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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO: 313*
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 31.03.2022

Decrease in Forest cover

313. SHRI NEERAJ DANGI:

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

(a) whether the forest cover in the country including the State of Rajasthan has decreased during the last three years, if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether any important steps are being taken by Government to increase the forest cover under land area, if so, the details thereof; and
(c) the steps taken to scale up the conservation of the sanctuaries in the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) The statement is laid on the table of the House.

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Statement refer to in reply to part (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 313 due for reply on 31.03.2022 regarding 'Decrease in Forest cover' by Shri Neeraj Dangi:

(a) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The forest cover assessment is a wall-to-wall mapping exercise based on remote sensing supported by intensive ground verification and field data from National Forest Inventory. The ISFR-2021 has been recently released by the Ministry on 13th January, 2022. As per ISFR-2021, there is an overall increase of 1540 square kilometre of forest cover at the national level as compared to the previous assessment i.e. ISFR-2019. The forest cover has increased by 5,516 square kilometre in the country during last two forest cover assessments (ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021). The details of forest cover from ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021 are given in **Annexure-I**.

As per ISFR-2021, the forest cover in the State of Rajasthan is 16,655 square kilometre showing an increase of 25 square kilometre as compared to previous assessment i.e. ISFR-2019. The forest cover has increased by 83 square kilometre in the State of Rajasthan during last two forest cover assessments (ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021). The details of forest cover for the State of Rajasthan from ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021 are given in **Annexure-II.**

(b) Various schemes are being implemented by the Central and State Government/Union Territory Administration for increase in forest and tree cover in the country. These include the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) and Green India Mission (GIM) being implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. National Afforestation Programme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for regeneration of degraded forest and adjoining areas in the country. Now NAP scheme has been merged with Green India Mission. National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the eight Missions outlined under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. It aims at protecting, restoring, and enhancing India's forest cover and responding to Climate Change by means of plantation activities in the forest and non-forest areas.

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes/funding sources such as Compensatory Afforestation Funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), afforestation activities under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), National Agro-forestry Policy and Sub-mission on Agro-forestry (SMAF), National Bamboo Mission and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture. In addition to above, State and UT Governments have their own afforestation and reforestation programmes. Almost every State has activities under social forestry, which largely focuses on tree planting in the areas outside forests.

(c) The Protected Areas including Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks are managed by State Government and Union Territory Administration. The Ministry provides technical support and also financial assistance under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Financial assistance to States/Union Territories under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for development of wildlife and its habitat, for activities like creation and maintenance of water holes for wild animals in Protected Areas, soil and moisture conservation measures, establishment of anti-poaching camps, strengthening wildlife veterinary care, eradication of weeds, creation and maintenance of fire lines.

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Annexure-I

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 313 due for answer on 31.03.2022 regarding 'Decrease in Forest cover'

Forest Cover of India between ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021

				(**Area in square kilometre**)
India State of Forest Report	**Geographical Area (GA)**	**Total Forest Cover**	**Percentage of Geographical area**	**Change in Forest Cover w.r.t. previous assessment**
ISFR-2017	32,87,469	7,08,273	21.54	6,778
ISFR- 2019		7,12,249	21.67	3,976
ISFR- 2021		7,13,789	21.71	1,540

The forest cover of the country has increased by 5,516 sq km during the last two forest cover assessments (ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021).

Annexure-II

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 313 due for answer on 31.03.2022 regarding 'Decrease in Forest cover'

Forest Cover in the State of Rajasthan between ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021

				(**Area in square kilometre**)
India State of Forest Report	**Geographical area (GA)**	**Total Forest Cover**	**Percentage of Geographical area**	**Change in Forest Cover w.r.t. previous assessment**
ISFR- 2017	3,42,239	16,572	4.84	466
ISFR- 2019		16,630	4.86	58
ISFR- 2021		16,655	4.87	25

The forest cover of Rajasthan has increased by 83 sq km during the last two forest cover assessments (ISFR-2017 to ISFR-2021).