

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 2463
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.08.2023

Forest cover

2463. DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL:

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

- (a) whether Ministry is aware that currently the forest cover of the country is a striking 24.62 per cent compared to the mandated 33 per cent;
- (b) whether Ministry has evaluated the serious climatic, ecological, biological, and socio-economic repercussions of the declining forest cover of the country;
- (c) whether Ministry has found a solution to the growing population of the country which acts as a leading cause of forest cover decline due to expansion in agricultural and residential needs; and
- (d) the details of the steps being taken to restore the lost forest cover of the country and whether reforestation programmes are effective in compensating the lost forest land?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, carries out the assessment of forest cover biennially, since 1987 and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The total forest cover in the country as per ISFR 2021 assessment is 7,13,789 square kilometer which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country. Further, the total forest and tree cover of the country as per ISFR 2021 assessment is 8,09,537 square kilometer which is 24.62% of the geographical area of the country. The total forest cover has increased by 1540 square kilometer as compared to the ISFR 2019 assessment.

(b) As per the ISFR reports, there is no decline in the overall forest cover of the country. In fact, the overall forest cover of the country is showing an increasing trend. Forest Survey of India in collaboration with Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, Goa Campus has performed a study to map the climatic hotspots over the forest cover in India, using computer model based projection of temperature and rainfall data, for the three future time periods i.e. year 2030, 2050 and 2085.

(c) Despite growth in population, agricultural growth and rapid economic progress, India is one of the few countries in the world which has conserved and enhanced its forest and tree cover.

(d) The Ministry provides technical and financial assistance to States/UTs under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely, Green India Mission (GIM), Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme, CAMPA, Nagar Van Yojana and other schemes of line ministries to increase the forest and tree cover of the country as per the mandate of National Forest Policy. These reforestation programmes alongwith conservation measures, afforestation activities and enhanced protection measures in plantation as well as in traditional forest areas have resulted in increase in forest and tree cover over the country.
