPTER XIII

MISCELLANEOUS

79. (1) Every person who exercises any right in a reserved or protected forest, or who is permitted to take any forest-produce from, or to cut and remove timber or to pasture cattle, in, such forest, and every person who is employed by any such person in such forest, and Persons bound to assist Forest-officers and Police officers

every person in any village contiguous to such forest who is employed by the ²[Government, or a local authority, or who receives emoluments from the Government or a local authority] for services to be performed to the community,

¹ The words "six months" and "five thousand" were substituted, for the words "one month" and "five hundred" respectively by section 24 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

² The words and commas "Government, or a local authority, or who receives emoluments from the Government or a local authority" were substituted, for the words and comma "Government, or who receives emoluments from the Government" by section 25 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

shall be bound to furnish without unnecessary delay to the nearest Forest-officer or Police officer any information he may possess respecting the commission of, or intention to commit, any forest-offence, and shall forthwith take steps, whether so required by any Forest-officer or Police officer or not,—

- (a) to extinguish any forest fire in such forest of which he has knowledge or information;
- (b) to prevent by any lawful means in his power any fire in the vicinity of such forest of which he has knowledge or information from spreading to such forest, and

shall assist any Forest-officer or Police officer demanding his aid—

- (c) in preventing the commission in such forest of any forest-offence; and
- (d) when there is reason to believe that any such offence has been committed in such forest, in discovering and arresting the offender.

(2) Any person who, being bound so to do, without lawful excuse (the burden of proving which shall lie upon such person) fails—

- (a) to furnish without unnecessary delay to the nearest Forest-officer or Police officer any information required by sub-section (1);
- (b) to take steps as required by sub-section (1) to extinguish any forest fire in a reserved or protected forest;
- (c) to prevent, as required by sub-section (1), any fire in the vicinity of such forest from spreading to such forest; or
- (d) to assist any Forest-officer or Police officer demanding his aid in preventing the commission in such forest of any forest-offence, or, when there is reason to believe that any such offence has been committed in such forest, in discovering and arresting the offender;

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to ¹[three months], or with fine which may extend to ¹[two thousand] Taka, or with both.

80. (1) If the Government and any person be jointly interested in any forest or waste-land, or in the whole or any part of the produce thereof, the Government may either—

Management of forests the joint property of Government and other persons

- (a) undertake the management of such forest, waste-land or produce, accounting to such person for his interest in the same; or
- (b) issue such regulations for the management of the forest, waste-land or produce by the person so jointly interested as it deems necessary for the management thereof and the interests of all parties therein.

(2) When the Government undertakes under clause (a) of sub-section (1) the management of any forest, waste-land or produce, it may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare that any of the provisions contained in Chapters II and IV shall apply to such forest, waste-land or produce, and thereupon such provisions shall apply accordingly.

81. If any person be entitled to a share in the produce of any forest which is the property of Government or over which the Government has proprietary rights or to any part of the forest-produce of which the Government is entitled, upon the condition of duly performing any service connected with such forest, such share shall be liable to confiscation in the event of the fact being established to the satisfaction of the Government that such service is no longer so performed:

Failure to perform service for which a share in produce of Government forest is enjoyed

Provided that no such share shall be confiscated until the person entitled thereto, and the evidence, if any, which he may produce in proof of the due performance of such service, have been heard by an officer duly appointed in that behalf by the Government.

¹ The words "three months" and "two thousand" were substituted, for the words "one month" and "two hundred" respectively by section 25 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

Recovery of money due to Government

82. All money payable to the Government under this Act, or under any rule made under this Act, or on account of the price of any forest-produce, or of expenses incurred in the execution of this Act in respect of such produce, may, if not paid when due, be recovered under the law for the time being in force as if it were an arrear of land-revenue.

Lien on forest-produce for such money

83. (1) When any such money is payable for or in respect of any forest-produce, the amount thereof shall be deemed to be a first charge on such produce and such produce may be taken possession of by a Forest-officer until such amount has been paid.

(2) If such amount is not paid when due, the Forest-officer may sell such produce by public auction, and the proceeds of the sale shall be applied first in discharging such amount.

(3) The surplus, if any, if not claimed within two months from the date of the sale by the person entitled thereto, shall be forfeited to Government.

Land required under this Act to be deemed to be needed for a public purpose under the Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982

84. Whenever it appears to the Government that any land is required for any of the purposes of this Act, such land shall be deemed to be needed for a public purpose within the meaning of ¹[section 5(2) of the Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Act No. II of 1982)].

Recovery of penalties due under bond

85. When any person, in accordance with any provision of this Act, or in compliance with any rule made thereunder, binds himself by any bond or instrument to perform any duty or act, or covenants by any bond or instrument that he, or that he and his servants and agents will abstain from any act, the whole sum mentioned in such bond or instrument as the amount to be paid in case of a breach of the conditions thereof may, notwithstanding anything in section 74 of the Contract Act, 1872, be recovered from him in case of such breach as if it were an arrear of land revenue.

¹ The words, figures, brackets and comma "section 5(2) of the Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (Act No. II of 1982)" were substituted, for the words, figures and comma "section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894" by section 26 of the Forest (Amendment) Act, 1990 (Act No. VIII of 1990).

85A. [*Omitted by the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973), section 3 and 2nd Schedule.*]

86. [*Omitted by the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act, 1973 (Act No. VIII of 1973), section 3 and 2nd Schedule.*]

THE SCHEDULE.—[*Repealed by the Central Laws (Adaptation) Order, 1961, Article 2 and Schedule.*]
