

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 1167
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.08.2024

Loss of forest cover

1167. SHRI JAWHAR SIRCAR:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that Global Forest Watch and other bodies have reported that India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000;
- (b) whether, as per the report, between 2013 and 2023, over 90 per cent of the entire tree cover loss in the country occurred within natural forests;
- (c) whether the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken up a suo motu case under which it has demanded a report from Government on the violations of the major environmental laws; and
- (d) the reasons why constant track of forest cover over satellite could not be done?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(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 the National Forest Inventory.

The tree cover of India has increased by 14,276 square km in the ISFR assessment 2021 as compared to ISFR assessment 2001.

The assessment and methodology of FSI in ISFR is tailored to reflect India's unique ecological and socio-economic conditions. The assessment is done with maximum possible precision and after extensive ground truthing by field verification. However, Global Forest Watch offers a broader global perspective and its forest cover assessment is done with different criteria and methodology. The Global Forest Resources Assessments (GFRA) published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations Organization, also relies on the data of the Forest Survey of India for its reporting.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) The National Green Tribunal (NGT) while taking up matters related to violation of any environmental law, issues various directions and guidelines for the protection and conservation of environment and forest resources. Such directions and guidelines are implemented by the concerned State Governments, Union Territory Administrations, institutions and organizations.

(d) The Forest Survey of India is an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. FSI carries out the biennial assessment of the country's Forest Cover at State and district levels and changes w.r.t. the previous assessment, using satellite data through Remote Sensing technology, since 1987.
